

Employee Motivation in Elderly Care Social Enterprises in Macau

Jenny O. L. Phillips* and UnKei Mui

University of Saint Joseph, Faculty of Business and Law, Macau SAR, China
Email: jenny.phillips@usj.edu.mo (J.O.L.P.); 201900089@usj.edu.mo (U.M.)

*Corresponding author

Abstract—The ageing population in Macau has led to a growing demand for elderly care services. However, the lack of human resources in elderly care services has created an important social issue. Social enterprises have been used to tackle this issue in other places, but little is known about their role in Macau. Therefore, this research explores motivational factors that drive employees to work in social enterprises that provide elderly care services as a start to understand the dynamics in elderly care social enterprises. The study focuses on the only non-profit organisation in Macau that runs social enterprises providing elderly care services. The research used qualitative methods, conducting in-depth interviews with employees in the subject organisation's three elderly care service social enterprises. The study found six factors that affect employee motivation in social enterprises providing elderly care services in Macau: involvement in decision-making, harmonious and supportive team relationships, interesting and challenging work, job security, appreciation, and helping people. The study recommends further research to explore employee motivation in different social enterprises in Macau and to develop surveys for quantitative research. Overall, this research provides insight into the motivations of social enterprise employees in elderly care services, of which there is a lack of research.

Keywords—social enterprises, employee motivation, elderly care service

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the financial crisis affected the global economy causing a global economic recession which affected different industries. Therefore, many countries and cities started encouraging the development of social enterprises, including Macau. In 2009, the Macau government launched the “Social Enterprise” program in response to the impact of the global financial crisis on Macau's economic and societal development (Macau Monthly, October, 2019). The Macau government has proposed many policies, such as funding plans to encourage social organisations or other organisations to develop social enterprises to help vulnerable groups and create employment. However, the concept of social enterprise was still at an early development stage and was a new concept to Macau (Lou, 2009). After over ten years, social enterprise is still in its initial stage in Macau. While the

development of social enterprises started almost simultaneously in Macau as in places in neighbouring areas, they have already progressed far in places such as Hong Kong and Taiwan. Macau's social enterprises still need further support and development (Macau Month, November, 2019). And further studies of social entrepreneurship in Macau are needed, given the lack of published work on social enterprises in Macau.

In Macau, social enterprises do not have a standard definition. They are generally understood as enterprises with the purpose of solving social problems, not purely for profit. Regardless of how they are defined, compared to other NGOs, the basic characteristic of social enterprises focuses on the source of the working capital. At least half of the income comes from business transactions rather than government subsidies or donations to be called a social enterprise (Business Intelligence).

Non-profit organisations and non-profit charity organisations run all the social enterprises in Macau. This study focuses on one of these non-profit organisations. Our subject organisation focus on creating employment opportunity and helping disadvantaged groups, providing training for disabled people, providing products for children, and providing services for people with mobility difficulties and the elderly (Business Intelligence, n.d.). There are approximately 30 organisations that provide different types of elderly care services in Macau, most of which are non-profit charity organisations. Only three of them are social enterprises, and the subject organisation of this study establishes all three.

Generally, services for the elderly in Macau include community care services, home-based support, and elderly residential care services (Caritas Macau). Several organisations are providing different kinds of care services for the elderly. However, demand for such services continues to grow due to the ageing of the population, and employees for such organisations are in shortage due to the special skills required. Therefore, Macau is facing a lack of human resources, not just in elderly care services but in the health industry (Cheong & Hsu, 2021). Thus, there is a need to explore the employee motivation of social enterprise workers providing elderly care services to attract highly professional workers to work in these social enterprises.

Although social entrepreneurship research has been growing over the years, there is little research on employee motivation in social enterprises. Research on elderly service care social enterprises is almost nonexistent. Therefore, this research focuses on the only organisation in Macau running elderly care service social enterprises and aim to understand what motivates employees to work in these social enterprises in Macau. This research tackles the question: What factors motivate employees to work in social enterprises that deliver elderly care services?

The research objective of this study is to identify the key factors that motivate employees to work in social enterprises and stay in their organisations. The findings from this research can serve as a starting point in exploring motivation factors for employees working in elderly care social enterprises. This study can also help leaders of our subject organisation better understand how to motivate their employees and assist them in setting strategies that create a motivating environment for their team members. Moreover, this research provides insight for social entrepreneurs attempting to create social enterprises that tackle the ageing population issue, especially in providing elderly care services.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This session provides a brief definition of social enterprises. Then we provide a general overview of research on employee motivation, specifically on the motivation of social enterprise workers, focusing on identifying factors affecting motivation to be used as a conceptual basis for guiding our in-depth interview research.

A. Defining Social Enterprises

The concept of social entrepreneurship only began to be explored by researchers at the end of the last century. However, the phenomenon started with enterprises like SEKEM, now one of the world's most famous social enterprises, founded in 1977. Only at the end of the 1990s did scholars start to define the concept of social entrepreneurship. The early definition identifies social entrepreneurs as change agents in the social sector who create and sustain social value through entrepreneurship (innovation, pursuing opportunities, utilising limited resources) to achieve a sustainable outcome (Dees, 1998).

Several approaches are used to understand the various models of social enterprise. Some considered social enterprise as a private organisation, while some authors defined social enterprise as a not-for-profit organisation (Defourny & Nyssens, 2008; Galera & Borzaga, 2009; Teasdale, 2012). Chell (2007) suggested that there are two models of social enterprise, one with pro-social motives to operate the business dependent on philanthropy, donation, and grant aid. Another social enterprise model is a hybrid in which the enterprise supports non-profit-making activities through for-profit activities (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006). Given the dual mission of social enterprises (social and economic), social enterprises are considered hybrid organisations operating at the intersection of the non-profit and for-profit sectors (Doherty & Haugh, 2014;

Roumpi *et al.*, 2020). The social enterprise conducts economic activities to provide products or services to generate profit to reinvest into the social part of the organisation (Galera & Borzaga, 2009; Huang, 2019; Lou, 2009) rather than maximise profit for shareholders or owners (Chell, 2007).

B. Employee Motivation

Motivated employees are important as they pertain to the survival of an organisation, and motivated employees are believed to be more productive (Lindner, 1998) and lead to better organisational performance (Nohria *et al.*, 2008). It drives employees to achieve the organisation's goals and reflects the energy, commitment, and creativity employees bring to their jobs (Shahzadi *et al.*, 2014). Employees' motivation has long been considered a crucial factor for the long-term success of organisations (Kovach, 1995).

Employees are motivated by a combination of different factors, which can be intrinsic or extrinsic (Çinar *et al.*, 2011). Intrinsic motivation is a behaviour driven by employees' feelings and self-determination, engaging in activities for their purposes, interest, pleasure, and satisfaction. Competence or self-efficacy can motivate employees, as it is a judgment of an individual's ability to organise and implement actions required for performance (Lin, 2007). Factors like recognition, trust, empowerment, autonomy, and interesting work can influence it (Nyambegera & Gicheru, 2016). Intrinsic motivation, especially recognition and autonomy, increases job satisfaction and employee enthusiasm (Moodley & Hove, 2018). Interesting work is also a key element that motivates employees and enhances job satisfaction (Mizuuchi, 2012). Overall, intrinsic motivation is crucial in motivating employees and increasing job satisfaction.

External rewards drive extrinsic motivation and can inspire employees to perform well to achieve a goal or avoid punishment (Hearn, 2018). Examples of extrinsic motivators include financial rewards such as bonuses, salary increases, promotions, good working conditions, and employee management relationships (Nyambegera & Gicheru, 2016). According to studies by Hunjet *et al.* (2016) and Kabir & Parvin (2011), extrinsic factors such as advancement opportunities, job security, and good relationships with superiors and colleagues (Hunjet *et al.*, 2016) and money (Kabir & Paryin, 2011) have a positive impact on employee motivation and job satisfaction. Extrinsic motivators can increase employee satisfaction and improve work performance. Kendra (2021) explains that extrinsic motivators focus on external rewards and can encourage employees to perform actions that they might not find interesting. Overall, extrinsic motivation is important in motivating employees to perform well and increase job satisfaction.

Several researchers have identified key extrinsic or intrinsic factors that enhance employee job satisfaction. Extrinsic factors such as job security, salary, (Lindner, 1998; Kovach, 1995) working conditions (Lindner, 1998; Kovach, 1995; Ramlall, 2004), and fairness in the workplace (Ramlall, 2004; Nohria *et al.*, 2008) are considered important motivations in some research.

However, these hygiene factors can also be sources of dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1964). Whereas the work itself (Herzberg, 1964) that is challenging and interesting is an important motivating factor (Lindner, 1998; Kovach, 1995; Ramlall, 2004), and in some cases having interesting work is considered the most important motivating factor for employees (Kovach, 1995). Employees' satisfaction towards their job is also highly motivated by other intrinsic factors, such as the feeling of being given responsibilities and being recognised and appreciated for their achievements (Lindner, 1998; Kovach, 1995; Ramlall, 2004; Herzberg, 1964). There is also a strong motivation among employees to work for a company with a cooperative, friendly, and caring culture (Lindner, 1998; Nohria *et al.*, 2008; Kovach, 1995). Additionally, employees seek advancement and promotion opportunities (Lindner, 1998) to advance in their careers. As a result, advancement (Herzberg, 1964) has long played an important role in various research studies as an imperative motivation factor.

C. The Motivation of Social Enterprise Workers

Social enterprises must motivate their employees, particularly in the elderly care industry, where low job satisfaction and high staff turnover rates are common issues (Weiste *et al.*, 2023). It is well established that economic values play a significant role in the employment relationship. However, social values also play a critical role in motivating workers in social enterprises (Nguyen *et al.*, 2020). As well as intrinsic motivation, such as value alignment (Doherty *et al.*, 2014), non-monetary incentives, such as flexible work arrangements and rewards for values aligned with the company's values, can also motivate employees (Roumpi *et al.*, 2020). In most cases, the motivation for working in social enterprises is pro-social rather than purely intrinsic (Brolis & Angel, 2015).

Huang (2019) identified five factors influencing employee motivation in a study on Chinese social enterprise. The primary motivators were a positive relationship with colleagues and the organisation and a desire to contribute to society. The security of employment, the work's interest and challenge, and the employee's satisfaction and happiness were also motivating factors. Specifically, Garingal-Go and Hechanova (2018) found that social enterprise workers value socially beneficial work. They are motivated by intrinsic needs such as growing and developing within the organisation, building their networks, and feeling equal at work.

Aside from the intrinsic factors of values alignment, relationships, and pro-social factors such as societal contribution, extrinsic factors such as promotion opportunities, good working environment, salary, equality at work, participation, and flexible work can also motivate employees to work in social enterprises (Qin & Song, 2014). However, extrinsic motivation was less of a motivator for workers in social enterprises than intrinsic factors.

In a study of Greek cooperatives, four factors affect employee motivation in the social economy sector: social usefulness, autonomy, democracy, and commitment to values. According to the researchers, money was not the

primary motivator (Sdrali *et al.*, 2016). In comparison, job autonomy and opportunities for personal development (Casini *et al.*, 2018), social missions and meaningful work (Sun *et al.*, 2019) contribute more to motivating employees to join and stay working in social enterprises.

There is very little research on employee motivation within social enterprises; amongst these, research focusing on social enterprises providing elderly care services is almost nonexistent as far as academic research is concerned. Additionally, previous literature suggests a more comprehensive understanding of what motivates employees to work in social enterprises is needed (Brolis & Angel, 2015), particularly in different countries and cultural contexts (Caringal-Go & Hechanova, 2018). It emphasises the need to employ qualitative research techniques, such as in-depth interviews (Sdrali *et al.*, 2016), to gain insights and achieve a more in-depth understanding of the factors that affect employee motivation in social enterprises. The present study aims to address this gap in knowledge by exploring the factors that influence employee motivation in elderly care services social enterprises. As such, this study can be considered the first attempt to provide an overview of employee motivation in social enterprises in Macau and contribute to filling a knowledge gap.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative method to answer the question, "What factors motivate employees to work in social enterprises that deliver elderly care services?" The qualitative method is chosen because we intend to explore those factors based on people's thoughts, beliefs, feelings and motivations from social enterprise employees that deliver elderly care services. This method can generate more descriptive data and give us a more in-depth understanding of people's thoughts and perceptions. Using in-depth interviews can explore those employees' thoughts, give more detail, and provide more information than other data collection methods such as surveys. And through in-depth interviews, we can collect in-depth and more accurate data from the employees we interview (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

In this study, we used in-depth interviews to collect qualitative data. We applied purposive sampling to gain perspectives from employees working in social enterprises under a non-profit charity organisation delivering elderly care services. A total of six participants were approached through contacts from the researcher. After identifying the participants that all agreed to participate in the research, we arranged for those six participants to conduct interviews based on semi-structured open-ended questions to get their insights that could contribute to answering our research question. The duration of each in-depth interview was about 45 minutes to 1 hour each. And all of the interviews were conducted in Cantonese, recorded and transcribed in Chinese for further analysis. The results of the analysis were translated into English for this research paper.

This research aims to find motivational factors in social enterprises that provide elderly care services. Therefore, in

order to have a better insight into the motivation of employees to deliver elderly care service, the target participants were professionals who directly approach and deliver services to the elderly in the subject elderly homes. Since our participants work in social enterprises under the same organisation and are in a specific group, we have contacted the Development Supervisor of the organisation for assistance in providing access to our target participants. Finally, through the supervisor's, arrangements were made, and invitations were sent via our contact to their employees who work in our target social enterprises. A total of six participants, two participants with different positions from each of the three target social enterprises, agreed to be interviewed for our data collection.

The Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) method of data analysis was used. Thematic content analysis is a method to analyse qualitative data, which normally applies to a set of texts, such as the interview transcripts collected from interviews (Anderson, 2007). Each transcript was read carefully and coded. Then we gathered similar codes together into different themes. We then repeatedly read those data to determine if some non-relevant data needed to be discarded. All six transcripts were analysed to identify distinct codes and groups and regroup into those categories under different themes. After a few days, all the categories were reread to ensure those themes satisfied this study (Anderson, 2007). Themes were created firstly based on the motivational factors identified from the literature review. The transcripts were then reviewed to identify further themes that may not have been identified in previous research.

All participants knew the research topic, the purpose of the interview and the interview questions before the interview. And all participants voluntarily agreed to answer the question with no pressure. During the interview, the interviewer first gave the participants a brief overview of the research topic and the duration of the interview and informed them that the interview would be recorded. The participants were also informed they had the right to cancel the interview. To protect the participants' privacy, participants were assured that all information would be presented anonymously and used only for this research.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After analysing the data, we found that all of our participants identified themselves as social enterprise workers, strengthening the identity of the three elderly care home as social enterprises. Moreover, we found six factors that motivate the participants to work in an elderly care social enterprise common across the six interview participants. They are involvement, harmonious and supportive team relationships, interesting and challenging work, job security, appreciation and helping people.

A. Involvement Leads to a Sense of Being Valued and Enhances Trust

All the participants talked about how they valued involvement in their organisation's operation. They shared their experiences in the decision-making process, discussed issues with management, and had chances to

pursue their ideas. Overall, there is a clear indication that employees feel pride and valued when involved in planning and decision-making on matters concerning their organisations. For example, participant B stated:

"We would discuss our future direction or plans for this organisation in the coming one or two years by meeting or through some social media to discuss. I think our management is willing to take our ideas seriously even though there were many ideas."

And he added that:

"If anyone asks me, I am glad to tell them I am working under [this organisation] and feel proud about that."

Participant E shared a similar experience:

"We would discuss and plan how to do our work through meetings, and if our management had some thoughts, they would share them with me, and if I have any ideas, I can also talk with them."

The participants are involved in their organisation's operation in these two cases. From their narrations, they have positive work attitudes, are willing to share their thoughts and have shown initiative to their management because they think they are one of the team members. They want their work to be better and smoother because they trust their organisations, which gives them chances to share their thoughts.

Their organisations also encourage their employees to involve in the organisation's operation, discussing and give them chances to make the decision on their own, which lets employees feel valued and proud working in their organisations that take their thoughts seriously. As one participant puts it:

"I feel valued by this organisation [...] If there is an activity I am in charge of organising, I would plan and figure out how to complete it. And I felt like I am one of the team members in this organisation."

Therefore, involving employees in planning and decision-making makes them feel valued and enhances their trust in their organisation, which is important for employee motivation in social enterprises.

B. Harmonious and Supportive Team Relationship

All six participants indicated that their working environment in this organisation with their superiors and colleagues is harmonious and acknowledged that having a good relationship with each other in their team is important for their work. They shared their feelings about working in their organisation and their relationship. Overall, there is a clear indication that their working environment is harmonious. For example, participant D mentioned:

"When doing my work, other colleagues would ask if I needed help and care about me. My superior would ask some personal thing of mine and care about me. Working with them, I felt low pressure and do not have many conflicts."

Participant A shared a similar feeling:

"I think the working environment is good, and we have a good relationship with other elderly care homes, and assist and help each other."

These two participants also expressed that their work environment greatly lowers working pressure in elderly care services. Their colleagues care for each other, enjoy

open communication, and are supportive and willing to listen to each other. They do not have many conflicts, which creates a healthy relationship, so no one thinks they are isolated from others, which shows that they enjoy a good relationship.

Moreover, our participants felt happy to work with their superiors and colleagues. For example, participant C stated: *"I feel like every day we are happy. We like to have open communication with each other and tell jokes."*

This is resonance by participant E, who commented that: *"I feel happy every day because we like to have open communication with each other. We are harmonious when we work together and have a good relationship."*

These two participants said they felt happy and wanted to communicate openly with their superiors and colleagues. In this situation, we can see that they work in an environment with low pressure and harmony. They were willing to understand each other, created a good relationship, and increased their satisfaction with working at their organisations.

Our participants also indicated and mentioned that they felt a strong team spirit in the organisation. For example, participant E stated:

"We have strong team spirit. If the elderly need someone to care for them, we will work together to take good care of them and work as a team."

And participant F stated:

"There are many things I need to finish daily, and other colleagues would assist me. Each of us has our role and together can run the elderly care home's regular operation. I think the team spirit is strong."

The harmonious environment these employees share contributes to more open communication, allowing them to create strong team relationships. The strong sense of team was echoed in Participants C and B's comments:

Participant C: *"If many people work together, it feels like we complete a job such as good friends to work together."*

Participant B: *"I enjoy charging forward with my colleagues, even facing a big challenge. We would overcome it together and really like that feeling."*

Participant B further shared how strong their teamwork is when working with his superiors and colleagues:

"Each of us is like a gearwheel. We can run the machine smoothly when linked and work together."

We can see the strength of the team's relationship from sharing our six interview participants who work in different positions and at different levels in the organisation. Yet, they all feel the harmonious, caring, and helpful environment they work in. They agreed that it leads to strong teamwork where they feel special connections with superiors and colleagues. Our participants expressed that they feel like they are working with good friends and families, such as the relationship between mother and son and brother and sister. The harmonious and supportive environment has enhanced a deeper relationship between the team members.

C. Interesting and Challenging Work

The six interview participants all agreed that the work in their organisation is interesting and sometimes

challenging. And this has contributed to their enjoyment of working in their elderly care service social enterprise. According to Participant D:

"The interesting part of my work is about the reactions of the elderly. When interacting with the elderly, they have different reactions; some would interest me. The challenging part of my work is the emotions of the elderly, and some elderly may have dementia. They have their emotions and may have an emotional problem, need to deal with it, and find a way to solve it."

Participant E also claimed that:

"The interesting part of my work is about the elderly reaction or our conversations when interacting with them. The challenging part of my work is using limited resources to organise an activity like preparing props."

All of our participants felt their daily work is interesting and challenging. They describe their feelings about their work as positive, and they mention that the work they have to handle is fresh and every day is different. Most of them felt their work is interesting because of the elderly's reactions. The elderly would have different responses to facing different people, different situations, and different moods every day. This also created challenges in their daily interactions with the elderly. However, they expressed they could handle the challenges by applying their knowledge and skill in different situations and activities.

The daily challenges our interview participants face make their work non-repetitive, and they will not feel bored at work. In fact, they all expressed the pleasure they gain from the daily challenges and made their job an interesting one that they enjoy working in their organisation.

D. Job Security

Job security is an important motivating factor for the interviewees to work in their organisation. This job security they sensed stemmed from their trust in this organisation. They were not afraid they would be laid off and had absolute confidence in the organisation. Overall, all participants indicated that they feel secure working in their organisation. For example, participant C stated:

"I am not worried about being layoff. I feel secure in this organisation, and I know that this organisation will not lay me off unless I make a severe mistake. Work here is very secure, and many colleagues have already worked in this organisation for many years."

Participant E shared a similar perspective:

"I do not feel afraid I will be a layoff. I feel secure in this organisation and will not layoff from this organisation unless I make a severe mistake. For example, receive red packets and presents, hit the elderly. I feel low pressure to work in this organisation, and no matter how well you have done, you still have chances to get laid off in another organisation."

These two participants trust in their organisation's reputation and believe they can continually work at their organisation for many years without a doubt. One of our participants stated he was willing to earn a lower salary for stable employment:

“I work in this organisation because I think working in this organisation is stable. That is why I work here. It is not because of salary. I will not consider if I am offered a salary payment of 20% to 30% more to change my job.”

According to the interviewees of this research, job security has been one of the important elements they choose to stay in their organisation. They consider their employers the most secure organisation in the same industry, so they never think of changing jobs.

E. Being Appreciated

Most participants expressed that they feel motivated by the appreciation they received from their organisation and the elderly they served. Three of our participants felt their roles in the organisation were important. The appreciation they received from their supervisors and the elderly ‘client’ they served made them feel needed and their capability recognised. Participant F shared that:

“The most important thing is the appreciation of the elderly because they are the service users. I need a word of appreciation from them. I felt like I was doing it correctly, so the service users’ appreciation is more important and an affirmation.”

This participant felt someone needs him. He played an important role in helping others deal with special situations. Someone recognised his ability, believed his competency could handle it, made him feel he had a good performance, and felt good about being recognised.

Four of our participants felt the organisation appreciated them. For example, participant A stated:

“In the same position, I consider as young management. So I think I am valued. I believe I can have a certain appreciation in this position and am valued and appreciated.”

And participant D stated:

“I am in charge of operations about this organisation, communication and cooperation. That is why I think I am quite valued.”

Our participants feel that the appreciation they received from superiors and ‘clients’ showed they were valued, giving them a sense of achievement, thus increasing their work satisfaction. As our participants mentioned before, they feel happy when their management shows appreciation towards their work, and this is one of the reasons to keep them stay in their organisation

F. Value of Helping People

Employees at the elderly service care social enterprise also voiced that they are motivated in their jobs as they can help people by working in this organisation. They want to provide better services or experiences for the elderly and make the elderly feel happy. Being able to help others makes our participants feel happy and fulfilled working in their organisations. Our participants indicated they feel positive about helping people, not limited to the elderly. For example, participant A mentioned:

“I work at this organisation because I think I can help people. And this is my priority, the goal of this organisation also is the same direction, and I feel great.”

And participant B mentioned:

“I am happy to work at this organisation because I can truly help people. And I think my work in this organisation is very meaningful. That is why I feel happy.”

Our participants think they can help people through their organisations that aim to help people. Their organisations provide them with chances to help people and realise their dreams. Not only help the elderly, even their colleagues, the family of the elderly and others. As long as others need help, they will try their best to help. One of our participants mentioned that when they have some activities outside their organisations if people need help, those people will find them for help because people’s perception toward their organisations is that they are willing to help people.

Furthermore, they claimed that helping people is important, improving the quality of service to help the elderly and making the elderly happy are what make the participants themselves happy too, and feel satisfied with their work. One of our participants shared that their plan for the future year is to think about using limited resources to maximise the effort for the elderly and indicated that the feeling of helping people is great. The feeling of helping people can cause happiness and increase their satisfaction with their work.

G. Discussion of the Findings

A total of six motivating factors have been identified for employees working in elderly care service social enterprises in Macau. Our result also shows that factors such as salary, advancement opportunity, rewards, equality in the workplace, job autonomy, personal development, and network building (Carinal-Go & Hechanova, 2018; Qin & Song, 2014; Casini *et al.*, 2018) found in some previous literature in social enterprise employee motivation research do not motivate the social enterprise workers in Macau. Factors such as flexible work arrangements and rewards (Roumpi *et al.*, 2020) also did not stand up in our case. In fact, the situation in the elderly care service social enterprises in Macau is more in line with the research of Doherty *et al.* (2014) that emphasises value alignment, in our case, the value of helping people. And Huang’s (2019) research on Chinese social enterprise, especially in the primary motivating factor of relationships with colleagues and organisation, job security, and interesting and challenging work, also resonates with our research.

In many organisations, the salary can motivate employees to stay and keep enthusiasm in their work, but not in our subject organisations. Salary is not a motivation to our participants. Most of our participants thought their salary was medium. Even some of them thought their salary was quite low compared to the industry average in similar organisations. However, they do not plan to look for higher-salary jobs. As expressed by one of our participants:

“I think salary is unimportant for me choosing to work at this organisation. I will consider other factors, such as being appreciated.”

Another participant also shared that:

“I think my salary is quite low compared to the industry average. I choose to work in this organisation because I

believe this organisation is stable, not because of the salary."

Other participants also claimed that salary is not important for them to find a job. They would consider other conditions such as the vibes of the working environment, stable career, appreciation and happiness. Even though the salary is unimportant for them, it is still an essential element. They consider salary as something that helps them fulfil their basic needs and is not a factor motivating them to work in their organisations.

Advancement opportunities also did not motivate our participants, and most think they do not have advancement opportunities in this organisation. For example, one of our participants mentioned:

"I do not think there is an advancement opportunity, and I do not think there is a chance to develop my skill in this organisation. The job content is the same, and I believe there is no space for advancement."

Another participant shared a similar feeling:

"I would not think about advancement opportunity, and even I think it is hard to say if there is advancement opportunity."

One of our participants mentioned that the organisation's structure is flat. There are only activities coordinators, social workers, therapists or some professional employees, and the director of the elderly care home, from the bottom to the top. The organisation does not have many advancement opportunities for employees if no one is leaving. Some of our participants think they do not care about advancement. They claimed that they do not have ambition and that it is unimportant. They would prefer to stay in the same position rather than advance, as the greater the responsibility, the greater the stress.

Rewards can motivate employees and fulfil employees' needs and satisfaction, but our participants were not motivated by rewards. Our participants stated that the organisation did not have any rewards system. For example, one of our participants mentioned:

"We did not have any rewards in this organisation, no matter our performance, and I do not need any rewards."

Our participants have a neutral attitude towards the motivation of rewards. They think that it would be great if there is any reward such as bonuses and extra leave, no matter financial or non-financial rewards, they would be happy to have it, even a meal. But they understand their organisations are social enterprises, and the profits their organisation earned are needed to sustain their social goals, so they would not expect any extra rewards. Furthermore, our participants stated that even if they did not have any rewards, they would try their best to do their work well, as their motivation did not come from getting rewards.

Our interviewees did not specifically comment much on factors found as motivating factors in social enterprises from previous research, such as equality in the workplace, social impact, job autonomy, and a good working environment. Therefore, those factors were not considered key motivators for elderly care service social enterprise employees in Macau.

Our research indicated that the key motivating factors for workers in elderly care service social enterprises are:

involvement in decision-making and planning, harmonious and supportive team relationship, interesting and challenging work, being appreciated by superiors and clients they serve, and the value of helping people.

V. CONCLUSION

In Macau, the demand for elderly care services is increasing due to the ageing problem. Meanwhile, the healthcare industry is facing a lack of human resources, the demand for healthcare employees is growing, and there is much competition to hire this type of employee. Moreover, social enterprises are not familiar to people in Macau. Thus, it is important to understand how to motivate employees to work in social enterprises.

Many factors affect employee motivation, and everyone has different desires to motivate them to work. Whether in traditional enterprises or social enterprises, there are different factors to motivate their employees to stay. This research fills a gap which explores the motivational factors for employees working in social enterprises to deliver elderly care services in Macau.

This research identified six key factors that motivate employees of elderly care social enterprises, similar to previous research on employee motivation but specific to our study context. We also found that a harmonious and supportive team relationship and the value of helping people are key factors affecting employee motivation of social enterprises that is unique in Macau.

This research provides insight for social entrepreneurs attempting to create social enterprises to deliver elderly care services in Macau by providing an overview of what motivates employees to work in these social enterprises.

This research has limitations. First, our study is limited to three specific social enterprises under one non-profit organisation and may not represent all of the social enterprises in Macau. Second, we focus on only one particular sector, elderly care services, and the result may not be able to be generalised for social enterprises in different sectors. Third, the small sample may suit the purpose of an in-depth study but may not be able to generalise for workers in other social enterprises.

Therefore, we have some suggestions for future research based on the limitations. First, extend the research of employee motivation of social enterprises in Macau to other social enterprise sectors. Second, use this research to design and conduct quantitative research to reach a bigger sample for generalisation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Both authors contributed equally to the research design and analysis. Mui conducted the field research and initial data analysis; Phillips revised the analysis, extracted the findings from the data and wrote the paper; all authors had approved the final version.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, R. 2007. Thematic Content Analysis (TCA). *Descriptive presentation of qualitative data*, 1–4. Available: <http://rosemarieanderson.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/ThematicContentAnalysis.pdf>
- Business Intelligence*. n.d. Social enterprise “without sponsor”. Business Intelligence Monthly Magazine. Available: <http://www.bizintelligenceonline.com/content/view/1102/lang>
- Boyce, C. & Neale, P. 2006. *Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input* (vol. 2). Watertown, MA: Pathfinder International.
- Brolis, O., and Angel, V. 2015. Workers’ motivations and managerial practices in not-for-profit social enterprises. In *5th EMES Conferences Selected Papers Series (ECSP)*.
- Caringal-Go, J. F. & Hechanova, M. R. M. 2018. Motivational needs and intent to stay of social enterprise workers. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 9(3): 200–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2018.1468352>
- Caritas Macau**. n.d. Services for the Elderly. from <https://www.caritas.org.mo/en/services-for-elderly>
- Casini, A., Bensliman, R., Callorda Fossati, E., Degavre, F., & Mahieu, C. 2018. Is social innovation fostering satisfaction and well-being at work? Insights from employment in social enterprises providing long-term eldercare services. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Non-profit Organizations*, 29: 1244–1260. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-0001-3>
- Chell, E. 2007. Social enterprise and entrepreneurship: Towards a convergent theory of the entrepreneurial process. *International Small Business Journal*, 25(1): 5–26. Available: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0266242607071779>
- Çınar, O., Bektaş, Ç., & Aslan, I. 2011. A motivation study on the effectiveness of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. *Economics & Management*, 16(5): 690–695.
- Cheong P. L, and Hsu, N. 2021. Developing and Evaluating a Continuous Education Program for Healthcare Assistants in Macao: A Cluster-Randomised Trial. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 18(9):4990. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18094990>.
- Dees, J. G. 1998. *The meaning of “social entrepreneurship”*. Available: https://web.mit.edu/sloan2/dese/readings/week01/Dees_TheMeaningofSocialEntrepreneurship.pdf
- Defourny, J., and Nyssens, M. 2008. Social enterprise in Europe: Recent trends and developments. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 4(3):202–228. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17508610810922703>
- Doherty, B., Haugh, H., and Lyon, F. 2014. Social enterprises as hybrid organisations: A review and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 16(4): 417–436. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12028>
- Galera, G., and Borzaga, C. 2009. Social enterprise: An international overview of its conceptual evolution and legal implementation. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 5(3): 210–228. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17508610911004313>
- Hearn, S. 2018. Understanding intrinsic and extrinsic employee motivation. *Recruiter.com*. Available: <https://www.recruiter.com/i/understanding-intrinsic-and-extrinsic-employee-motivation/>
- Herzberg, F. 1964. The Motivation-Hygiene Concept and Problems of Manpower. *Personnel Administration*, 27: 3–7.
- Huang, L. 2019. The work motivations of employee in social enterprises: An experience from China. *DEStech Transactions on Economics Business and Management*.
- Hunjet, A., Petak, D., and Kozina, G. (2016). Employee motivation in public administration. *Economic and Social Development: Book of Proceedings*, 40–52.
- Kabir, M. N., and Parvin, M. M. (2011). Factors affecting employee job satisfaction of pharmaceutical sector. *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 1(9): 113–123.
- Kendra, C. 2021. What is extrinsic motivation? In verywellmind.com. (updated October 22, 2022). Available: <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-extrinsic-motivation-2795164>
- Kovach, K. A. 1995. Employee motivation: Addressing a crucial factor in your organisation’s performance. *Employment Relations Today*, 22(2): 93–107. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ert.3910220209>
- Lin, H. F. 2007. Effects of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on employee knowledge sharing intentions. *Journal of Information Science*, 33(2): 135–149. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165551506068174>
- Lindner, J. R. 1998. Understanding employee motivation. *Journal of Extension*, 36:3, 1–8. Available: <https://archives.joe.org/joe/1998june/rb3.php>
- Lou, S. H. 2009. The concept, practice and development strategy of social enterprises. *Administration*, 83(22:1): 5–16. Available: https://www.safp.gov.mo/safptc/download/WCM_003405
- Macau Monthly**. 2019. Using other countries’ experience to promote social enterprise. October: 7–8. Available: <https://www.fx361.com/page/2019/1111/5989232.shtml>
- Macau Monthly**. 2019. Exploring the development of social enterprises in Macau. November. Available: <http://macaumonthly.net/yuekan/biandu/2019-10-23/253416.html>
- Moodley, S., & Hove, G. 2018. The factors affecting employee motivation and its impact on organisational performance at an engineering supplies company in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal. *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 7(4):55–65.
- Mizuuchi, Y. 2012. *Employee Work Motivation in Japanese Fitness Clubs*. Doctoral dissertation, Arkansas State University.
- Nohria, N., Groysberg, B., and Lee, L. 2008. Employee motivation: A powerful new model. *Harvard Business Review*. 86:7/8, 78. Available: <https://cdn.freelance.ru/download/289113/Employee+Motivation+2008.pdf>
- Nguyen, Q. T., Lee, M. Y. and Hu, Y. C. 2020. An employee-oriented perspective in the value-creating mission of social enterprises. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 16(1):1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SEJ-07-2019-0048>
- Nyamabegera, S. M., and Gicheru, C. N. 2016. Extrinsic and intrinsic factors influencing employee motivation: Lessons from AMREF Health Africa in Kenya. *International Journal of Business and Social Research*, 6(9): 20–31.
- Qin, W., and Song, Z. 2014. Work Motivation in Social Enterprises: A Study in Gävle Sweden. University of Gävle. Access from: <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?dsid=5251&pid=diva2%3A729317>
- Ramlall, S. A. 2004. A review of employee motivation theories and their implications for employee retention within organisations. *Journal of American Academy of Business*, 5(1/2): 52–63.
- Roumpi, D., Magrizos, S., & Nicolopoulou, K. 2020. Virtuous circle: Human capital and human resource management in social enterprises. *Human Resource Management*, 59(5): 401–421. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22002>

- Sdrali, D., Goussia-Rizou, M., Giannouli, P., & Makris, K. 2016. What motivates employees to engage in the social economy sector? A case study of Greek cooperative enterprises. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 43(12): 1334–1350. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSE-10-2014-0212>
- Shahzadi, I., Javed, A., Pirzada, S. S., Nasreen, S., and Khanam, F. 2014. Impact of employee motivation on employee performance. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(23):159–166. <https://core.ac.uk/reader/234625730>
- Sun, J., Lee, J. W., & Sohn, Y. W. 2019. Work context and turnover intention in social enterprises: The mediating role of meaning of work. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 34(1): 46–60. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-11-2017-0412>
- Teasdale, S. 2012. What's in a name? Making sense of social enterprise discourses. *Public Policy and Administration*, 27(2): 99–119. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0952076711401466>
- Weerawardena, J., and Mort, G. S. 2006. Investigating social entrepreneurship: A multidimensional model. *Journal of World Business*, 41(1): 21–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2005.09.001>
- Weiste, E., Paavolainen, M., Olin, N., Korhakangas, E., Saari, E., Koivisto, T., and Laitinen, J. 2023. Elderly care practitioners' perceptions of moral distress in the work development discussions. *Healthcare*, 11(3):291. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11030291>

Copyright © 2024 by the authors. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License ([CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)), which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided that the article is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.