

The Impact of Managerial Appreciation on Laotian Employee Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

This purpose of this research study was to examine the relationship between managerial appreciation and job satisfaction among selected full-time salaried employees in Laos. The study investigated how various types of appreciation, including verbal expressions of praise, recognition, and promotion/rewards, were perceived by workers in various for-profit and non-profit organizations. Employees were also asked to suggest practical ways that managers could more effectively express appreciation to subordinates. Utilizing a descriptive quantitative design and a researcher-developed survey questionnaire, data was collected from 180 employees who worked in a variety of service organizations and businesses. The findings showed that all three categories of appreciation were significantly correlated with employee satisfaction at the 0.01 level, with a slightly higher score for promotion/rewards than for expressions of praise or recognition. Multiple regression analysis revealed that managerial appreciation accounted for 68.8% of the variance in overall employee job satisfaction, and employees also reported that they highly valued managerial feedback and suggestions. Tangible benefits of effective appreciation practices included heightened worker motivation and engagement, upbeat workplace environments, enhanced productivity, and lower turnover rates. Affirmation is a cost-effective management strategy, and implementing robust, tailored appreciation programs that meet employees' emotional needs helps to foster ongoing commitment, productivity, and retention.

Keywords: Managerial appreciation, job satisfaction, Laotian employees

INTRODUCTION

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Employee job satisfaction is a crucial determinant of organizational success, influencing productivity, overall performance and retention. One key factor that impacts job satisfaction is the degree to which employees feel appreciated or recognized for their workplace contributions. One study found that employees don't leave their jobs, but that they leave their managers instead (Ganguly & Chaudhuri, 2017). This illustrates how a lack of appreciation from managers towards employees impacts firms; not only are experienced workers lost, but knowledgeable competitors may also be created. While Asian employees may respond modestly when complimented and reply that "Oh, it's only part of my job," this doesn't mean that they

don't need affirmation. The truth is that two of the most basic human desires are validation and appreciation.

Knowing this, managers should be as interested in their employees' satisfaction as they are in their customers because happy employees make happy customers. However, just as each employee has a different personality, their needs also differ. For some workers, verbal appreciation is enough, while others may prefer more tangible expressions of gratitude such as cash bonuses, gift certificates, celebrations, special privileges, or a chance for career growth or promotion (Jeffrey & Schaffer, 2007).

According to Heller (2017), leaders could markedly improve employee engagement by giving them due recognition. His findings revealed that 50% of employees believed that being appreciated by managers improved their relationships and built trust with higher-ups, while 69% stated that they performed better when their work was acknowledged. When companies use recognition programs to motivate employees, it boosts work motivation and satisfaction in the workplace, which improves employee engagement and reduces turnover (Ali & Ahmad, 2008).

A manager might ask, "Am I required to say thank you and appreciate employees who are simply doing what they are paid to do? Is their salary not enough?" However, commendation and words of thanks can travel farther than simply to an employee's ears. This powerful motivational tool can be used by leaders or managers every day. Though not costly, it can improve productivity, strengthen workplace morale, keep employees engaged, and help to build staff loyalty. It helps to build staff engagement and an organizational culture that employees want to be a part of because it makes them feel like they belong, and happy employees make for happy customers.

In terms of organizational management, contentment is a crucial subject. Job satisfaction is an evaluation of how well a working environment fulfills employees' needs (Habib et al., 2014). Verbal compliments and constructive feedback to employees have been found to improve contentment, foster a positive workplace culture, and improve retention (Ushakov & Shatila, 2021). According to Kaliski (2007), when an employee attains self-actualization at work, job satisfaction is also achieved. Finding fulfillment in one's work is contingent upon performing well at a job that one enjoys and receiving recognition for those efforts. Consequently, appreciation is positively

linked to productivity and self-esteem, and an essential component that leads to happiness and success.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions aimed to explore the relationship between managerial appreciation and employee job satisfaction in selected Laotian organizations, as well as to suggest practical ways that managers can express increased appreciation to their employees. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between managerial appreciation and employee job satisfaction in selected Laotian organizations?

What are the effects of appreciation – or a lack of it – on employees, and in what various ways may appreciation be expressed?

2. In what practical ways may managers more effectively express appreciation to employees?

Answers to this question may be applied by managers in real-life situations to increase employee satisfaction with their jobs and create a pleasant atmosphere in their working places.

While previous studies have explored the relationship between managerial appreciation and job satisfaction, there is a paucity of research focusing on Laotian workforces. Therefore, this study aimed to help fill this gap by investigating the impact of appreciation on employee job satisfaction in Laotian workplaces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Laos

Laos, officially known as the Lao People's Democratic Republic, is a landlocked Southeast Asian country bordered by Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Covering an area of approximately 236,800 square kilometers, Laos is known for its mountainous terrain and the Mekong River, which forms a significant part of its western border. The population is around 7.9 million, with a slight majority being ethnic Lao. The official language is Lao, and the predominant religion is Buddhism (CIA, 2023). Laos has a communist government and has been ruled by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party since 1975.

The economy is largely agrarian, with rice cultivation as a staple. Subsistence agriculture still accounts for almost half of GDP and up to 80% of employment. Though challenges such as poverty, limited infrastructure, and environmental problems persist, Laos has experienced moderate economic growth in recent years driven by investment in hydropower, mining, and tourism (World Bank, 2023). The country is known for its beautiful scenery, ethnic diversity, and rich cultural heritage that includes the UNESCO World Heritage site of Luang Prabang (UNESCO, 2023). Traditional festivals, cuisine, and arts are also important in the lives of its people. Smith (2022) points to data revealing that Laos is experiencing gradual improvements in workforce participation and employment rates. The labor force participation rate is around 70%, and urban areas are experiencing a shift toward services and manufacturing, driven by small and medium-sized firms that are acting as catalysts for economic growth and development (Xiong, 2024). However, challenges like skills mismatches and underemployment persist, emphasizing the need for vocational training and education reforms to meet labor market demands (Lao Statistics Bureau, 2023). While the overall unemployment rate remains relatively low (1.2%), it varies significantly among demographic groups and regions (World Bank, 2023).

Extrinsic motivation

Extrinsic motivation stems from benefits received from sources external to an employee. These may be material, like cash or grades, or immaterial, like recognition or acclaim. Extrinsic motivation is driven by rewards from outside sources, in contrast to intrinsic motivation, which comes from within a person. Extrinsically motivated individuals may stick with a task even when it does not yield immediate rewards. For instance, to make a living, they may perform unenjoyable tasks at work (Jovanovic & Matejevic, 2014).

Whatever employees receive from their firms in return for their work, whether tangible or intangible incentives of any kind, may be viewed as rewards. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) regard rewards as any benefits that employees receive from doing their jobs. Organizations with well-balanced reward and recognition program for employees have seen significant improvement in employee output. McFee (2023) noted that employees offer specific skills and abilities to their organizations, and in return they expected a decent working environment where they could use their skills, satisfy their desires, and attain their goals. To ensure a high standard of performance and to retain

employees, rewards are crucial in building and sustaining commitment among employees who might otherwise move somewhere else (Wang, 2004).

Intrinsic motivation

However, not all people are motivated by money. Employee engagement is not produced only by satisfaction with one's pay. Zhenjing et al. (2022)) found that a positive work environment promoted employee commitment and loyalty. Though financial incentives may also improve performance quality, they are not always good motivators. An employee may do what is required in order to be paid, but this may not reflect strong involvement in the job. Jeffrey and Schaffer (2007) concluded that managers should not always rely on cash inducements because non-financial recognition-based rewards were often motivationally superior. Recognition programs engage employees, which in return may increase commitment and productivity (Kohn, 2018).

Showing appreciation to employees plays a vital role in keeping them motivated, content, and satisfied with their jobs. A study of bank employees in Tirunelveli City concluded that ways of rewarding and recognition should be revised over time to meet employee needs. However, employees may lack motivation if the form of appreciation does not meet their needs (Vijayakumar & Subha, 2013). For example, saying “good job, and thank you for your hard work,” while paying low wages with no raises for several years, is unlikely to be seen as adequate or genuine.

Rule (2023) suggests that both in kind and non-monetary rewards should be utilized in recognition programs. Social reinforcement may be added to other modes of recognition, such as being mentioned in company newsletters, receiving plaques or letters of commendation, travel incentives, extra days-off, or privately or publicly expressed verbal affirmation. Brun and Dugas (2008) seconded these conclusions. Rewards are not just symbolic for the beneficiaries, but they provide an immense amount of emotional and practical value.

A strong relationship between organizational support, job involvement, and performance was found in a study by Zhong et al. (2016). Employee involvement and performance were influenced by their perceptions of the organizational climate (Kraimer et al., 2011). Employees' involvement at work is likely to increase when they

see that their organizations support them (Imran et al., 2020). In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, one need is to achieve self-esteem and eventually self-actualization; there is a human need for achievement, respect from others, and acceptance as a unique individual. Whether these needs are satisfied or not generally has an impact on one's performance as an employee (Jerome, 2013).

Job Satisfaction - characteristics and employer expectations

When employees are able to satisfy their drive for achievement and meet employer expectations through their work performance, this leads to a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction with their work duties. People frequently view job satisfaction as a positive feeling; increasing job satisfaction has a beneficial effect on employee retention and vice versa (Alrawahi et al., 2020). A factor that enhances employee sense of wellbeing and influences job happiness is managerial appreciation (Pfister et al., 2020). Appreciation is strongly linked to workers' job satisfaction. Characteristics of job satisfaction include a cognitive evaluation of expectations versus realities, equity and fairness, as well as a positive affective or emotional attitude towards one's work. Other important characteristics include organizational culture, work-life balance, social relationships, and personal values and goals (Aye, 2018). These characteristics have a significant impact on how satisfied employees are with their jobs.

Employer expectations often have a Pygmalion effect, leading employees to invest extra time and effort to accomplish organizational objectives. They impact employee self-perceptions (self-efficacy theory) so that staff members believe that they can accomplish tasks aligned with their employer's expectations. Appreciation is a built-in expectation that is examined in this study. When work is recognized and valued, employees are more likely to reach performance standards and surpass them in the future, which ultimately leads to both high job satisfaction and meeting employer expectations. Appreciation can be thought of as an implicit psychological contract created with employees as a way to reward them for meeting expectations (Mazumdar et al., 2022).

Job dissatisfaction and retention

Job dissatisfaction may be compared to jigsaw puzzle pieces which don't fit together; it often sums up many issues such as poor workplace relationships, little empowerment or influence, lack of work-life balance, minimal growth prospects, work that is uninteresting or not meaningful, and feeling unappreciated. However, the feeling of being unappreciated or not valued is the main job dissatisfaction cause for employees. In a UK study, two-thirds of employees felt that they were not valued or appreciated, and this led to job dissatisfaction (Half, 2019).

Up to 80% of employees who are likely to quit their jobs felt that they were not adequately valued in their current roles. This highlights the fact that when employees don't feel appreciated, they are more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs and leave (Gitnux, 2023). This is a significant issue, because dissatisfied employees lead to high turnover rates and decreased productivity (Jun et al., 2023). Thus, employers should endeavor to make employees feel valued and appreciated in order to maintain job satisfaction and a healthy work environment. Boatman (2021) mentioned some ways that dissatisfied employees impacted organizations; these included disengagement, decreased productivity, increased turnover, and unfavorable impact on business reputation.

There is a constant tug-of-war among organizations to hire and retain the best employees. To be successful, leaders and managers need to keep employees together and united. A South African study noted that companies which focused on employee engagement and rewarded diligent employees saw increased levels of employee satisfaction, commitment, and productivity (Vallo & Mashau, 2020). Thus, expressing appreciation to employees and recognizing their contributions is a cost-effective way for organizations to retain good employees. Developing policies that formalize this approach can boost job satisfaction and minimize expenditures required to recruit and coach new employees (Half, 2023).

Research hypotheses

Previous studies suggest a significant relationship exists between managerial appreciation and employee job satisfaction, with specific dimensions of appreciation

such as expressions of thanks, recognition, and promotion/rewards. The following hypotheses guided this study:

Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between managerial appreciation and employee job satisfaction in selected Laotian organizations.

Hypothesis (H_{1a}): There is a significant relationship between managerial appreciation (*expressions of thanks*) and employee job satisfaction in selected Laotian organizations.

Hypothesis (H_{1b}): There is a significant relationship between managerial appreciation (*recognition*) and employee job satisfaction in selected Laotian organizations.

Hypothesis (H_{1c}): There is a significant relationship between managerial appreciation (*promotion or rewards*) and employee job satisfaction in selected Laotian organizations.

Conceptual framework: Managerial appreciation of employees

The conceptual framework illustrates the importance of employer appreciation of employees in enhancing job satisfaction; it is shown below in Figure 1.

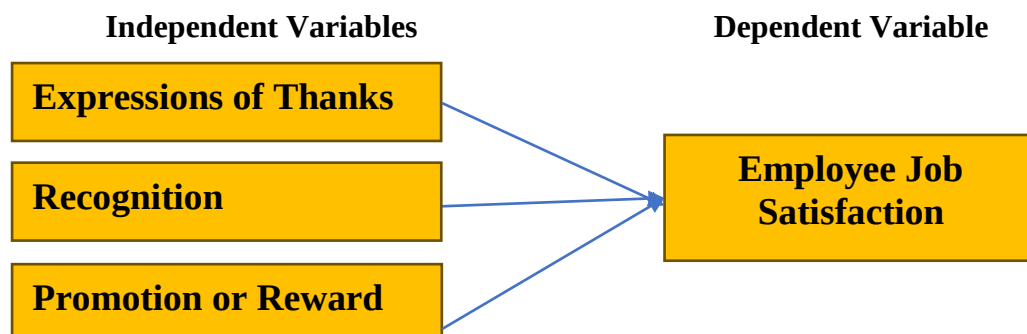


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Managerial Appreciation of Employees

Managerial appreciation of employees may take various forms, as noted above in the literature review. In this study, expressions of appreciation were divided into three categories: 1) verbal or written personal expressions of thanks; 2) recognition of employee contributions shown by issuing certificates/awards, or formally publicly

commending outstanding performance; and 3) appreciation in the form of a promotion or rewards of a monetary or non-monetary nature.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive quantitative research design was employed to gather insights into the effects of different forms of managerial appreciation on employee job satisfaction. The population was defined as probationary, contract, and regular salaried workers in Vientiane, the capital city, and in Xieng Khouang Province, northeastern Laos, who had worked at their employing organizations for at least 6 months. While the size of this population was difficult to accurately estimate, national workforce survey figures (Lao PDR Labour Force Survey, 2018) indicated that it was more than 200,000. Assuming that not less than 80% of respondents would value managerial appreciation, a confidence interval of $\pm 5\%$, and Veal's (2005) sample size table, a target sample of 246 was established. Usable surveys from a convenience sample of 180 respondents were eventually received.

The researcher approached many organizations in the two provinces, asking for permission to collect data from their employees about managerial appreciation. These establishments included schools, business firms, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies. If permission was granted, then surveys were distributed to a proportion of the staff through a contact individual; only a few surveys were given to small firms, but more to larger ones. Respondents represented a wide range of professions including teachers, salespersons, accountants, bank employees, security guards, and janitors.

A researcher-designed survey consisting of 48 Likert-type questions was used to collect the data. An item-objective congruence review by 3 experienced researchers was used to validate survey item content, and after reviewing the survey and data collection plan, ethical approval and permission to conduct the study was granted on 24 January 2024 by the University's Research Committee (Approval #RRDC 2024-23). Participation in the survey was voluntary, consent was obtained from both employers and employees before surveys were distributed, and respondent confidentiality was strictly maintained.

Data was primarily collected using an online Google document form, supplemented by paper surveys. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize survey responses, and inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation coefficient and regression were employed to analyze the relationships between various forms of managerial appreciation and employee job satisfaction.

RESULTS

Descriptive analysis, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, was conducted to provide insights into how managerial appreciation affects job satisfaction among Laotian employees. Analytical methods included Pearson's correlation coefficients and multiple regression. Demographic information about the study's respondents is shown below in Table 1.

Table 1:
Demographic Information

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	48	26.7
Female	132	73.3
Status		
Single	49	27.2
Married	131	72.8
Organization		
Educational	113	62.8
Governmental	10	5.6
Private Business	32	17.8
Non-government organization (NGO)	25	13.9
Years Working in Current Job		
6–12 months	26	12.5
1–3 years	16	7.7
4–6 years	16	7.7
7 years or more	150	72.1
Age		
18–25 years	29	16.1
26–35 years	113	62.8
36–45 years	12	6.7
46 years or more	26	14.4
Education		
High School and Below	27	15.0
Diploma	70	38.9

Bachelor	73	40.6
Master and above	10	5.6
Employment		
Probationary	7	3.9
Contract worker	109	60.6
Regular worker	64	35.6
Salary		
US\$80–200	94	52.2
\$201–400	41	22.8
\$401–700	37	20.6
\$701 and more	8	4.4

The data shows that most respondents were female (73.3%), married (72.8%), had worked in the educational sector (62.8%) for 1-3 years (62.8%), aged 26-35 years (72.2%), with Bachelor degrees (40.6%), and were contract workers (60.6%) receiving salaries from \$80-200 (52.2%).

Selected items with high scores reflecting how respondents perceived verbal expressions of thanks from their managers are shown below in Table 2.

Table 2:
Managerial Appreciation as Expressions of Thanks (n=180)

Variable	Mean	SD	Level
1. My direct supervisor gladly acknowledges my completion of assigned tasks.	3.73	0.92	High
2. My managers' suggestions make me want to improve my work.	4.33	0.51	Very High
3. I perform my daily tasks better because of my manager's appreciation.	3.58	1.02	High
4. I can approach my managers and talk about my work easily.	4.02	0.84	High

These scores showed that managerial appreciation was highly significant to employees. Employees want to be appreciated; appreciation from managers was highly valued and made them try to improve their performance. This indicates that managerial guidance and supervision, given in a way that acknowledges employee contributions to an organization, are helpful in motivating them to do an even better job than when nothing is said. These responses revealed that there was a strong relationship between managerial appreciation and employee job satisfaction.

Respondent perceptions of selected items about recognition of work are shown in Table 3.

Table 3:

Managerial Appreciation in the Form of Recognition (n=180)

Variable	Mean	SD	Level
1. I'd like to work in an organization where recognition programs are held.	3.73	1.05	High
2. Our organization holds regular recognition programs.	3.57	1.00	High
3. I'm satisfied with my current firm because of the appreciation it gives.	3.73	1.05	High
4. If my firm has a recognition program, I will work there until I retire.	3.42	1.18	High

While average scores were slightly lower than for expressions of thanks, most respondents indicated that they would enjoy working at organizations which hold recognition programs. While some respondents believe that recognition and appreciation programs are not necessary to motivate employees, responses generally favored them (as seen by the “high” ratings for most items). This showed that appreciation through recognition is a felt need among most employees.

Table 4 shows the results for selected survey items that inquired about managerial support for professional growth, promotions, or rewards.

Table 4:

Managerial Appreciation in the Form of Promotion or Rewards (n=180)

Variable	Mean	SD	Level
1. I feel happy when my managers support me professionally.	4.16	0.90	High
2. When I do well in my work, I expect to receive a promotion.	3.74	1.09	High
3. If promotion is promised, the quality of my work will improve.	3.83	1.01	High
4. Extra pay or bonuses do/would encourage me to do better in my job.	3.78	1.14	High

Average scores for this section were relatively high; employees desire opportunities for professional growth, and greatly appreciate managerial support for occasions that allow them to improve their qualifications or skill sets. Promotion possibilities were another factor that motivate staff members to work hard, and positive responses were noted for advancement opportunities that were merit-based and given as promised. Employees are more likely to stay in organizations where there are good prospects for career development, and this may influence them to stay even when offered a higher salary by

another organization.

Table 5 shows the results for selected survey items that inquired about the relationship between managerial appreciation and job satisfaction.

Table 5:
Job Satisfaction (n=180)

Variable	Mean	SD	Level
1. A good work environment is about good managers, not just good pay.	4.26	0.79	Very High
2. Effective implementation of organizational rules and regulations makes me want to continue working here.	3.96	0.89	High
3. Even though my job is challenging, I am happy to continue working here because of my manager's encouragement and support.	3.77	0.88	High
4. My job satisfaction is higher because of my manager's encouragement.	3.62	0.89	High

The overall results were high, showing managerial appreciation is an important component of job satisfaction. Respondents believed that a good work environment was closely linked to good managers, not just good pay; the score for this item was very high. This means that managerial behavior has a major impact on the work environment—whether it is comfortable or unpleasant.

Table 6 shows Pearson's correlation coefficients among the various forms of managerial appreciation that were studied and job satisfaction.

Table 6:
Pearson's Correlation Coefficients

Variables	Correlations			
	Job Satisfaction	Expression	Recognition	Promotion
Job Satisfaction	1.00			
Expressions of Thanks	.607**	1.00		
Recognition	.635**	.581**	1.00	
Promotion	.589**	.615**	.821**	1.00

* Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson's correlation results indicated strong and statistically significant

relationships ($p < 0.01$) between expressions of thanks (0.607), recognition (0.635), and promotion (0.589); the overall correlation between managerial appreciation and job satisfaction was 0.688. Recognition had the highest score, emphasizing its importance in increasing employee job satisfaction. The strongest correlation among the three sub-factors was between recognition and promotion (0.821), indicating that promoting employees may be an especially important form of recognition that has a very important impact. Expressions of thanks had lower scores, possibly because they are seen as common practices. Employees highly value recognition and promotion for their contributions, suggesting the need for meaningful acknowledgment in workplaces.

Table 7 shows the results of multiple regression among the various forms of managerial appreciation, with job satisfaction as the dependent variable.

Table 7:
Multiple Regression Results

Variables	Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Expression of Thanks	0.607**			
Recognition		0.635**		
Promotion and Rewards			0.589**	
Overall Appreciation				0.688**
R	0.607	0.635	0.589	0.638
R Square	0.368	0.404	0.347	0.473
F	103.843**	120.552**	94.451***	159.741**

** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

All three forms of managerial appreciation studied—expressions of thanks, recognition, and promotion/rewards—displayed statistically significant relationships with employee job satisfaction, explaining 68.8% of the total variation. The study's main hypothesis, that manager appreciation impacts on employees' job satisfaction in Laotian organizations, was supported at the 0.01 level, as were all three sub-hypotheses. Both correlation and regression showed a 99% confidence level, indicating that employee job satisfaction is highly dependent on managerial appreciation, regardless of the work environment.

While employees highly value managerial recognition and support, they perceived a lack of adequate encouragement and praise. The findings supported the

hypothesis that managerial appreciation significantly affects employee job satisfaction in Laotian organizations. Recognition, expressions of thanks, and promotion/rewards play pivotal roles in fostering a positive work environment and enhancing employee morale.

DISCUSSION

This study elucidates the pivotal role that managerial appreciation can play in increasing employee job satisfaction in Laotian organizations. Exploring how various forms of appreciation such as expressions of thanks, recognition, and promotion/rewards influence job satisfaction, it highlights key factors that contribute to employee engagement and positive work environments. It emphasizes the tangible benefits of fostering regular appreciation practices, meaningful rewards, and a culture of recognition within workplaces. Furthermore, an emphasis on tailoring appreciation efforts to individual preferences reflects a nuanced understanding of employee needs, which supports professional growth and offers valuable insights to enhance employee engagement and retention. Ultimately, its findings underscore the transformative potential of proactive appreciation strategies in fostering a positive workplace environment that is conducive to employee well-being and productivity, shapes organizational dynamics, and drives organizational success.

The findings of this study are closely aligned with classical theories that highlight the importance of achievement and recognition in enhancing employee morale, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. For example, Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs theory suggested that appreciation helps to fulfill employees' higher-level psychological needs for esteem and self-actualization, thereby fostering their motivation and satisfaction at work.

Moreover, Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory posited that factors such as recognition, achievement, and advancement opportunities are motivators that contribute to job satisfaction, while the absence of these factors can lead to dissatisfaction. The results of this study corroborated Herzberg's theory by demonstrating a positive correlation between managerial appreciation and employee job satisfaction in the context of Laotian organizations.

Additionally, social exchange theory (Cook et al., 2013) underscores the

reciprocal nature of relationships between employees and organizations, wherein employees perceive appreciation and recognition as indicators of commitment to their well-being and development. These findings support this perspective by highlighting the significant impact of managerial appreciation on employee perceptions of organizational support.

Furthermore, the transactional model of leadership (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987) emphasizes the importance of contingent rewards like promotions and recognition in motivating employees and enhancing their job satisfaction. This study's results corroborate this model by demonstrating a positive association between promotion opportunities, recognition programs, and employee satisfaction in Laotian organizations.

Overall, the findings of this study provide empirical evidence of the relationship between managerial appreciation and employee job satisfaction in Laotian organizations. The synthesis of these findings with existing theoretical frameworks enhances our understanding of the mechanisms through which appreciation influences employee attitudes and behaviors, and underscores the importance of cultivating a culture of appreciation and recognition within organizations to promote employee well-being, retention, and organizational success.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how managerial appreciation impacted job satisfaction of salaried employees in Laotian organizations. Its findings highlight the importance of regular appreciation practices, such as expressing thanks, recognition, and meaningful rewards in enhancing employee morale and motivation. By devising proactive strategies to affirm employee contributions, firms can promote employee emotional well-being and create a positive work environment that leads to improved commitment, productivity, and retention.

Managerial appreciation significantly impacts job satisfaction, and support for professional growth through training fosters employee engagement and commitment. Tailoring appreciation efforts to individual preferences and needs creates a supportive culture that leads to increased job satisfaction, retention of talented individuals, and achievement of organizational goals.

Recommendations

Appreciation is essential for all, especially in the workplace. Managers should regularly show gratitude through verbal recognition, thank-you notes, or public acknowledgments. They should also provide meaningful benefits and rewards and benefits like health insurance and bonuses. Supporting employees' professional growth with training programs and clear career paths is also crucial. Creating a culture of continuous improvement fosters engagement and satisfaction. Tailoring appreciation efforts to individual preferences is key, and these practices will lead to higher job satisfaction and retention.

Employees should not solely rely on their employers to provide appreciation and training. Instead, they should proactively seek opportunities for self-improvement and skill improvement to excel within the organization by taking initiative and striving to bring out their best. In this way, employees demonstrate a commitment to personal and professional growth, which ultimately benefits both themselves and their organizations.

Study limitations

The study's data was collected in only two provinces in Laos, with a sample size of 180 respondents that did not fully represent the diversity found throughout the country. These factors may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions of Laos or other countries with different cultural and economic contexts. While the sample size was sufficient for certain analyses, it was not large enough to allow examination of specific subgroups or sectors.

Despite these limitations, the study contributes valuable insights into the relationships between managerial appreciation and employee job satisfaction in Laos. It may be viewed as a foundational study, and further investigations may build upon it to better inform managerial practices aimed at enhancing employee well-being and organizational commitment.

Directions for future research

Future research studies could draw upon employees from a broader range of organizations and locations. This study focused on salaried employees, many of whom

enjoy relatively good working conditions. However, focusing on other types of firms such as factories, which employ low-skilled workers who receive minimum wages, might reveal different results than those in this study. Future studies could also compare results among different types of organizations to see if the impact of managerial appreciation on job satisfaction differs from one sector to another. Further research in this area is warranted to explore additional factors influencing employee job satisfaction and to validate the findings in different cultural contexts.

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Author contributions

Khamkhong Thipavong: Principal investigator, research study concept, data collection, drafting manuscript

Noah Balraj: Research study advisor, research study design, critical revision of literature review

Wayne Hamra: Research study co-advisor, research instrument design, interpretation of data, critical revision of manuscript

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest associated with this study.

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