

Comparing the opinions about occupational Choices between government employees and entrepreneurs

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Abstract- The objective of this research is to study about the opinions of government employees and entrepreneurs in Vientiane, Lao P.D.R. about their occupational choices, by studying the factors that influence them while choosing their occupation, job satisfaction and opinions about starting a business. This research has surveyed 112 government employees and entrepreneurs in Vientiane.

The findings of this study are that social recognition is the most important factor in choosing an occupation for both government employees and entrepreneurs, while income is very important for entrepreneurs but not important for government employees. Personal preference is more important for entrepreneurs than for government employees. Education achievements, parents' influence and career's potential growth are important for both government employees and entrepreneurs. The findings about job satisfaction are similar for both groups; i.e., they have a high level of satisfaction in their job, and the only difference is that government employees are not satisfied about their salary or income. Most of the government employees want to start their own business in the future and they think that money, customer and education are the most important factors in doing business, while entrepreneurs think that money, customer and economic situation are the most important factors.

I. Introduction

Occupation is one of the most important factors for most people because it is the main source of income for a person or household. Thus, choosing an occupation is very important and has a direct impact on the living of every person.

The occupational choice for most Lao citizens after the country gained independence in 1975 is very limited because of the weak economy and the overall environment is not supportive. In that period, choosing to become a government employee is one of the best choices for an educated person because it provides a stable income and social recognition. Furthermore, the government also wants to recruited high educated person in order to develop the country. After 1986, the government have decided to open the country more by increased trading with other countries, as well as, introduced a market-oriented economy which contributes to the rapid growing of the private sector (Enterprise Development Consultants Co. Ltd., 2002). With a more supportive environment and continuing development of the economy, more Lao citizen chooses to started their own business and become an entrepreneur. At the present time, there are 126,913 entrepreneurs in Lao PDR and 25,265 of them are in Vientiane (Internal Commerce Department, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 2009).

There are many occupational choices for Lao citizen at present time and many economic sectors have high demand for a skilled labor. However, government employee is still one of the most desired occupations for a lot of people, even though the income of the government employee is very low compared to entrepreneur. At this moment, there is no study on which reason or what factors that make people choose government employee as their occupation. There's a common believe that government employee is highly respected by the society and personal preference is the main factor. However, there is no necessary information that supports this believe. Furthermore, there is no detailed study about what are the factors that influence people in making their occupational choices apart from the economic factor. Thus, the objective of this research is to study the influence of the factors that make government employee and entrepreneur in Vientiane choose their occupation by using occupational choice theory and motivation theory as reference, and using primary data as the main source of information. Moreover, this research is also wants to study the factors that have an impact on job satisfaction and factors that are important for both occupations in doing business. The result of this research will be valuable information for anyone who is interested to know the reason why people want to be a government employee or entrepreneur, what is their job satisfaction level and what is their opinion about doing business.

II. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This study is using 2 theoretical frameworks, which are, occupational choice theory and motivation theory.

According to psychologists, a person occupational choice is influenced by their self-concept, character, and personality. John L. Holland (1973) suggests that a person is divided into 6 personality and they will choose an occupation that suits their personality (Personality Theory). Whereas in Self-Concept Theory, a person have a clear idea about themselves on what they like or what they are capable of and they will choose an occupation that suits them (Donald E. Super, 1963). Generally, personal preference is one of the most important factors that influence a person in making their occupation choice, while other theories also have a similar idea although some is focusing on other aspect of a person. For example, one of the theories suggests that a person's childhood affection is also having an effect on choosing an occupation.

Motivation is one of the most important factors that affects a person career and contributes to job satisfaction of a person. Two-Factor Theory suggests that there are many factors that affect a person job satisfaction like recognition, growth, salary, etc. These factors may have a different level of impact depends on the stage of a person with only recognition factor will have a high level of impact in all stage (Frederick Herzberg, 1964).

Roger Ham (2009) has studied the choosing of an occupation of a person in Australia by using the Personality Theory. From the study, Ham has concluded that apart from education, personality and parents influence are also important factor that affects the choosing of an occupation. The study in nearby country (Sukhanya Anousakoun, 2005) has used Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory to study the job satisfaction of public employee in Chiangmai and the result is they have a high level of satisfaction. Suphanny Vongtakoun (2008) also study about job satisfaction of a person who works in the vegetable industry in Lampang and the result is also they have a high level of satisfaction. While the study from Suphot Saenhan (2005) found that basic educational employee have a low level of job satisfaction and they only have a medium level of satisfaction about their salary.

From theoretical framework and literature review we can see that there are many factors that affects a person choosing an occupation and job satisfaction with the level of impact from these factors are vary depends on types of occupation. In this research, I will study the influence of these factors on the choosing of an occupation and job satisfaction of government employee and entrepreneur in Vientiane. While also show and compare which level of impact these factors have on both occupations, as well as, compare their opinions about occupational.

III. Methodology

This research is a comparing type that wants to study factors that have an impact on the choosing of an occupation of government employee and entrepreneur in Vientiane and using questionnaire as a tool to gather primary data.

Sample size: according to the data in 2009, there are 11,989 government employees (Prime Minister Office) and 25,265 entrepreneurs (Ministry of Industry and Commerce) in Vientiane. The combined population is 37,254 and the sample that will use in this research is calculated by using the equation of $n = N/(1+Ne^2)$ where n - is the sample size, N - is the population and e - is equal 5% or 0.05, and from the calculation, we have $n = 395$. However, with a limited time and low cooperation from entrepreneurs, the final number of questionnaire that will be distribute is 150 copies with both occupations get 75 copies each.

Questionnaire: questionnaire is divided into 2 parts, the first part consist general question and the second part consist question about factors that affect the choosing

of an occupation, factors that affect job satisfaction and factors that affect business. The questions in the second part will be a rating scale type (Likert Rating Scale). Every question will have a score from 1 to 5, in which, 1 means lowest and 5 means highest. The meaning of the average score will be described as below.

Average Score	Meaning
4.21 – 5.00	Have highest impact
3.41 – 4.20	Have high impact
2.61 – 3.40	Have medium impact
1.81 – 2.60	Have low impact
1.00 – 1.80	Have lowest impact

Out of 150 copies of questionnaire that are distributed, only 112 copies are returned with a full answer, 72 of them are from government employee and 40 are from entrepreneur.

IV. Results

A. General Information of The Sample

In this study, 64% of the total sample is government employee and 36% is entrepreneur, with 55% of them are male. Most of them are aged between 25 to 35 years old, which consist of 61%, and only 4% are aged more than 55 years old. 54% of them have a bachelor degree and 17% of them have a higher than bachelor degree, while only 7% of them are only graduated from high school and all of them are entrepreneur.

Entrepreneur have a monthly salary higher than government employee, with 76% of government employee have a monthly salary of less than 1 million Kip, 18% earn 1 to 2 million Kip and only 4% that earn more than 2 million Kip. Whereas for entrepreneur, 50% of them earn more than 5 million Kip per month, 45% earn 1 to 5 million Kip and only 5% that earn less than 1 million Kip.

B. Factors That affect Occupational Choice and Job Satisfaction

1) Factors That affect Occupational Choice

Psychologists have suggest that there are many factors which affect the choosing of an occupation apart from salary like personal preference, parent's influence, education, career potential growth, and social recognition. Table 1 shows the value of mean and standard deviation (S.D.) of all the factors that affect the choosing of an occupation. From the table we can see that both government employee and entrepreneur have a similar score, with social recognition have a highest impact for both occupations, while parent's influence, education and career potential growth have a high impact for both occupations.

Personal preference and salary are the 2 factors that have a different impact between government employee and entrepreneur. Personal preference has a highest impact for entrepreneur and has a high impact on government

employee, whereas salary has a high impact for entrepreneur and has a medium impact on government employee.

From the data, we can see that social recognition is very important for both government employee and entrepreneur because every person wants to be respected. In the other hand, personal preference is also an important factor especially for entrepreneur, while salary is not an important factor for government employee. As we all know, government employee in Lao PDR have a very low salary compared to other occupation. However, it's a very respected by others and a lot of people are interested personally.

Table 1
The level of impact from factors that contribute to occupational choice

Factors	The Level of Impact					
	Government Employee			Entrepreneur		
	Mean	S.D.	Meaning	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
Personal Preference	4.04	1.18	High Impact	4.38	0.86	Highest Impact
Parent's Influence	4.06	1.00	High Impact	3.68	1.49	High Impact
Education	4.07	1.01	High Impact	3.73	1.15	High Impact
Career Potential Growth	4.01	1.00	High Impact	3.93	1.09	High Impact
Salary	2.67	1.12	Medium Impact	4.03	1.02	High Impact
Social Recognition	4.39	0.83	Highest Impact	4.22	0.97	Highest Impact

2) Factors That Affect Job Satisfaction

Factors that affect job satisfaction for both government employee and entrepreneur have a similar score with the only difference are the salary. In table 2, we can see that both government employee and entrepreneur have a high level of satisfaction in their responsibility, colleagues, working environment and career potential growth. However, only entrepreneur have a high level of satisfaction about their salary while government employee have a low level of satisfaction.

Results from table 2 shows that both government employee and entrepreneur have a high level of job satisfaction with only government employee have a low level of satisfaction about their salary.

Table 2
The level of impact from factors that contribute to job satisfaction

Factors	The Level of Impact					
	Government Employee			Entrepreneur		
	Mean	S.D.	Meaning	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
Responsibility	3.92	0.96	High Impact	4.00	0.93	High Impact
Colleagues	3.75	0.90	High Impact	3.50	1.30	High Impact
Working Environment	3.75	0.88	High Impact	3.65	1.16	High Impact
Career Potential Growth	3.94	1.03	High Impact	4.10	0.92	High Impact
Salary	2.58	1.13	Low Impact	4.13	1.11	High Impact

3) Factors That Are Important in Doing Business for Government Employee and Entrepreneur

A. Factors That Are Important in Doing Business for Government Employee

In this study, 36% of the government employee wants to change their occupation in the future and 93% of them want to have their own business in the future. However, 46% of them believe that doing business is very difficult, 50% think its difficult and only 4% think it's not difficult.

Table 3 shows the main obstacles for government employee in having their own business which includes capital, economy, customer, education, risk and income. From the table, we have customer, capital and education are having the highest impact on government employee, while risk, income and economy are having a high impact.

Table 3
The level of impact from factors that affect government employee to have their own business

Factors	The Level of Impact		
	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
Capital	4.23	1.06	Highest Impact
Risk	3.55	0.86	High Impact
Income	3.41	0.93	High Impact
Economy	4.03	0.95	High Impact
Customer	4.40	0.88	Highest Impact
Education	4.28	0.95	Highest Impact

B. Factors That Are Important in Doing Business for Entrepreneur

A large number of entrepreneurs think that doing business today is different from the past with 57% of them think that it's very different, 37% think that it's different and only 6% think that it's no different. There are about 35% of them that want to change their occupation in the future.

There are many factors that play an important role in their business operation like capital, access to capital, customer, competitor, economy and education. Table 4 shows the impact of these factors, in which, customer, capital and economy are having the highest impact, whereas competitor, access to capital and education have a high impact.

Table 4

The level of impact from factors that affect entrepreneur business operation

Factors	The Level of Impact		
	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
Capital	4.30	0.90	Highest Impact
Access to Capital	3.80	0.98	High Impact
Customer	4.71	0.63	Highest Impact
Competitor	4.03	0.98	High Impact
Economy	4.30	0.90	Highest Impact
Education	3.41	1.30	High Impact

From the results above, we can see that capital and customer is very important factor for both government employee and entrepreneur. Generally, capital is one of the most important things in doing business and no business can operate without it. On the other hand, in today's very competitive market, attracting new and retaining a customer is very challenging and pivotal for the success of a business because business cannot survive without enough customers. Thus, both government employee, who wants to have their own business in the future, and entrepreneur, who are currently operating a business, is suggesting that these two factors are the most important for them. In addition, government employee also believes that education is very important too, while entrepreneur think that economy, not education, is very important.

C. Comparing the Responses Between the Two Occupation

In this section, the Independent t-test is being used to identify the difference in response from government employee and entrepreneur regarding all the factors. Table 5 and 6 shows the value of (t) and (df) of all the factors. In table 5, we can see that both government employee and entrepreneur only response differently regarding salary. In

addition, salary is the only factor that government employee and entrepreneur response differently in table 6.

Table 5

Comparing the response to factors that contribute to the choosing of an occupation between government employee and entrepreneur

Factors	Occupation (Government Employee and Entrepreneur)	
	df	t
Personal Preference	110	-1.565
Parent's Influence	110	1.607
Education	110	1.641
Career Potential Growth	110	0.436
Salary	110	-6.312***
Social Recognition	110	0.939

Note: *** denoting statistical significance at the 1% level

Table 6

Comparing the response to factors that contribute to job satisfaction between government employee and entrepreneur

Factors	Occupation (Government Employee and Entrepreneur)	
	df	t
Responsibility	110	-0.296
Colleagues	110	1.196
Working Environment	110	0.510
Career Potential Growth	110	-0.791
Salary	110	-6.933***

Note: *** denoting statistical significance at the 1% level

V. Conclusion

The main objective of this research is to comparing the opinions about occupational between government employee and entrepreneur, by looking at the factors that affects the choosing of an occupation, job satisfaction and opinions about starting a business. The population of this research is all government employee and entrepreneur in Vientiane, which totaled 37,254 unit and 150 copies of questionnaire have been distributed, with 112 copies are returned with full information.

The findings on the impact of factors that affects the choosing of an occupation have shown that social recognition is having the highest impact on both government employee and entrepreneur. Personal preference has a highest impact on entrepreneur and has a high impact on government employee. Other factors such as parent's influence, education and career potential growth all have a high impact on both occupations. However, salary is not important factor for government employee, as

they prefer to be respected by others, while for entrepreneur salary is also one of the important factors for them. In addition, there's only salary that government employee and entrepreneur have a different response in this study.

The findings on the impact of factors that affects job satisfaction shows that both government employee and entrepreneur has high satisfaction on their responsibility, colleagues, working environment and potential career growth. However, government employee has a low satisfaction regarding to their salary whereas entrepreneur has a high satisfaction. Furthermore, the only difference in response to these factors between government employee and entrepreneur is the salary.

In this study, we can see that there are many factors that have an impact on government employee and entrepreneur in their decision on choosing an occupation and every factor are very important, except for the salary factor which is not significant for government employee. In general, both government employee and entrepreneur have a high job satisfaction, with only government employee who is not satisfied about their salary. Moreover, there are as high as 93% of the government employee who wants to have their own business in the future, although there are many obstacles such as not enough capital, potential customer and inadequate education. In the other hand, most of the entrepreneur believes that doing business today is different than before, with capital, customer and economy are the important factors that play a big role in doing business.

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