

## *“Bakit Ka Kumakayod?”* Developing a Filipino Needs Theory of Motivation

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This study utilized a mixed method sequential exploratory strategy in investigating the needs of the Filipino working population and the relationship between these needs and employee engagement. In the first phase, workers were interviewed to determine the needs that motivate them. In the second phase, a survey with 302 workers elicited four types of needs: job-related, career-related, organization-related, and family-related. Among these, family is a novel addition to the extant theories of work motivation in the West. The importance and presence of these four factors were all significantly correlated with employee engagement. Three models were tested to describe the importance and presence of needs as predictors of employee engagement. The best fitting model was the presence of needs as predictors of engagement. Among the needs, it was those related to the job that predicted employee engagement.

*Keywords:* motivation, engagement, Filipinos, workers

Advances in technology and the breaking down of world economic barriers have led to the greater mobility of workers and organizations. Given the growth of Asia as a market and the relative financial stability in the region, more multinational organizations are entering Asian markets. At the same time, businesses from “Rising Tiger” economies in Asia are invading industries previously dominated by Western multinational companies. All these changes

have increased competition, especially within Asia, where markets, foreign investments, and manpower are all being rigorously sought after (Asher & Nandy, 2006).

Although advances in information and communication technology and the sciences fuel the age of globalization, at the foundation of all these is the human person. Today, companies seek to differentiate themselves from the competition by providing superior human systems quality and added value in their products and services (Khan, 2005; Meister, 1994). Because the quality of human resources is a critical factor that can determine whether or not an organization will succeed, organizations are hard pressed to find ways to keep their employees motivated.

Motivation is defined as “the psychological forces that determine the direction of a person’s level of effort, as well as a person’s persistence in the face of obstacles” (Lockwood, 2010, p. 1). Motivation provides a goal that the employee works towards, thereby giving the employee a direction to follow.

There are various theories that describe what motivates workers as well as the process by which motivation occurs. However, these theories were developed using a Western perspective and in developed economies; and there is increasing evidence that theories may not be completely applicable across all cultures (Hofstede, 1980). This study seeks to make a contribution to extant literature by developing a theory on motivational needs of workers in a collectivist and Asian context such as the Philippines.

### **Needs Theories of Motivation**

Several theories on motivation have been developed throughout the years. A Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) white paper lists the following theories of motivation as the most influential in generating understanding on the concept of motivation within the workplace: Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory, and McClelland’s needs for achievement, affiliation, and power, to name a few (Lockwood, 2010). These theories can be categorized into those that describe the process of motivation and what needs motivate people.

Needs theories assume that motivation is based on employee needs and the extent to which these needs are achieved. A seminal theory of motivation is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) that enumerates several stages of a person's needs: basic, safety, belonging, esteem needs, and self-actualization. This theory also suggests that human beings are able to move on to the next level in the hierarchy only after the lower need has been met (Maslow, 1943). Despite its popularity, the theory has been criticized because of its lack of empirical support. According to a review of Wahba and Bridwell (1976), there is a lack of strong evidence to support the propositions of the theory on deprivation domination. Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies that sought to validate the gratification/activation proposition of Maslow also had limited support (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976).

Another motivation theory that describes needs is Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory. Herzberg distinguished factors that motivate (motivators) from factors that dissatisfy (hygiene). He proposed that intrinsic factors that invoke positive feelings about work, such as achievement and recognition, are those that motivate performance. Hygiene factors, on the other hand, involve extrinsic factors related to the job such as compensation benefits, interpersonal relationships, company policies, and the like (Herzberg, 1966, as cited in Teck-Hong & Waheed, 2011). According to Herzberg, hygiene factors lead to dissatisfaction but their presence does not necessarily lead to better performance.

Like Maslow, Herzberg's theory has also received its share of criticism. Several studies found that some factors such as salary, rewards, and benefits are both motivators and hygiene factors (Teck-Hong & Waheed, 2011). Three major criticisms on the motivator-hygiene theory are: (a) the use of semi-structured interviews that may have resulted in inconsistent conclusions, (b) the differences between sources for job satisfaction and dissatisfaction may have stemmed from "defensive processes within the respondent" (p. 361), and (c) there was no attempt to measure the overall job satisfaction of the respondents (Brenner, Carmack, & Weinstein, 1971). There was also evidence that hygiene factors are not the only determinants of dissatisfaction (Brenner et al., 1971).

David McClelland's theory on achievement motivation (1961) focuses on three basic drivers that motivate individuals: achievement, affiliation, and power that are inter-related. McClelland (1961) explained that individuals develop the need for achievement as a result of their desire to excel in their field and actualize their purpose. The need to achieve escalates the need to become more (Yamaguchi, 2003). The hunger for influence drives an individual to seek avenues to attain a higher status through affiliation. Affiliations may result in stronger power influences that may enable greater achievement (Robbins, 2003). Thus, the interplay of these three drivers contributes to motivate individuals to establish themselves alongside others in the competitive world.

### **The Role of Culture**

These seminal theories on motivation were all developed in the West. However, Hofstede suggested that the characteristics of each culture have an effect on the usefulness of the theories (Hofstede, 1980). Studies have established the distinction of Western from Eastern culture with the earlier being more individualistic as compared to the latter being more collectivistic (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Markus and Kitayama (1991) described collectivist culture as more interdependent as opposed to individualistic cultures that are more independent. People in collectivist cultures focus more on social norms and peer evaluations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In a research conducted by Pitrik and Lennard (2010), people from a culture with a high regard for interpersonal relationships would always work towards performing a specific behavior for the benefit of another individual. Finally, Ebeling and Gustafsson's (2012) study on the effects of collectivistic and individualistic cultures on people's aspirations found evidence of the role of culture in determining people's motivations and outlook on achievement.

### **Philippine Culture**

In order to develop a theory of needs for Filipino workers, it is imperative to understand this phenomenon from the perspective

of Philippine culture. *Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Sikopil)* provides researchers with an avenue to comprehend the behavior of participants while being considerate of the people's norms, values, beliefs, and tradition (PePua, 2006). *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, developed by Virgilio Enriquez, advocates building knowledge that is nuanced by Philippine culture, beliefs, traditions, and consciousness (PePua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

One of the most significant aspects of *Sikopil* is the importance given to *kapwa*. Although it has no direct translation in English, it is loosely translated as concern for the other and/or the person one shares all things with (PePua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). The importance of *kapwa* in the Filipino psyche not only guides the Filipino into maintaining homeostatic relationships, but also makes them act out of genuine care for the other. Harmony in interpersonal relationships and caring for the other are top priorities in the Filipino psyche. This notion is formally referred to as *pakikipagkapwatao*, which is strongly associated with the collective identity of the Filipino people and need for social acceptance (Selmer & De Leon, 2001).

The manner in which Filipinos behave is based on a set of core values that all fall under *pakikipagkapwatao*. *Hiya* (shame) is a value that guides socially acceptable and socially unacceptable behavior. *Utang-na-loob* (debt of gratitude) gives value to mutual reciprocity. *Pakikisama* (conformity to group) brings about a sense of togetherness and cohesiveness in a given group similar to that found in a tightly-knit community (Selmer & De Leon, 2001).

The value for *pakikipagkapwatao* influences social relationships and group identity of Filipinos. Jocano (2001) suggested that for Filipinos, the influential groups are typically family, kin, and *barkada* (peers). Family, which consists of the father, mother, and unmarried children, is described as the most secure group that the Filipino worker can turn to for support, especially in times of need (Jocano, 2001). Kin, made up of close or distant relatives, the second most important group, provides support when the family cannot do so (Jocano, 2001). The third group is the *barkada*, a collection of peers that serves as another support group outside of the family. Establishing the *barkada* is a way for the Filipino worker to gain social approval and acceptance (Jocano, 2001). In addition to these groups, Filipino workers value

the quality of relationship with co-workers and the sense of belonging to an organization (Pangan, Hechanova, Franco, Mercado, & Lopez, 2008).

### **Filipino Research on Motivation**

Although there are no local theories on Filipino motivation, there is a growing body of research in the Philippine workplace on motivation. A study by Hechanova, Uy, and Presbitero Jr. (2005) described the average Filipino worker as someone who values job security, good pay, and opportunities for growth when choosing a prospective employer. The authors suggested that the importance of job security may be explained by the trend towards downsizing in companies. The importance of good pay reflects the economic situation and the need for majority of workers to make ends meet. However, beyond job security and good pay, Filipinos also value opportunities for growth. Aside from describing what Filipino workers look for when selecting organizations, the study also examined what is important for Filipino workers. The study found that family and interpersonal relationships are two of the most important elements in the lives of the Filipino worker (Hechanova et al., 2005).

A number of studies suggest that despite the incidence of poverty in the Philippines, intrinsic factors remain more important than extrinsic factors. Franco (2008) found that challenge to ability, learning and growth, and enjoyment, respectively, ranked as the top three most valued intrinsic outcomes. However, the scores for external outcomes like career advancement and money to support the family did not fall far from the scores of the intrinsic outcomes on importance.

Another study on what motivates the Filipino worker reported that majority of the workers are actually driven by intrinsic motivators rather than extrinsic motivators (Yao, Franco, & Hechanova, 2005). This means that for Filipino workers, intangible rewards such as self-satisfaction, autonomy, and recognition weigh more than tangible rewards. However, this does not mean that extrinsic rewards could be forgone altogether. The authors suggested the need to combine both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Yao et al., 2005). Furthermore, money is actually the number one extrinsic motivator for Filipino

workers as they use their salaries to provide for themselves and their families. Another interesting finding was that giving gifts to the family take precedence over expenditures for the self. The fact that Filipino workers choose to spend on their families before themselves show how important the family is for Filipinos (Yao et al., 2005).

### **Employee Engagement**

One outcome that has been linked to motivation is employee engagement (De Lange, Van Yperen, Van der Heijden, & Bal, 2010). This is defined as “the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work, and how long they stay as a result of that commitment” (Lockwood, 2007, p. 2).

Employee engagement is associated with increased productivity. Lockwood (2007) found that committed employees perform 20% better and this translates to better customer relations as employees have a more optimistic view of their work leading to superior customer service.

Engagement is also linked to a decrease in job turnover. Lockwood (2007) reported that engaged employees are 87% less likely to leave the organization. Organizations are better able to hold onto the talent that they have invested so much time, money, and energy on when these employees are committed to them. This lessens the likelihood of employees leaving an organization to join the competition (Lockwood, 2007).

Employee engagement is also associated with costs. For example, the beverage company of Molson Coors was able to save up to \$1,721,760 in 2002 due to the engaged employees whose average safety incident cost was only \$63, almost seven times less than that of a non-engaged employee whose average safety cost amounted to \$392 (Lockwood, 2007).

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study used needs theories as a starting point in seeking to determine what motivates Filipino workers. Employee engagement

was selected as an outcome variable to validate the motivational impact of these needs. In summary, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the needs of Filipino workers?
- 2) How are the importance and presence of these needs related to employee engagement?

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study used a sequential mixed-method exploratory strategy. The first phase focused on gathering qualitative data on the needs of Filipino workers. In this phase, the researchers conducted one-on-one interviews with male and female workers in Metro Manila in order to understand their motivational needs. After consolidating all of the findings from the interviews, the researchers constructed a questionnaire that measured the importance and presence of needs and employee engagement.

### **Phase 1**

*Participants.* To ensure good representation, the sample that was chosen was determined by two factors: socioeconomic status (SES) and age group. The participants were chosen based on a percentage of both these factors in an attempt to come up with a sample that is representative and consistent, in terms of distribution, of the whole working population. Workers were divided into seven different age groups (15-19, 20-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and 65 above) following the practice of the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics (BLES, 2010). For SES, they were divided into four groups based on income brackets: AB (PhP 30,001 and above), C (PhP 15,001-30,000), D (PhP 8,001-15,000), and E (Below PhP 8,000). These categories were based on a study conducted by Pulse Asia in an attempt to estimate the distribution of wealth in the Philippines (Africa, 2011).

The participants were chosen via quota sampling. Twenty participants were chosen to represent the various age groups and SES



brackets with a mean age of 31.7 years.

*Interview schedule.* During the first phase of data collection, the interviews focused on data that would elicit a list of factors that the participants regarded as their pool of motivators. Questions such as, “How do you feel about your job?”, “Describe to me how hard you work?”, “What do you aspire for?”, “What makes you want to do well at work?”, and “ \_\_\_ motivates me to work.”, were asked in order to discover what needs served as the motivators of Filipino workers. Questions were written in both English and Filipino. These interviews were conducted in the language preferred by the respondents.

*Data collection procedures.* The researchers first described the nature of the interview, the duration, and the procedure on how the interview would take place. The researchers explained that the participants’ identity would remain anonymous and the information acquired from the interview would remain confidential. Participants were then asked to sign a voluntary consent form giving the researchers permission to record the interview and use the information gathered during the interview for the purposes of their study.

*Data analysis procedures.* Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The goal of thematic analysis was to find the main, most encapsulating, and broadest underlying themes for motivation that encompassed all of the information gathered from the interviews. This methodology allows the description of particular phenomena, but also gives the researchers the opportunity to explain occurrences through analyzing patterns of behavior and themes that underlie these phenomena (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011).

The first step of data analysis involved the utilization of interviews in order to identify patterns of behavior, emerging ideas, and underlying themes (Aronson, 1994). This step was followed by finding data related to the themes, ideas, and patterns that were already initially identified in the first step in order to ensure more efficient data transcription and analysis (Guest et al., 2011). This was followed by the consolidation of related patterns into bigger themes that encompassed all the data (Aronson, 1994). In a study that aimed to explain a particular phenomenon, these themes served as imperative factors or variables within the generated theory (Guest et al., 2011). Lastly, it was imperative to build up a strong argument for the theory based on the

data interpretation and analysis done by the researchers, which was accomplished by the construction of a valid review of related literature (Aronson, 1994).

## **Phase 2**

*Participants.* The participants in this phase of data collection were 305 Filipino workers. These participants were chosen via nonrandom convenience sampling. The mean age of the participants in this phase was 34 years. There were slightly more males (52%) than females.

*Data collection instruments.* Based on the results of Phase One, the researchers constructed a survey questionnaire to determine the motivational needs of the Filipino workers. The first part of this survey asked participants to rank how important each need was and the extent to which it was present in their current job. The scale consisted of 22 items describing the various needs elicited from the interviews. Participants were asked, "To what extent does this motivate you to perform well?" using a 6-point Likert scale, with 6 being greatly important and 1 not at all important. To determine need attainment, participants were asked, "To what extent is this need met in your job?" Their responses likewise used a 6-point Likert scale with 6 as being greatly met and 1 as not met at all.

*Employee engagement (employee engagement as a function of vigor, dedication, and absorption while working).* It was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which consisted of 17 items, and participants were asked to indicate how often they felt this way (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The scale utilized a 7-point scale with 6 as everyday and 0 as never ( $\alpha = .91$ ).

*Data analysis procedures.* In order to describe the structure of motivational needs, the data on needs were subjected to exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation. Once these pools of motivating factors were generated, the reliability of the items within each factor was tested via Cronbach's alpha. Furthermore, the reliability of the second part of the questionnaire, UWES, which was used to measure employee engagement, was also tested.

The results of all the factors within each motivational factor and for engagement were averaged. Structural equation modeling (SEM)

was conducted to test the relationship between the motivating factors and employee engagement. Items measuring the variables were clustered and averaged to serve as indicators for the latent variables.

## **RESULTS**

### **Motivating Factors**

The interviews elicited 22 needs that serve as motivators of the Filipino workers. These were: compensation from job, recognition from employer, competition among workmates, sense of challenge/novelty/growth, sense of personal accomplishment, personal comfort, personal enjoyment/preference, compatibility with workmates, satisfaction received by clients, provide for familial needs, job fulfillment, responsibility to company, care/concern for coworkers, leaving a legacy, setting a good example for the younger generation, promotions/career growth, loyalty to employer, familiarity of the workplace, provide better future for family, provide education for family members, gain/acquire personal possessions, and provide education for oneself. Table 1 provides sample verbatim quotations for each need.

### **Needs of Filipino Workers**

The data were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis (PCA) and varimax rotation. From the initial 22 needs, one item (education for self) was dropped because of multiple loadings. Running PCA again with the remaining 21 items, four factors emerged after six iterations: job-related, organization-related, family-related, and career-related. Together, these four components explained 60% of the variance of needs. Table 2 provides a quantitative description of the factor and its loading coefficients. The internal reliability of these factors was computed and are also reflected in Table 2.

Table 1. Summary of Factors and Sample Texts taken from the interviews

Motivating Factor	Sample Texts
1. Compensation from job	“Because when you’re jobless, you’re income-less as well. I really put my career first. When there are appointments, I give it time. I really prioritize it.”
2. Recognition from Employer	“...to make my boss happy.”
3. Competition among workmates	“It’s really all about improvement of progression. And whenever you see that there’s something good coming out of your work and the work of your peers, it’s really rewarding to excel further.”
4. Sense of challenge/novelty/growth	“So it’s ever-shifting and I enjoy the fact that it’s always challenging from day to day. It doesn’t strike me as a routine to get to work... for me it’s all about growth...”
5. Sense of personal accomplishment	“I work for greatness... I love excelling and I’m good at it.”
6. Personal comfort	“You should learn to love your job because when this happens, it would not feel as much of a chore, rather, you enjoy it...”
7. Personal enjoyment/preference	“...it is a daunting task, to be honest, but enjoyable nonetheless...”
8. Compatibility with workmates	“It’s always nice to have companions and my colleagues here are very kind to me. Even when there’s a lot of work that needs to be done, I get happy because of the people there.”
9. Satisfaction received by clients	“I make sure that when I go home everyday, I give the client satisfaction.”
10. Provide for familial needs	“The only thing I aim for would probably be to have my children finish their education and provide for their needs, even though I can’t give them everything they need, at least I can still provide for some.”
11. Job fulfillment	“Challenging, fulfilling, difficult. As what I’ve mentioned, you can use all the adjectives with first letters starting from A to Z. There are happy times, but there are also times when I’m faced with tough clients that are very difficult to talk to so it becomes hard. But for the most part, the job really makes me feel good.”

(Table 1 continued)

Motivating Factor	Sample Texts
12. Responsibility to company	“I’m giving back what the community gave to us... I witnessed how our community has transformed. I just gave back what this community has given me.”
13. Care/concern for co-workers	“I work for those who belong to the scope of my constituents, the people who belong to the community, those are most important ones.”
14. Leaving a legacy	“I work for the betterment of the community and to share the technology we develop with the next generation.”
15. Setting a good example for the younger generation	“Of course, you need to think about your future. For you to become tough and strong. You need to think of the things you need for you to stand alone and be independent and not rely on other people because you yourself will be responsible for supporting your family. So you really have to be strong and independent for them for their future. I want to be an example to children and grandchildren as a laborer.”
16. Promotions/career growth	“So that I won’t get fired from work and also to promote my level here at school...”
17. Loyalty to employer	“It’s also difficult to find the right company that will really take care and look out for you.”
18. Familiarity of the workplace	“It’s stressful at times but at the same time, you master the process easily. It’s a complex process but I’ll give it six months, and you’ll master the process...”
19. Provide better future for family	“Of course it’s for my son. It’s for our future, for his future...”
20. Provide education for family members	“Because if I don’t work, she (daughter) won’t be able to pursue her education.”
21. Gain/acquire personal possessions	“...to be able to buy my own things...”
22. Provide education for oneself	“Of course, I want to be able to finish my education...”

Table 2. Principal Component Analysis Loadings of Motivational Needs

	Job Related	Organization Related	Family Related	Career Related
Eigenvalue	7.95	1.79	1.47	1.29
% Variance	37.85	8.54	6.99	6.13
Cronbach's Alpha	.85	.84	.82	.67
Sense of Accomplish- ment	.83			
Enjoyable Work	.73			
Personal	.63			
Job fulfillment	.61			
Challenge	.57			
Recognition	.56			.46
Client Satisfaction	.55			
Coworker relations	.52	.42		
Loyalty to company		.76		
Responsibility to company		.76		
Being a Role model to others		.74		
Concern from cowork- ers		.70		
Good Work environ- ment		.63		
Fulfilling Family Needs			.79	
Securing future for family			.79	
Education for family members		.42	.73	
Good Pay & Benefits			.58	
Competition				.75
Acquiring personal possessions				.57
Career growth				.56
Leaving a legacy		.42		.47

Note. Factor loadings < .4 are suppressed.

## Needs and Employee Engagement

Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics of the importance and presence of these motivational needs, the reliability coefficients of each factors, and the correlations between them. The factor family-related needs obtained the highest mean in importance. This was followed by job-related and organization-related needs. Interestingly, however, when asked about the extent these needs are being met, organization-related needs rated highest followed by job needs, family needs, and career needs.

All of the motivational factors were significantly correlated with each other and to employee engagement. Although both importance and presence were correlated with engagement, the extent to which the needs were present had higher correlations than the importance of needs.

## Importance and Presence of Needs as Predictors of Employee Engagement

SEM using maximum likelihood and robust methods was used to test the extent to which these needs predicted employee engagement of the Filipino working population. Three models were tested. The first model examined importance of needs, the second model tested the presence of needs, and the third model utilized the product of importance and presence of needs as predictors of employee engagement.

The fit indices for each model were computed to determine how well the model explains the data. According to McDonald and Ho (1991), in order for a model to adequately fit with the data, two of the following three fit indices must be met: the Satorra-Bentler chi square should not be significant, the comparative fit index should be greater than or equal to .90, and the root-square mean error of approximation should be below .08. In the case of Model 1, the goodness of fit indices was mixed. Robust CFI was .87 and Satorra-Bentler chi square was significant [ $X^2(142) = 300.67, p < .01$ ], although RMSEA was .07. Only the RMSEA was found to be indicative of an adequate fit.

Figure 1 shows the model with importance of needs as predictors of

Table 3. Correlation Between Importance of Motivational Needs

	M	SD	IJOB	IORG	IFAMILY	ICAREER	PJOB	PORG	PFAMILY	PCAREER
Income	2.63	.98								
Impt. Job	5.31	.63	(.85)							
Impt. Org	5.20	.72	.57**	(.84)						
Impt. Family	5.41	.76	.58**	.54**	(.82)					
Impt. Career	4.59	.87	.53**	.54**	.51**	(.67)				
Presence Job	4.73	.73	.44**	.34**	.23**	.33**	(.87)			
Presence Org	4.82	.71	.41**	.58**	.30**	.39**	.72**	(.83)		
Presence Family	4.64	.96	.28**	.38**	.40**	.36**	.64**	.59**	(.85)	
Presence Career	4.14	.97	.32**	.35**	.31**	.60**	.68**	.65**	.70**	(.75)
Engagement	4.86	.84	.32**	.48**	.24**	.32**	.61**	.56**	.46**	.47**

Note. Numbers in parenthesis are reliability coefficients.

\*\* $p < .01$ .



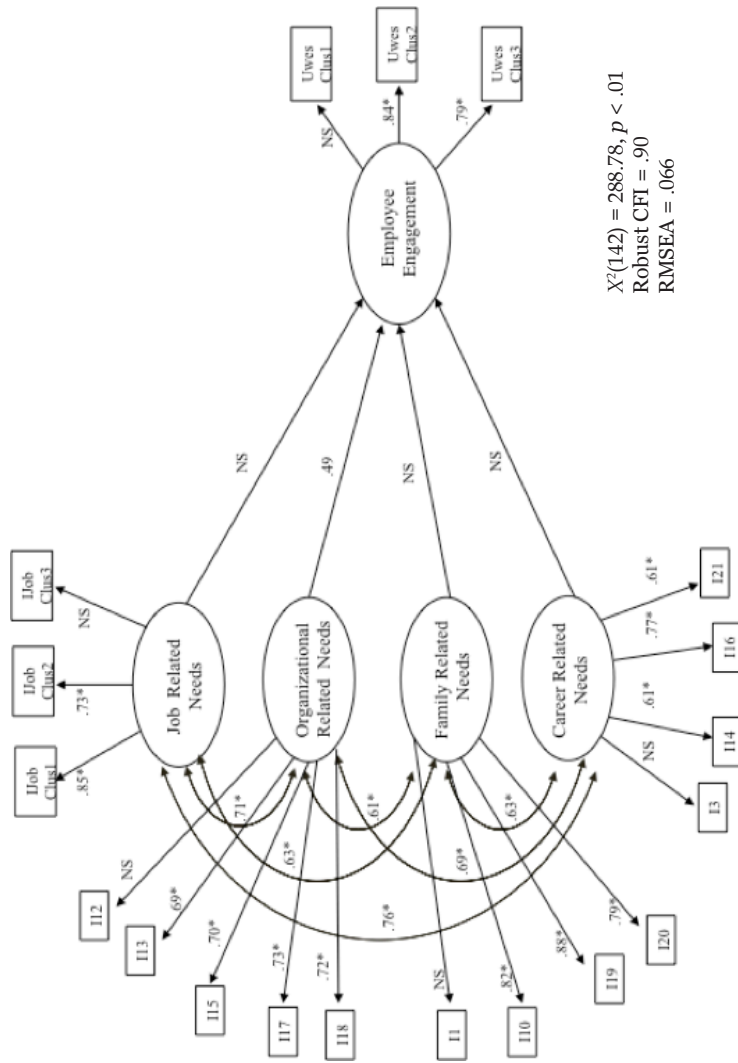


Figure 1. Standardized path estimates and goodness of fit indices for importance of motivational needs and employee engagement, \* $p < .05$ .

employee engagement. In this model, organization-related needs was a moderate predictor of employee engagement with a standardized path estimate of .49. This implies that the more important organization-related needs are, the greater the employee engagement. None of the other factors significantly predict employee engagement. Altogether, job-, organization-, family-, and career-related needs explain 21% of the variance in employee engagement.

The second model tested utilized presence of needs as predictors of engagement. In accordance with McDonald and Ho's (1991) goodness of fit benchmarks, this model fit well with the data. Despite the Satorra-Bentler chi square being significant [ $\chi^2(142) = 314.46, p < .01$ ], the CFI (Robust CFI = .91) and RMSEA (.07) had values that reflected goodness of fit indicating that the data and results of this model are generalizable to the population it measures. The model also shows that the presence of job-related needs is a strong positive predictor of employee engagement with a standardized path estimate of .68. This implies that the greater the presence of job-related needs, the greater the engagement of employees. The other factors did not significantly predict employee engagement although taken together, the factors job-, organization-, family-, and career-related needs explain 54% of the variance in employee engagement (see Figure 2).

The third model examined the product of importance and presence of needs as predictors of employee engagement. Goodness of fit indices revealed that this hypothesized model was an adequate fit with the data, thus, making it generalizable to the population. The comparative fit index (Robust CFI = .90), and the root-square mean error of approximation (RMSEA = .07) of this model were both found to be within the range of goodness of fit.

The results for this model show that of the four motivational factors, the importance and presence of organization-related needs significantly predict employee engagement with a weak positive standardized path estimate of .33. This shows that as the importance and presence of a Filipino worker's organization-related needs increases, so does their engagement. Taking all the needs together, the factors explain 42.7 % of the variance in employee engagement (see Figure 3).

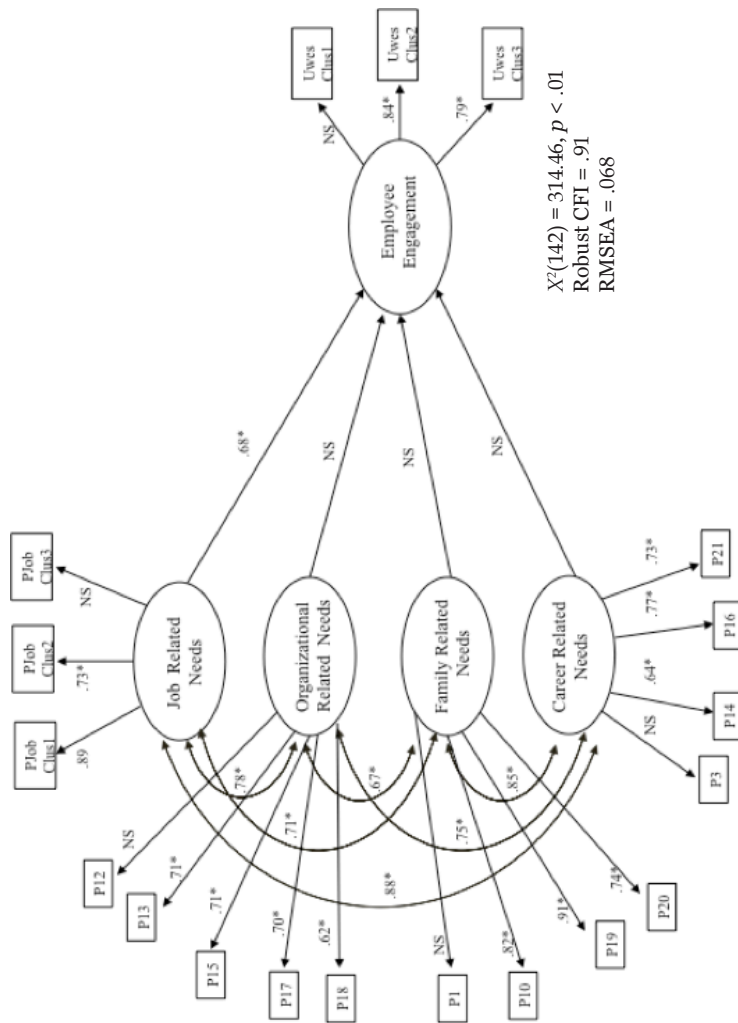


Figure 2. Standardized path estimates and goodness of fit indices for presence of motivational needs and employee engagement. \* $p < .05$ .

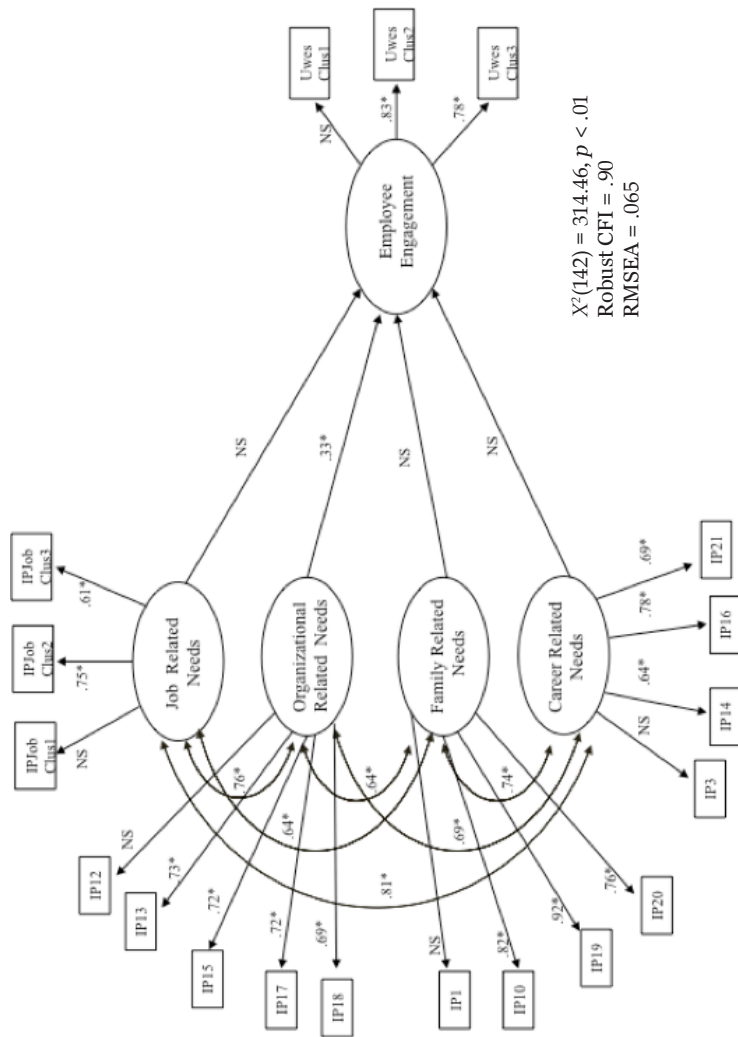


Figure 3. Standardized path estimates and goodness of fit indices for importance and presence of motivational needs and employee engagement, \* $p < .05$ .

## DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to discover what factors motivated Filipino workers. This was accomplished by asking a specific question – what are the needs of the Filipino worker? The researchers conceptualized this study in an attempt to build indigenous knowledge on motivation. The study elicited four motivating factors: job, organization belonging, career-, and family-related needs. Of these, job, career, and organization are factors found in Western theories.

The factor organization-related need is somewhat similar to the factor of affiliation in McClelland's motivational theory (1961) in terms of establishing interpersonal relationships within the work place. In addition, organization needs include employee's loyalty and sense of responsibility to the company or *malasakit*. This validates local studies that found that Filipino workers value the quality of relationship with co-workers and the sense of belonging to an organization (Pangan et al., 2008).

Job-related needs are somewhat related to those cited by Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory as a motivator. They are also similar to the factors identified by Hackman and Oldham's (1980) job characteristics model that suggest five characteristics that lead to greater employee motivation and satisfaction: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and job feedback. It reinforces previous findings that Filipino workers' intangible rewards such as self-satisfaction, autonomy, and recognition weigh more than tangible rewards (Yao et al., 2005).

An interesting finding is that the item relationship with coworkers loaded on both organization- and job-related needs. That it loaded slightly higher on job-related is interesting because it suggests that for Filipinos, coworker relations is an integral part of how they view their job. This validates previous findings that individuals from the Eastern hemisphere tend to be more collectivistic as compared to the individualistic Westerners (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Career-related needs are consistent with McClelland's theory on achievement, affiliation, and power (1961). Competing with one's peers, acquiring personal possession, experiencing career growth/promotions, and leaving a legacy all suggest the opportunity to be

recognized whether in material or nontangible ways. The results validate other local studies that highlight the importance of challenge to ability, learning and growth, and enjoyment (Franco, 2008).

One factor, family needs, appears to be an independent and unique factor compared to Western theories. Unlike Maslow's theory that conceptualized needs from an individual level, it appears that Filipino workers' needs are more other-oriented. This validates researches that individuals from the East tend to be more collectivistic as compared to the individualistic Westerners (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In line with the notion of family being the most influential group of the Filipino, the novel factor of family in this study shows that the family of Filipino workers not only influences their outlook and behavior within their kin and *barkada*, but also serves as a motivating factor within their workplace; thus, reinforcing previous studies that have shown the importance of family in the life of workers (Hechanova et al., 2005).

The results of the structural equation modeling show that the presence of job-related needs is a significant predictor of employee engagement. One possible explanation of this could be that these are the factors directly related to their role as workers.

The importance of organization-needs also predicts engagement. This finding may reflect the Filipino collectivist culture that emphasizes one's collective identity and need for social acceptance (Selmer & De Leon, 2001). In the case of Filipino workers, concern from coworkers, loyalty, and sense of responsibility to the company, and a good work environment are important for their engagement.

Although correlated with engagement, family and career needs were not significant predictors of engagement. However, it is possible that the other factors may influence other work or nonwork outcomes such as organizational citizenship behavior, or even life satisfaction. Another possible explanation is that job and organizational factors were rated high in both importance and presence. In contrast, although family-needs were rated as important, it received low ratings in terms of it being met. Career-related needs, on the other hand, were rated low on both importance and presence.

## **Implications**

The study aimed to contribute to theory by understanding needs of Filipino workers. The results suggest that employers need to recognize that Filipino workers have particular needs that should be addressed. The study revealed four types of needs: job-, organization-, family-, and career-related needs. Of these, family is not found in Western models, suggesting that motivation theories and practices do need to be nuanced by local culture. Based on this, employee benefits in Philippine organizations may be designed in a way that can offer more rewards, delivering value not just for the employee but to their family as well. Insurance and educational plans as well as family days and work-life balance that may allow for more family time may appeal more to Filipino workers than the benefits prescribed by previous theories.

The study found that job needs are driving factors of engagement among Filipino workers. This highlights the importance of job fit and job design in order to motivate the Filipino worker. It would be beneficial for both the employers and the employees if the workers were given jobs that complemented their skills and capabilities.

That organization-related needs are a significant predictor of employee engagement suggests the importance of HR initiatives such as socialization, building a sense of community within the workplace, and enabling good interpersonal relationships. This can be through programs that reinforce the feeling of camaraderie and attachment such as onboarding, training, and celebrations and events.

## **Limitations and Recommendations**

The sample obtained by the researchers was limited to Metro Manila. That said, a larger sample size including respondents outside of Metro Manila is recommended in order to increase its reliability and generalizability in the Philippine context.

Also, this study would be more accurate if the sample obtained was in proportion to the whole Filipino working population to at least have a scope of the frequency and range of responses differing from participants of different SES, gender, civil status, and age. These

variables may also be taken into consideration in order to provide a more specific analysis of the nuances in motivators of Filipino workers.

The study utilized employee engagement as an outcome variable. However, there are other possible outcomes that can be tested in future researches. In particular, it may be important to examine how well these needs can predict both personal outcomes such as life satisfaction and well-being as well as organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, organization citizenship behavior, turnover intent, etc.

### **Conclusion**

The study makes an important theoretical contribution by developing a theory of needs of Filipino workers. The study found four main factors that appear to be the key influencers for Filipino work motivation: job-, organization-, family-, and career-related needs. Among the four, family was found to be a novel addition to the already existing research about work motivation in the West, validating the importance of building knowledge that is nuanced on local culture. The emergence of organization- and job-related needs as predictors for employee engagement also suggest ways that organizations in the Philippines can harness and motivate Filipino workers.

### **AUTHORS NOTE**

The authors wish to acknowledge the Ateneo Center for Organization Research and Development for their assistance in data gathering.

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