



The Causal Relationship Model of Work Passion Among Community Development Volunteers Samattaphong Khajohnmanee* and Sudarat Tuntivivat

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Abstract

Community development volunteers play a vital role in communities and nations to achieve sustainable development goals. The objective of this study was 1) to develop the causal relationship model of work passion among community development volunteers, and 2) to empirically validate the causal relationship model of work passion among community development volunteers. The sample consisted of 362 community development volunteers. Proportional stratified random sampling was used. Questionnaires were used to collect data, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient between .92-.96. Data were analyzed by the structural equation modeling technique. The result showed that the proposed model fitted the empirical data. Meaningful work and quality of work life had a direct effect on work passion among community development volunteers, whereas work atmosphere had an indirect effect on work passion among community development volunteers via quality of work life. In addition, work atmosphere also had a direct effect on quality of work life. The implications of this research proposed a policy to enhance the quality of work life and create training programs to increase the level of work passion among community development volunteers.

Keywords: Work Passion, Community Development, Community Development Volunteers, Causal Relationship Model

Introduction

The world is confronting a challenging Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) situation, as a result of climate change, artificial intelligence, digital disruption, and the COVID-19 pandemic (Thailand Management Association, 2020). Since it has affected the economy of all countries worldwide, all sectors in society including government, private sector and community need to adjust themselves to ongoing changes. Furthermore, the government must formulate an appropriate national development strategy, create an economic recovery, and build a strong economic foundation (Anusonphat & Poompurk, 2022) in order to be able to adjust to the new normal. The main objective here is to achieve sustainable development.

In preparation for the new normal, it is necessary to focus on all levels of society, especially the local community so that people's lives in the current situation can be reflected (Hanphichai & Julawat, 2021). At first community development focused mainly on capitalism aimed at economic growth, particularly in the urban area; however, it resulted in disparity between people. As a consequence, there is a paradigm shift into alternative development, which focuses on the local community, aiming to develop and create balance in the whole society in order to achieve sustainable development (Parinyasutinun, 2018).

Although there is a great importance attached to community development, the policies are rather based on the government's perspective than the community's perspective. As a result, it is unlikely to provide a solution to actual problems in the community as people in the community in fact are the ones who truly understand their community context and its needs (Oumnoi, 2017). In addition, when social, cultural, economic, and environmental context in community development becomes more complicated, a single authority alone cannot solve all community's problems. Cooperation from the community and other organizations are required as well



(Metasuk & Silksuk, 2021). The Community Development Department, Ministry of Interior of the Kingdom of Thailand thus encourages community members to participate in community development by establishing a civic group called Community Development Volunteers. People in the community who are altruistic and well-behaved are recruited to do community development works. The roles of community development volunteers comprise 1) raise community issues with a civic group, 2) able to plan for problem solvings independently, 3) initiate and support developing projects or village development activities, 4) coordinate with government agencies or private sectors. In addition, they also assist community developers and government agencies in achieving development goals in each area efficiently (Community Development Department, 2016) as they are community members who fully understand their community context and have connections and interactions in the community (Kanjawanong et al., 2018). Additionally, the learning process and community members' participation are the main factors that lead to success in sustainable community development (Soodkeeree, 2015). Community development volunteers therefore play a vital role in driving community development to achieve development goals which are consistent with people's lives and actual ongoing situations, which will lead to development of quality of life and well-being of the community.

Due to the importance of community development volunteers, it is stated in the Handbook of Community Development Volunteer Leader that a person who has exceptional qualities, which are physical characteristics, abilities, and knowledge is required. Psychological characteristics are also included (Butrapun et al., 2014). Work passion is a positive feeling one has towards work that leads to willingness to work, work commitment, patience at work and pride in working. Furthermore, community-mindedness (Zigarmi et al., 2009) is an essential characteristic of community development volunteers. Since community development volunteering is a side job, it requires not only knowledge and ability but also sacrifice, community-mindedness, and work passion. It is also stated in the Community Development Department's mission (n.d.) that personnel must embrace the ideology of community development and expertise in integration. Moreover, in successful organizations, work passion has become a part of employees' role (Sangchan & Boonsathorn, 2015). Having work passion thereby is an important characteristic of community development volunteers.

There is a lack of prior studies on necessary skills for human resource developers and communities in the world that undergo rapid changes (Aticomswan et al., 2021). Studying the relationship model of employee work passion, Zigarmi et al. (2011) suggested that there are three factors affecting work passion, namely organizational factors, job factors and relationship factors. The previous studies found variables that directly influence work passion, including work atmosphere (Kromvatch, 2015), social support (Lautongmeesakun & Na Wichian, 2016), and quality of work life (Nikornsiri & Sritanyarat, 2015). However, there has not yet been any research that studied a mediator of work passion. Moreover, the previous study generally focused on work passion among employees in private companies or self-employed people (Virunhagarun & Boonsathorn, 2017). There has been no prior study on work passion among community development volunteers, which is a civic group.

The findings of this research are beneficial as they can be used as the guideline on improving community development volunteers. It also builds the body of knowledge that can be applied to developing community development work. Also, knowledge gained from this research can be used when proposing a policy to organizations and people who take part in improving a personnel development system for community



development volunteers to enhance their work performance. Eventually, this will lead to developing the community to achieve sustainable development.

Research Objectives

1. To develop the causal relationship model of work passion among community development volunteers.
2. To empirically validate the causal relationship model of work passion among community development volunteers.

Literature Review

This section describes the theory underpinning the research, theoretical framework and previous studies that are relevant to this research.

Theoretical Framework

This research used the Employee Work Passion Appraisal model (EWPA) (Zigarmi et al., 2011) to describe work passion. Work passion is as “an individual’s persistent, emotionally positive, meaning-based, sense of well-being, stemming from reoccurring cognitive and effective appraisals of various job and organizational situations that result in consistent, constructive work intention and behaviors” (Zigarmi et al., 2018). Moreover, work passion makes employees excited about their work (Gaan & Mohanty, 2014). The Employee Work Passion Appraisal model (EWPA) showed that work passion is employees’ affective and cognitive appraisals of their work experience. Moreover, after numerous reviews and research, work passion could be categorized into eight elements. The variables listed were meaningful work, collaboration, fairness, autonomy, recognition, growth, connectedness with leader and connectedness with colleagues (Tadesse, 2019), which can be grouped as organizational factors, job factors, and moderating factors. Organizational factors are influenced by the organization’s senior leadership, policies, procedures, and organizational systems while job factors are influenced by aspects of the job, colleagues, or leader. As for moderating factors or so-called relationship factors, they influence an individual’s perception of both organizational factors and job factors (Khantee & Boonsathorn, 2019).

Therefore, this research uses the theoretical framework suggested by Zigarmi et al. (2011) to develop causal relationship models that influence work passion among community development volunteers. It consists of 1) organizational factors: organizational climate theory (Dereke & Rezaei, 2020), social support theory (Lautongmeesakun & Na Wichian, 2016) and quality of work life theory (Nikornsiri & Sritanyarat, 2015), 2) job factors: meaningful life (Wiroko, 2021) and work autonomy (Kasai & Boonsathorn, 2018), and 3) moderating factors: acceptance (Khantee & Boonsathorn, 2019). Moreover, this research will study the mediational role of quality of work life and the factor which had direct and indirect effects on work passion.

Causal Relationship Model Development

The theoretical framework and literature review showed that there are some factors influencing work passion. Meaningful work and autonomy lead to work passion for innovative work behavior among executives and employees in a small hotel business (Kasai & Boonsathorn, 2018). Moreover, Soralum (2012) found that recognition is the most important factor affecting work passion across generations. Kromvatch (2015) summarizes the literature and research and indicates that work atmosphere and quality of work life can improve



work passion. Lautongmeesakun & Na Wichian (2016) found that social support had an effect on work passion among Thai teachers in municipal schools. In addition, the previous study found a correlation between work atmosphere and quality of work life (Dereke & Rezaei, 2020; He & Visitnitikija, 2018; Kamnuansin & Prakobphol, 2017). Social support had a correlation with quality of work life (Junyatham et al., 2018; Amini et al., 2016). The causal relationship model of work passion in this study can be summarized in Figure 1.

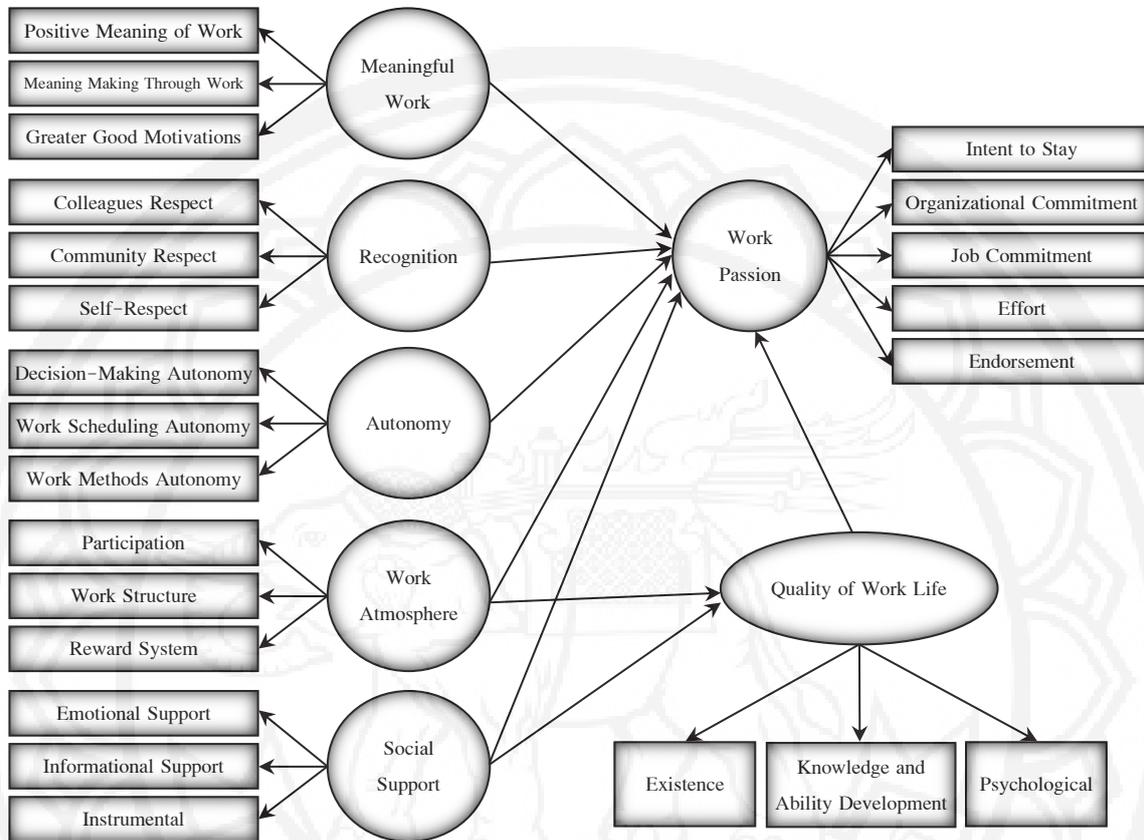


Figure 1 The Causal Relationship Model of Work Passion (Conceptual Framework).

Hypotheses

Based on the literature review, hypotheses of this research are:

1. The causal relationship model of work passion among community development volunteers fits the empirical data.
2. Meaningful work, recognition, autonomy, work atmosphere, social support, and quality of work life have direct effects on work passion among community development volunteers.
3. Work atmosphere and social support have indirect effects on work passion among community development volunteers via quality of work life.
4. Work atmosphere and social support have indirect effects on quality of work life among community development volunteers.



Methods and Materials

Population and Sample

The total population in this study consisted of 1,380 community development volunteers working in Pathumthani province, Thailand. The sample size was determined by using Stevens (2002) formula, which suggested the ratio of at least 15 observations per observed variable, to calculate an appropriate sample size. There are 23 observed variables in this study; therefore, the minimum sample size is 345. A proportional stratified random sampling was conducted. We divided the population into 7 strata based on district, then selected samples from each stratum. Afterwards, we collected data from them, and received completed questionnaires from the total number of 362 participants.

Instruments

This research employed a self-report questionnaire as a data collection instrument, using a 5-point Likert Scale which ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) as follows:

Meaningful Work Scale: This 12 item scale was developed based by the concept of Steger et al. (2012). It consisted of three dimensions. The items included “Community development volunteers understand community situations better than others do”, for example. The internal consistency of the scale was .92, indicating high consistency.

Recognition Scale: This 13 item scale was developed based on the concept by Dillon (1992). It consisted of three dimensions. The items included “People in the community believe in my ability to do community development works”, for example. The internal consistency of the scale was .94, indicating high consistency.

Autonomy Scale: This 10 item scale was developed based on the concept by Parker et al. (2001). It consisted of three dimensions. The items included “When making decisions regarding community development works, I can make decisions on my own”, for example. The internal consistency of the scale was .94, indicating high consistency.

Work Atmosphere Scale: This 11 item scale was developed based on the concept by Litwin & Stringer (1968); Likert & Likert (1976); and Dubrin (1984). It consisted of three dimensions. The items included “Colleagues let me participate in problem solving”, for example. The internal consistency of the scale was .92, indicating high consistency.

Social Support Scale: This 13 item scale was developed based on the concept by Schaefer et al. (1981). It consisted of three dimensions. The items included “I am encouraged by my colleagues”, for example. The internal consistency of the scale was .95, indicating high consistency.

Quality of Work Life Scale: This 12 item scale was developed based on the concept by Walton (1973); Huse & Cummings (1985); Chantiwacharoen (2013); Torboonsupachai & Prakobpol (2016); and Sriprasertsuk et al. (2019). It consisted of three dimensions. The items included “Community development volunteering gives me opportunity to train to improve my abilities”, for example. The internal consistency of the scale was .92, indicating high consistency.

Work Passion Scale: This 20 item scale was developed based on the concept by Zigarmi et al. (2011). It consisted of five dimensions. The items included “I proudly present myself as a community development volunteer”, for example. The internal consistency of the scale was .96, indicating high consistency.



Development of the Instrument: Before the questionnaire was administered, it was tried out and validated. The preliminary questionnaire was created based on the concept and theory from literature review. Then, it was presented to 5 experts with knowledge and experience in the field of psychology, community development and behavioral sciences. After we calculated an index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), it was found that all items had an index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) between 0.60–1.00, which was greater than 0.50 (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977). Then, the initial scale was administered to a try-out group of 32 people to assess reliability and discrimination power. The results showed that all scales had Cronbach's alpha coefficients between .92–.96 indicating that the data gained from the surveys were reliable, and all items had corrected item-total correlations between .55–.80, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Number of Items, Discrimination Power and Reliability

Variable	Number of Items	Corrected Item-total Correlation (Discrimination Power)	Cronbach's Alpha (Reliability)
Meaningful Work	12	.61 - .72	.92
Recognition	13	.64 - .75	.94
Autonomy	10	.62 - .78	.93
Work Atmosphere	11	.58 - .73	.92
Social Support	13	.71 - .80	.95
Quality of Work Life	12	.55 - .76	.92
Work Passion	20	.66 - .77	.96

Data Collection Method

After the researchers got approval from the ethical committee and community development authority in Pathumtani province, the researchers contacted the coordinator and the leaders in 7 districts to provide the details of the research. However, COVID-19 impacted the accessibility in some areas, so the researchers encouraged the leaders to serve as the data collector and practitioner in each district. The data collection process took place from September to December 2021. Once the data collection process was completed, the researchers checked the completion of the data for analysis in the next steps.

Statistical Analysis Method

All corrected data were checked to ensure there were no missing data and outliers. The data analysis for personal factors information was based on frequency and percentage. Skewness and kurtosis tests were performed to test the normality of distribution. Multicollinearity was tested by Cronbach's alpha. Structural equation modeling with LISREL program was conducted to test the causal relationship model and the hypotheses. The following goodness of fit indices were used: 1) Chi-Square / Degree of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) less than 3, 2) Root Mean Square Residual (RMSEA) less than 0.08, 3) Standardized Mean Square Residual (SRMR) less than 0.08, 4) Good of Fit Index (GFI) greater than 0.90, and 5) Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) greater than 0.85. (Schermelel-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003 as cited in Rinthaisong, 2021, p. 138)

Ethical Considerations

This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of Srinakharinwirot University. The reference number for this research was No. SWUEC/X/G-048/2564, dated 22 February 2021.

Results

1. In this study, data were collected from a total of 362 community development volunteers. Most of the sample were female (41.2%), whose age ranged from 51–60 years old (34%) (with the average age of 51.03, age standard deviation of 10.47, the minimum age of 19 years old, and the maximum age of 77 years old), graduated from senior high school (51.1%), agriculturist (35.9%) and work in Lam Luk Ka District (26.2%).

2. The observed variables had the average scores between 3.96 to 4.38, standard deviation between 0.55 to 0.66, skewness between -0.04 to -0.24, and kurtosis between -0.22 to -0.55, which indicate that the data met normal distribution. The analyses of correlation between observed variables were aimed at checking multicollinearity, with the Cronbach’s alpha between 0.43 to 0.86, which was lower than 0.90, indicating no multicollinearity problem (Hair et al., 2014).

3. Regarding the results of testing the causal relationship model of work passion among community development volunteers, Figure 1 and Table 3 showed that the causal relationship model of work passion among community development volunteers fitted the empirical data ($\chi^2 = 476.41$, $df = 195$, $p = .000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.44$, $RMSEA = .063$, $SRMR = .034$, $GFI = .90$, $AGFI = .85$). The result of the effects of path analysis showed that 1) meaningful work had a direct effect on work passion, 2) quality of work life had a direct effect on work passion, 3) work atmosphere had an indirect effect on work passion via quality of work life, 4) work atmosphere had a direct effect on quality of work life.

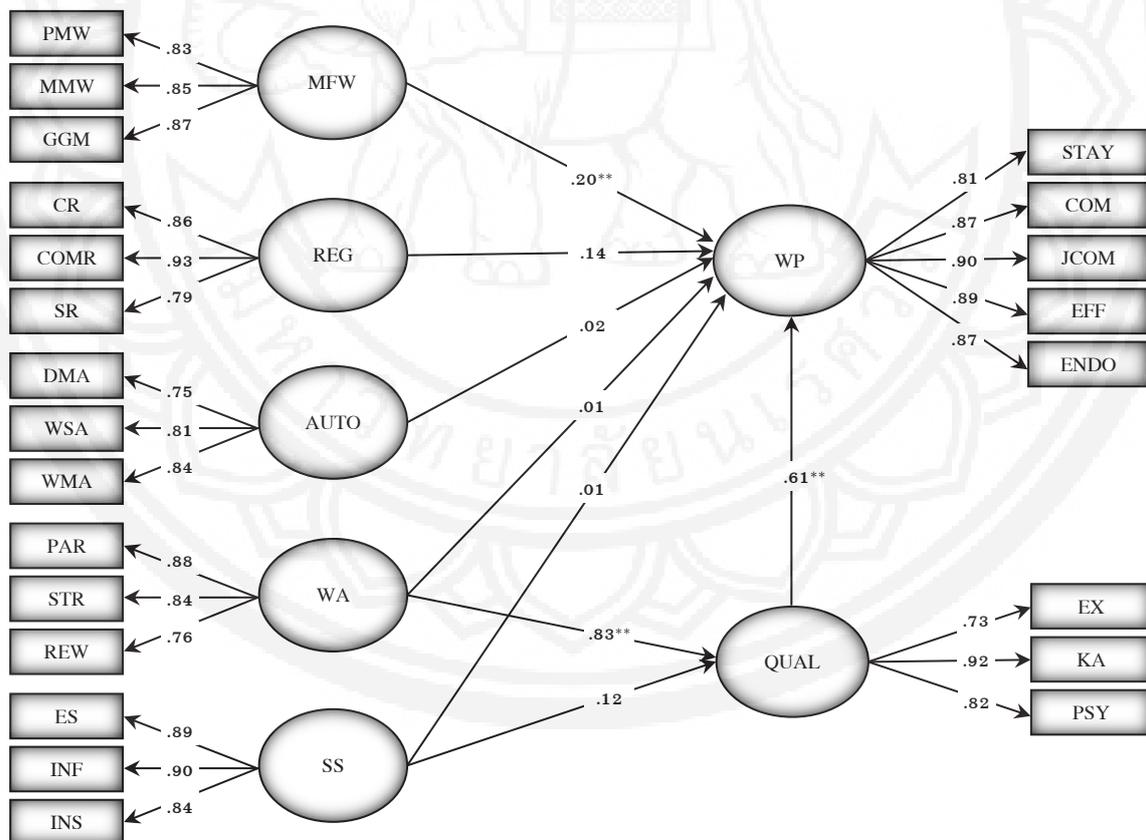


Figure 2 The Casual Relationship Model of Work Passion Among Community Development Volunteers (Final Model).

Note: Standardized Path Coefficient are Reported in the Figure.

**Table 2** Symbols for Meaning on Figure 2

Symbols for Meaning 2 The Casual Relationship Model			
PMW	=	Positive Meaning of Work	QUAL = Quality of Work Life
MMW	=	Meaning Making through Work	PAR = Participation
GGM	=	Greater Good Motivations	STR = Work Structure
MFW	=	Meaningful Work	REW = Reward System
CR	=	Colleagues Respect	WA = Work Atmosphere
COMR	=	Colleagues Respect	ES = Emotional Support
SR	=	Self-Respect	INF = Informational Support
REG	=	Recognition	INS = Instrumental Support
DMA	=	Decision-Making Autonomy	SS = Social Support
WSA	=	Work Scheduling Autonomy	STAY = Intent to Stay
WMA	=	Work Methods Autonomy	COM = Organizational Commitment
AUTO	=	Autonomy	JCOM = Job Commitment
EX	=	Existence	EFF = Discretionary Effort
KA	=	Knowledge and Ability Development	ENDO = Employee Endorsement
PSY	=	Psychological	WP = Work Passion

Table 3 The Summary of the Standardized Effects of the Causal Relationship Model of Work Passion Among Community Development Volunteers

Variable	Quality of Work Life			Work Passion		
	DE	IE	TE	DE	IE	TE
Meaningful Work	-	-	-	.20**	-	.20**
Recognition	-	-	-	.14	-	.14
Autonomy	-	-	-	.02	-	.02
Work Atmosphere	.83**	-	.83**	.01	.51**	.52*
Social Support	.12	-	.12	.01	.07	.08
Quality of Work Life	-	-	-	.61**	-	.61**
R²	.87			.83		

Note: DE = Direct Effect, IE = Indirect Effect, TE = Total Effect

*p < .05, **p < .01

Discussion

We will discuss several key findings of this research. The results showed that the causal relationship model of work passion among community development volunteers fitted the empirical data. The results are also in line with the employee work passion theory suggested by Zigarmi et al. (2011). This indicates that the causal relationship model can explain factors affecting work passion among community development volunteers. However, only three variables had a statistically significant effect on work passion. This probably results from the difference in job characteristics between community development volunteers and employees in private companies, a sample group in the study used to develop the employee work passion theory. Considering variables that have statistically significant effects on work passion, we discovered that:

Firstly, work atmosphere had a direct effect on quality of work life with a statistical significance of .01 and the coefficient of .83. If community development volunteers perceive work atmosphere such as being able to express their opinions and participate in decision makings on their own work, having good relationship with



co-workers and receiving cooperation from them, understanding their own duties, responsibilities, rules, regulations, and standards at work, receiving supports and encouragement for having a good work performance, having an increase in morale at work, they will perceive the quality of community development work life such as having a good work environment, having an opportunity to improve themselves and understanding that community development is important and beneficial to all levels of society. These are also associated with the works of Dereke & Rezaei (2020); He & Visitnitikija (2018); and Kamnuansin & Prakobphol (2017).

Secondly, meaningful work had a direct effect on work passion with a statistical significance of .01 and the coefficient of .20. After all, perceiving the meaning, value and importance of community development volunteering, having a positive feeling toward community development volunteering, including developing a growth mindset and perceiving one's own meaning and value for doing jobs that are important and valuable to others after doing community development job (Steger et al., 2012) result in having passion for work, which include being responsible for community development goals, working hard, overcoming problems and challenges, feeling a sense of belonging to community development and being proud of community development work. These are in accordance with the works of Wiroko (2021); Khantee & Boonsathorn (2019); Kasai & Boonsathorn (2018); and Zigarmi et al. (2011).

Thirdly, quality of work life had a direct effect on work passion with a statistical significance of .01 and the coefficient of .61. If community development volunteers perceive quality of work life, they would feel good about community development work. For instance, an opportunity to attend a training program to improve one's competence results in having passion for work (Luo et al., 2014) and a dedication and determination to achieve tasks even if those are upon one's assignment. These are in accordance with the works of Ruhana et al. (2019); Nikornsiri & Sritanyarat (2015); and Kromvatch (2015).

Lastly, work atmosphere had an indirect effect on work passion via quality of work life with a statistical significance of .01 and the coefficient of .51. It is in line with the employee work passion theory suggested by Zigarmi et al. (2011) that work passion stems from employees' appraisal of their ongoing experiences at work in a positive way. Moreover, if community development volunteers assess that community development work provides them with fair compensation, an appropriate amount of attendance fee, as well as self-improvement opportunities, and is also beneficial to the whole community, they will perceive that community development work provides appropriate quality of life, which will lead to passion for work.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results are as follows:

1. The causal relationship model of work passion among community development volunteers fitted the empirical data.
2. Factors affecting work passion among community development volunteers are quality of work life, work atmosphere and meaningful work.

Limitations

This research solely focuses on community development volunteers within Pathumthani, a metropolitan area which is considered as an urbanized/semi-urbanized area. Therefore, the limitation on the results in this research



should be considered since it may not be completely generalisable to community development volunteers from other regions.

Implications

Implications for Practice

The results showed that quality of work life, work atmosphere and meaningful work had an effect on work passion among community development volunteers. We therefore offer policy implications as follows:

1. Concerned agencies should propose policies to improve the quality of work life for community development volunteers by offering appropriate compensation and benefits, encouraging development of knowledge, skills, and competence by conducting training programs and field visits, and raising awareness of the importance of community development volunteers in order to increase their pride in working.

2. Community development volunteer leaders should set a ground rule that all team members participate in working such as giving team members an opportunity to express their opinion freely, showing respect to others, and motivating team members at the moment they accomplish a task.

3. Creating training programs to promote the importance of community development works by applying the concept of meaningful work to guidelines on developing training curriculum, or otherwise using communication. Using information to encourage development volunteers in order that they perceive value of community development works. Accordingly, this will lead to development of work passion.

Implications for Further Research

1. Conduct quantitative research, an in-depth interview, and a focus group discussion with community development volunteers or authorities from agencies concerned, in order to gain insights into methods to develop work passion among community development volunteers, and thus conduct training programs or make handbooks of developing passion for community development work.

2. Study further using the findings of this research to improve training programs on developing passion for community development work. Afterwards, implement a training program to measure its effectiveness.

3. Expand the scope of research into the nationwide samples since the sample selected for this research was solely a population in the metropolitan area, Pathumthani. Besides, regional differences might have an influence on work passion among community development volunteers as well. Therefore, this research has a limitation on the results found in the sample. They do not represent the results that would be obtained from other community development volunteers in the country.

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