

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

# **Motivation and Well-Being in Humanitarian Health Workers:**

Relating Self-Determination Theory  
to hedonic vs. eudaimonic well-  
being, vitality and burnout

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology,  
Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand**

**Natasha Ann Tassell  
2009**







## Abstract

---

This research examined the effects of motivation on the well-being of humanitarian health workers. Using Self-Determination Theory, I argued introjected and identified motivations were applicable to this occupational domain, and have differential effects on well-being. Introjected motivation would be positively related to hedonic well-being and burnout, while identified motivation would be positively related to eudaimonic well-being and vitality. Orientations to happiness and passion were proposed as mediating these relationships. An online quantitative questionnaire was used in the first phase of data collection. Respondents were  $N = 82$  humanitarian health workers. A semi-structured interview methodology was used in the second phase. Participants were  $N = 5$  humanitarian health workers. Path analyses revealed neither introjected nor identified motivation was significantly related to vitality or hedonic vs. eudaimonic well-being. Both motivations had significant direct effects on burnout, albeit in the opposite direction to hypotheses. Passion moderated the relationship between motivation and burnout. Additional path analyses showed obsessive passion mediated the path between introjected motivation and emotional exhaustion. Harmonious passion mediated the path between identified motivation and diminished personal accomplishment. Both obsessive and harmonious passion mediated the paths between each motivation and depersonalisation, although identified motivation had the strongest relationship with this aspect of burnout. Interview data supported the majority of quantitative findings. The results suggest the motivations underlying engagement in humanitarian work, are related to the development of burnout. The mediational effect of passion determines which aspect of burnout will be most prevalent. The findings have applicability to the design and implementation of recruitment strategies, and programs aimed at the treatment and prevention of burnout in workers, both pre- and post-deployment to humanitarian situations.



## Acknowledgements

---

I dedicate this thesis to my nephews: Blake, Finn, Phoenix, and Jarvis. I hope they grow to be men of compassion and humanitarianism.

I wish to thank my family: Dad, Susan and Phil, and Corey and Kara for their constant love, encouragement and support in all aspects of my life; and acknowledge the memories of my late mother and sister.

Special thanks to Nathan Mataamua, who has given lots of laughter and love during the final year of this thesis.

Immeasurable appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Ross Flett, for the help, expertise, patience, and guidance he has provided to me during the time I have known him.

Warm thanks to Dr John Podd, Dr Racheal Pond, and Dr Leigh Coombes for viewing drafts of parts of this thesis, and the helpful suggestions they provided.

Thanks to te whānau o Te Rau Puawai, and Monica Koia in particular, who have supported me throughout the completion of this thesis.

Appreciation to Massey University, who financially supported this research via a Massey University Doctoral Scholarship.





## Table of Contents

---

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>Table of Figures</b> .....	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Table of Tables</b> .....	<b>xv</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0 Motivation for Work: An Overview of Theories</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2.1 Content Theories of Work Motivation .....	11
2.1.1 <i>Maslow and Alderfer's Hierarchy of Needs Theories</i> .....	11
2.1.2 <i>McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory</i> .....	13
2.1.3 <i>Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory</i> .....	15
2.1.4 <i>Hackman and Oldham's Theory of Optimal Job Design</i> .....	16
2.1.5 <i>Summary of Content Theories</i> .....	17
2.2 Process Theories of Work Motivation .....	19
2.2.1 <i>Expectancy-Valence Theories</i> .....	19
2.2.2 <i>Goal-Directed Theories</i> .....	21
2.2.3 <i>Summary of Process Theories</i> .....	22
2.3 An Alternative Approach .....	23
<b>3.0 Self-Determination Theory</b> .....	<b>25</b>
3.1 Types of SDT Motivation .....	27
3.1.1 <i>Amotivation</i> .....	29
3.1.2 <i>Intrinsic Motivation</i> .....	30
3.1.3 <i>External Motivation</i> .....	31
3.1.4 <i>Integrated Motivation</i> .....	32

3.1.5	<i>Introjected Motivation</i> .....	33
3.1.6	<i>Identified Motivation</i> .....	34
3.1.7	<i>Differentiating Introjected and Identified Motivations</i> .....	36
3.2	Assessment of Motivation Types .....	38
3.2.1	<i>Evidence of Introjected and Identified Motivations using the Self-Regulation Questionnaires</i> .....	42
3.3	Conclusion .....	44
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Hedonic vs. Eudaimonic Well-Being</b> .....	<b>47</b>
4.1	Well-being .....	48
4.1.1	<i>Hedonic Well-Being</i> .....	49
4.1.2	<i>Eudaimonic Well-Being</i> .....	51
4.2	Motivation and Well-Being.....	53
4.3	Pathways to Well-Being.....	55
4.3.1	<i>Measuring the Orientations to Happiness</i> .....	56
4.4	Predicting the Well-Being of Humanitarian Health Workers .....	60
4.5	Conclusion.....	62
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Burnout vs. Vitality</b> .....	<b>63</b>
5.1	Passion.....	64
5.1.1	<i>Harmonious Passion</i> .....	65
5.1.2	<i>Obsessive Passion</i> .....	66
5.1.3	<i>Differentiating Passion from SDT</i> .....	67
5.2	Passion for Activities and SDT Motivation.....	70
5.3	Harmonious Passion and Vitality .....	72
5.3.1	<i>Vitality and Humanitarian Health Workers</i> .....	75
5.4	Obsessive Passion and Burnout.....	78
5.4.1	<i>Burnout and Humanitarian Health Workers</i> .....	79
5.5	Conclusion.....	83
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Hypotheses</b> .....	<b>85</b>

6.1	Motivation and Well-Being.....	85
6.1.1	<i>Hedonic vs. Eudaimonic Well-Being</i> .....	85
6.1.2	<i>Burnout vs. Vitality</i> .....	87
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>89</b>
7.1	Quantitative Data.....	89
7.1.1	<i>Sample</i> .....	89
7.1.2	<i>Procedure</i> .....	90
7.1.3	<i>Measures</i> .....	93
7.2	Qualitative Data.....	98
7.2.1	<i>Sample</i> .....	98
7.2.2	<i>Procedure</i> .....	99
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Results .....</b>	<b>103</b>
8.1	Quantitative Data – Online Questionnaire .....	103
8.1.1	<i>Demographics</i> .....	103
8.1.2	<i>Measures</i> .....	104
8.1.3	<i>Relationships Between Demographic and Psychological Variables</i> 107	
8.1.4	<i>Correlations Between Psychological Variables</i> .....	111
8.1.5	<i>Testing the Hypothesised Models</i> .....	117
8.2	Qualitative Data – Semi-Structured Interviews .....	139
8.2.1	<i>Initial Motivation for Humanitarian Health Work</i> .....	139
8.2.2	<i>Reasons for Continuing Humanitarian Health Work</i> .....	143
8.2.3	<i>Personal Consequences of Humanitarian Health Work</i> .....	149
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>155</b>
9.1	Motivation .....	155
9.1.1	<i>Summary</i> .....	162
9.2	Hedonic vs. Eudaimonic Well-Being.....	164
9.2.1	<i>Hedonic Well-Being</i> .....	164
9.2.2	<i>Eudaimonic Well-Being</i> .....	166
9.2.3	<i>Orientations to Happiness</i> .....	168
9.2.4	<i>Summary</i> .....	174
9.3	Burnout vs. Vitality .....	177
9.3.1	<i>Burnout</i> .....	177
9.3.2	<i>Vitality</i> .....	180

9.3.3	<i>Passion</i> .....	182
9.3.4	<i>Summary</i> .....	187
9.4	Practical and Research Implications.....	190
9.5	Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research.....	194
9.6	Conclusion.....	198
	<b>References .....</b>	<b>201</b>
	<b>Appendix A – Online Questionnaire (English Version).....</b>	<b>231</b>
	<b>Appendix B – Online Questionnaire (Spanish Version) .....</b>	<b>243</b>
	<b>Appendix C – Online Questionnaire (French Version).....</b>	<b>255</b>
	<b>Appendix D – Information Sheet for Interview Participants.....</b>	<b>267</b>
	<b>Appendix E – Interview Participant Consent Form .....</b>	<b>269</b>
	<b>Appendix F – Authority for Release of Transcripts.....</b>	<b>271</b>
	<b>Appendix G – Interview Schedule and Prompting Questions.....</b>	<b>273</b>
	<b>Appendix H – Descriptive Statistics for Individual Subscale Items .....</b>	<b>275</b>
	<b>Appendix I – Descriptive Statistics for Comparison Samples.....</b>	<b>281</b>

## Table of Figures

---

Figure 1.	The hypothesised pathways between motivation and well-being for humanitarian health workers	.....9
Figure 2.	The SDT continuum of motivation, showing the three major motivations, sub-motivations, and the regulations underlying each	.....29
Figure 3.	The hypothesised direct and indirect pathways between motivation and well-being, also showing mediator variables	.....48
Figure 4.	The hypothesised direct and indirect pathways between motivation and well-being, also showing mediator variables	.....64
Figure 5.	The hypothesised direct and indirect pathways between motivation and well-being, also showing the orientations to happiness as mediator variables	.....87
Figure 6.	The hypothesised direct and indirect pathways between motivation and well-being, also showing obsessive and harmonious passion as mediator variables	.....88
Figure 7.	The hypothesised direct and indirect pathways between motivation and well-being, also showing mediator variables	.....119
Figure 8.	Results of the final path analytic model for the hedonic vs. eudaimonic well-being analyses.	.....124
Figure 9.	The model tested in the subsequent path analyses, for hedonic vs. eudaimonic well-being	.....125

Figure 10.	Results of the final model for hedonic vs. eudaimonic well-being, showing path coefficients between the relevant variables	.....127
Figure 11.	The hypothesised direct and indirect pathways between motivation and well-being, also showing mediator variables	.....128
Figure 12.	Results of the final path analytic model for the burnout vs. vitality analyses	.....131
Figure 13.	The model tested in path analyses, using emotional exhaustion	.....134
Figure 14.	Results of the final model using emotional exhaustion	.....134
Figure 15.	The model tested in path analyses, using diminished personal accomplishment	.....136
Figure 16.	Results of the final model using diminished personal accomplishment	.....136
Figure 17.	The model tested in path analyses, using depersonalisation	.....138
Figure 18.	Results of the final model using depersonalisation	.....138

## Table of Tables

---

Table 1.	Participant Demographics	.....99
Table 2.	Key Demographic Variables of Sample	.....103
Table 3.	Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alpha Reliabilities, and Score Range Data of All Research Variables	.....104
Table 4.	Correlations Between Some Demographic and Psychological Variables	.....110
Table 5.	Correlations Between Psychological Variables	.....116
Table 6.	Direct Effects from Path Analyses of Models 1, 2, 3 and 4	.....121
Table 7.	Correlations Between Individual Items and Variables of Interest	.....123
Table 8.	Direct Effects Between Paths in Subsequent Analyses	.....126
Table 9.	Direct Effects from Path Analyses of Initial Model	.....129
Table 10.	Correlations Between Motivation, Passion, and the Burnout Subscales	.....132
Table 11.	Means, Standard Deviations, and N for Individual Items on Each Scale	.....275



Table 12.	Means and Standard Deviations of Comparison Samples for Introjected and Identified Motivation	.....281
Table 13.	Means and Standard Deviations of Comparison Samples for the Pleasant, Engaged, and Meaningful Orientations to Happiness	.....282
Table 14.	Means and Standard Deviations of Comparison Samples for Harmonious Passion and Obsessive Passion	.....283
Table 15.	Means and Standard Deviations of Comparison Samples for Positive Affect and Negative Affect	.....284
Table 16.	Means and Standard Deviations of Comparison Samples for Satisfaction with Life	.....285
Table 17.	Means and Standard Deviations of Comparison Samples for Self-Actualisation	.....286
Table 18.	Means and Standard Deviations of Comparison Samples for Vitality	.....287
Table 19.	Means and Standard Deviations of Comparison Samples for Burnout	.....288

