Relationship between Employees' Cultural Background and Work Motivation (According to McClelland's Need Theory of Motivation)

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Abstract--The study aimed to determine the relationship between employee cultural background and their work motivation based on McClelland's Need Motivation Theory. The participants were selected from three different cultural backgrounds included Asian, Middle Eastern and Western. The questionnaires was provided to the participants which based on McClelland's Need Motivation theory. The data was analysed with SPSS program and implemented one-way and ANOVA testing. The result found Asian participants had high achievement motivation as compared to Western participants but not as compared to Middle Eastern participants, who showed to have high achievement motivation as compared to their two other counterparts rather than having high affiliation motivation. Interestingly enough, Western participants showed to have high affiliation motivation as compared to their other two counterparts rather than having high power motivation. Another interesting discovery made was the similarities in results between the Asian and Middle Eastern participants, as well as the concept of Power Distance being a possible explanation to the high affiliation score Western participants.

Keywords--Culture; cultural background; motivation; work motivation

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapidly expanding global economy has led to an increasingly international workforce worldwide, People are working in different countries, geographic locations, and living within cultures that differ from the ones they originated from. An increasingly global, international workforce has posed many challenges for human resource management. Among these challenges is organizations' attempt at understanding their employees' work motivations.

Work motivation is correlated to the service quality delivery by improve workers' performance towards personal and cooperation goals [1]. Work motivation is impacted by an employee's work-life balance [2]. The organization have motivated their employee for achieving organization goals since motivating factors causes the employee to perform well and more committed [3].The motivated and committed employees with high job involvement levels are considered as important assets to an organization [4,11]. Reward management system is practice in the organization for goal achievement which consists extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. Financial rewards such as salary and bonus and non-financial rewards such as recognition, security, title, promotion, appreciation, praise, flexible working hours, workplace comfortable, feedback and social rights [5].

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In addition, motivation is defined as the psychological process that determines the direction, intensity and persistence of goal-orientated actions. Work motivation also defined simply as the employee's inherent enthusiasm and drive to accomplish work-related activities. Motivations is an internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need and achieve certain goals [6].

Another definition of work motivation is the internal and external drives that initiate work-related action, determine the form of action, the intensity of the action, and the duration of the action. Furthermore, many studies found the factors that determine public sector employee's motivation are different from private sector employee's motivation which private sector employees considered high salary but public sector employees preferred promotion and job security [7].

The cross-cultural adaption also important in job performance which determined by degree of ease and/ or difficulty that employee faces in their personal life and at work [8]. Cultural differences also can affect team members' behaviour in the cross-cultural projects [9,12]. In addition, employees from different cultural background have different understandings and perceptions on management, perspectives and behaviours [10].

The increment in the employee cultural diversity, thus important to begin understanding how employees' cultural backgrounds could have an influence on their work motivation. The important that organizational heads have a better understanding of this idea in order to harness the full potential of their employees, regardless of their cultural background, and increase work level quality. There are a number of theories that have discussed the idea of motivation, from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to McClelland's Need Theory of Motivation. Therefore, a number theorists and psychologists have considered the existence of the numerous levels of motivation.

McClelland's theory has found support by a number of researchers that have used it in their studies, especially with the need for achievement. For example, the entrepreneurs are typically higher in the need for achievement category than managers. The autonomous and challenging demands that are met by entrepreneurs are valued as a method satisfying this need. Besides, the achievement, affiliation and power needs are important to indicate the level of organizational commitment and the level of job involvement. People with a strong need for achievement demonstrated higher levels of work performance and are more goal-oriented. Although average and above-average employees show a similar needs profile, it has been shown that those with a higher need for achievement are the same employees with higher organizational commitment and higher job involvement. McClelland's theory is believed to be more useful than Maslow's Need theory and Alderfer's ERG theorydue to the fact that McClelland's theory is significantly supported by empirical evidence than Maslow's or Alderfer's. McClelland believed that needs were not innate, but rather learnt at a young age and could be reinforced in individuals which has lead McClelland has developed training programs for managers in order to increase their need for achievement. The strength of McClelland's theory 14 is that it allows managers to understand and deal with different types of employees by being able to put employees in different types of jobs according to the type of motivation that best relates to them, thus increasing work quality and employee satisfaction.

However, one of the major weaknesses in McClelland's theory is that serves very little purpose in public sectors. Although this theory is useful in the sense that it identifies the type of motivation public sector employees

are driven by, it creates difficulty for superiors to assign challenging tasks and create competitive work environments for public sector employees. McClelland's theory has been extensively used in management, leadership, and cross-cultural studies that look into motivation in this study. McClelland's theory is used in identifying the different types of motivation according to their cultural background. The study aimed to determine the relationship between employee cultural background and their work motivation.

II. METHODOLOGY

The participants were chosen from different cultural backgrounds and job levels using a convenient sampling technique. The sample sizes were 78 participants from Asian, Western and Middle Eastern background. The participants' job positions ranged from entry-level employees to Vice presidents. There were 56 Middle Eastern participants and selected from local population. Meanwhile, 11 participants were Western and Asian and selected from total population of their respective countries. The reason behind choosing participants from different countries and not solely rely on the participation of expatriates because cultural background. There was important to eliminate the possibility of the current cultural environment that expatriates having any influence on any ideas or beliefs stemming from their cultural background.

The motivational questionnaire is known Motivational Needs Questionnaire was used for data collection. This questionnaire was developed by the 4-H Youth Development program and was used as a training tool for volunteers. The reason for choosing this specific questionnaire because the format of the questions and the answer analysis was depending on McClelland's needs motivation theory. The questionnaire consisted 11 questions which each question was composed 3 statement which participants are instructed to choose one best statement from each question. Each statement in every questions was designed as a scale measure the level of achievement, affiliation and power in the participants.

The procedure in this study consisted of sending out the questionnaire to different organizations in 3 different countries: Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and The United Kingdom. The main method of distribution used in this study was online databases such as Google Documents. The data was analysed used SPSS program and descriptive statistics used was one-way ANOVA to determine the relationship between the variables.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Result

In Table 1, the achievement mean for Middle Eastern participants were 4.94 while affiliation mean was 2.83. For Asian cultural background, achievement mean was 4.90 and power mean was 3.18. The affiliation mean was 3.83 and power mean was 3.45 for Western cultural background.

Table 1: Mean of study group [N=78]

Cultural	Mean of motivations for each group	

backgrounds	Achievement	Affiliation	Power
Middle Eastern	4.94	2.83	3.21
Asian	4.90	2.81	3.18
Western	3.63	3.83	3.45

The motivation mean also represented in Figure 1 which Middle Eastern cultural background had scored highest mean in achievement and affiliation with 4.94 and 4.90. Meanwhile, Asian cultural background had lowest mean in achievement and affiliation among three cultural background with 2.83 and 2.81. The Western cultural background had scored highest mean in power with 3.45.
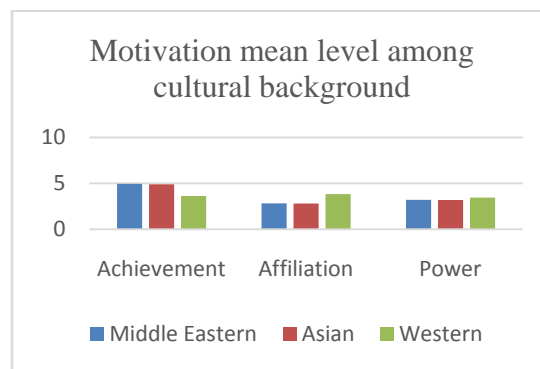
Figure 1: Motivational mean level among cultural background.

In Table 2, mean of achievement for Middle Eastern was 4.9464, Asian cultural background had mean of 4.9091 and Western cultural background had mean of 3.6364. Meanwhile, standard deviation for achievement, Middle Eastern cultural background had 1.65606 and Western cultural background had 1.74773. Asian cultural background had standard deviation of 1.37510. For affiliation, Middle Eastern cultural background had standard deviation of 1.56991 and Asian cultural background had standard deviation of 1.16775. Western cultural background had standard deviation of 1.92117.

For power, Middle Eastern cultural background had standard deviation of 1.42337 and Asian cultural background had standard deviation of 1.53741. Meanwhile, Western cultural background had standard deviation of 1.50756.

Table 2: Statistical result for cultural background groups [N=78]

Variables	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard Error
Achievement Middle Eastern	56	4.9464	1.65606	0.22130
Asian	11	4.9091	1.37510	0.41461
Western	11	3.6364	1.74773	0.52696
Total	78	4.7564	1.67631	0.18981

Affiliation				
Middle Eastern	56	2.8393	1.56991	0.20979
Asian	11	2.8182	1.16775	0.35209
Western	11	3.9091	1.92117	0.57926
Total	78	2.9872	1.59946	0.18110
Power				
Middle Eastern	56	3.2143	1.42337	0.20979
Asian	11	3.1818	1.53741	0.35209
Western	11	3.4545	1.50756	0.57926
Total	78	3.2436	1.43415	0.18110

In Table 3, sum of squares for achievement between groups was 16.078 and within groups were 200.294. Mean square for achievement motivation between groups was 8.039 and within groups was 2.671. In addition, achievement motivation had significant of 0.055.

For affiliation, the sum of squares between groups was 10.888 and within groups was 186. 099. Mean square between groups was 5.444 and within groups was 2.481. Meanwhile, the significant for affiliation motivation was 0.119.

Meanwhile power motivation between groups was 0.580 and within groups was 157.792. Mean square between groups was 0.290 and within groups was 2.104. The significant for power motivation was 0.872.

Table 3: ANOVA result for cultural background groups [N=78]

Variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Achievement					
Between groups	16.078	2	8.039	3.010	0.055
Within groups	200.294	75	2.671		
Total	216.372	77			
Affiliation					
Between groups	10.888	2	5.444	2.194	0.119
Within groups	186.099	75	2.481		
Total	196.987	77			
Power					
Between groups	0.580	2	0.290	0.138	0.872
Within groups	157.792	75	2.104		
Total	158.372	77			

b. Discussion

The sample being used in this study were employees of three different cultural backgrounds, Middle Eastern, Asian and Western. The first Our first hypothesis was proven false due to the fact that the Middle Eastern participants scored higher in achievement than the Asian participants. Albeit on a very negligible level, with a 0.4 difference as shown in Table 1 and figure1.

Meanwhile, second hypothesis which was employees with Western cultural background are likely to have high power motivation as compared to their Middle Eastern and Asian counterparts, this hypothesis has been proven true as shown in Table 1. Interestingly the data has shown that western participants are more significantly motivated by affiliation than the other two types of motivation, specifically, there was 0.38 difference between the affiliation motive and the power motive. Therefore, possible argue that even though one might live in an individualistic society, this does not mean that the main drive for motivation individualistic priorities such as power, but there is a possibility of being motivated by affiliation. For third hypothesis, employees with Middle Eastern cultural background are more likely to have high affiliation motivation as compared to their Western and 23 Asian counterparts, this hypothesis has been proven false as shown in the data. There was difference between achievement motivation and affiliation motivation with Middle Eastern participants is 2.11, which would be considered as a considerable difference. The most interesting finding is the close similarities between the Middle Eastern and the Asian culture. The possible reason behind the close resemblance between both cultures could be some shared values and ideas such as collectivism, having a high sense of wanting to achieve and putting emphasis on excelling.

Interestingly, the closest level of similarity for both cultures is in the achievement motivation. This could be drawn back to the fact that there is a significant amount of Asian employees working in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, assumed that the presence of having said Asian employees at different job levels. For the western participants despite being scoring somewhat higher in power motivation as compared to the Middle Eastern and Asian participants, the Western had scored higher in the affiliation motivation as compared to other two groups of participants. One of the reasons Western participants scored higher in affiliation than their Middle Eastern and Asian counterparts could be due to the concept of Power Distance.

Power distance can be defined as the extent of subordinates accepting the level of inequality between them and their superiors, and the extent to which they accept and obey the commands of 24 their superiors. The concept of power has its strong presence within culture and is affected greatly by situational factors. High power distance cultures often have subordinates that expected to take blame if anything goes wrong, superiors openly display their rank, superior and subordinate relationship is not very close, presence of hierarchal work environment, social divisions are accepted. Meanwhile, low power distance cultures included frequently blame between superiors and subordinates, subordinates are assigned important tasks, subordinate and superior relationships are close and society tends to be more equals.

The cultures that have high power distance are the same where social divisions are accepted and cultures that have low poet distance are the ones where the society is more equal. Based on significant data that can be found among the three groups is in the achievement category. This result meant only group that has results that could

possibly be true in terms of motivation among the three 25 groups and not due to any extraneous reasons is the achievement motivation among the three cultural backgrounds.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Asian participants had high achievement motivation as compared to Western participants but not as compared to Middle Eastern participants, who showed to have high achievement motivation as compared to their two other counterparts rather than having high affiliation motivation. Interestingly enough, Western participants showed to have high affiliation motivation as compared to their other two counterparts rather than having high power motivation. Another interesting discovery made was the similarities in results between the Asian and Middle Eastern participants, as well as the concept of Power Distance being a possible explanation to the high affiliation score Western participants showed.

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