

Workforce Motivation at Malaysian Orangutan Conservation Centres

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Abstract

Most conservation research and efforts focus on a targeted animal taxon and we often tend to forget about the human component in conservation work. It is often alleged that conservation work is in itself rewarding, rather than motivated by monetary gain. However, this remains anecdotal, and this study approaches this topic through qualitative analysis of the motivation of the workforce in orangutan conservation. The objective of this paper was to assess the driving motivations for conservation workers at three Malaysian ex-situ conservation facilities for orangutans. Using structured interviews and a thematic approach, we classified five main types of motivation amongst the workers. The “Environment/Surrounding” factor describing positive team work experiences emerged as the primary motivator for conducting this job, whereas “Monetary” and “Conservation” were similarly often mentioned as the second motivators. “Personal Development” and “Humanistic” factors were the third and least mentioned motivators, respectively. Our results indicate the importance of providing and maintaining a good work environment and relationship with co-workers, as well as adequate salaries to motivate the conservation workforce. The findings from this study could help the management of any conservation areas/centers to effectively manage and encourage their workforce towards a better care of captive animals.

Keywords: Orangutan, motivation, workforce, rangers, conservation

Abstrak

Kebanyakan penyelidikan dan usaha pemuliharaan sering menumpukan kepada takson haiwan sasaran dan selalunya, kita cenderung melupakan pekerja pemuliharaan. Seringkali kerja pemuliharaan memberi ganjaran kepada perbuatan itu sendiri, bukannya keuntungan dan penajaan kewangan. Walau bagaimanapun, ini kekal anekdot, dan kajian ini mendekati topik melalui analisis kualitatif untuk memberikan pandangan yang lebih baik. Objektif kertas ini adalah untuk menilai apakah motivasi yang mendorong pekerja pemuliharaan. Kami meninjau motivasi tenaga kerja di tiga pusat pemuliharaan orangutan. Menggunakan temu bual dan pendekatan bertema, kami mengklasifikasikan lima jenis motivasi utama di kalangan pekerja. Perkara yang mengejutkan, faktor Persekitaran/Persekitaran yang menjadi pendorong utama, manakala Monetari dan Pemuliharaan berkongsi peratusan yang sama dengan motivator kedua. Pembangunan peribadi dan faktor Humanistik adalah pendorong ketiga dan terakhir. Keputusan kami menunjukkan kepentingan mengekalkan persekitaran kerja yang baik, gembira dan menyeronokkan untuk memberikan motivasi kepada pekerja pemuliharaan. Penemuan daripada kajian ini boleh membantu pengurusan mana-mana kawasan/pusat pemuliharaan untuk mengurus dan menggalakkan tenaga kerja mereka ke arah penjagaan yang lebih baik dengan berkesan.

Kata kunci: Orangutan, motivasi, tenaga kerja, renjer, pemuliharaan

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Putting the human element in the conservation framework is crucial, especially in tourism-based wildlife conservation centres (Campbell & Smith, 2006; Tella *et al.*, 2007). Every level of the workforce should contribute toward achieving a centre’s objectives hence, intrinsic values of staff are often highly interlinked with attitudes and performance (Tella *et al.*, 2007). Thus, human challenges at conservation centres are often expressed in a lack of intrinsic motivation to provide best care for captive animals. Furthermore, extrinsic threats such as wildlife crimes, poaching, illegal trespassing and logging (Balazs, 2016; Davis *et al.*, 2013) contribute to challenges faced by staff of these facilities. Managing wildlife conservation centres with wide outdoor spaces, including forest, requires expertise and energy from the workforce, especially to maintain and patrol huge areas and to control the influx and behaviour of tourists (Gaylard & Ferreira, 2011; Ijeomah & Ogbara, 2013; Mohd-Azlan & Engkamat, 2013). Hence, a well-managed centre should not only consider animal welfare adhering to strict professional international guidelines for best practices and financial sustainability but also invest in training, capacity building, and a healthy working environment for its staff (Tella *et al.*, 2007).

In order to improve and uphold management standards in wildlife conservation facilities, it is important to better understand the drivers and motivation of the staff working in, and often committing their lives to, these centres, as to why they chose this particular career path. Motivation values of workers who wish to contribute towards better management practices of wildlife conservation centres are broadly

described with key words such as “openness to change”, “conservation”, “self enhancement” and “self-transcendence” (Ros et al., 1999). Campbell & Smith (2006) listed further intrinsic motivational values for conservation work, such as “aesthetic”, “scientific”, “humanistic”, “experiential”, “intrinsic”, “existence” and “spiritual” by interviewing volunteers who engaged in tourism-based turtle conservation programs in Costa Rica.

To explore the motivation of staff in Malaysian orangutan conservation facilities, we used in-depth, guided open-ended interviews analysed qualitatively through a thematic approach (Aronson, 1995) as this method does not which require a large sample size, resource or baseline data (Baylis et al.; Bottrill, Hockings, & Possingham, 2011). We conducted interviews with the workforce of Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre (SORC) in Sabah, Semenggoh Nature Reserve (SNR) in Sarawak, and Taiping Zoo and Night Safari in Perak, Malaysia.

■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have articulated values that relate to environmental and biodiversity conservation awareness (e.g., Dearborn & Kark, 2010). Some studies list various intrinsic motivation values of staff and volunteers that could contribute towards better management of wildlife conservation centres or programs, such as “openness to change”, “self-enhancement” and “self-transcendence”, “aesthetic, scientific, humanistic, aesthetic, experiential, intrinsic, existence and spiritual” (Ros et al. 1999; Campbell and Smith, 2006). Positive attributes for the motivation of the rangers at wildlife parks are described as “attachment to nature”, “desire to help people”, “job satisfaction”, “job independence”, “exposure” and “the work itself” (Charles, 1982; Moreto et al., 2016; Palmer & Bryant, 1985). Beyond extrinsic or mixed motivational factors, Moreto et al. (2017), drawing from an extensive study in 11 Asian countries, state that intrinsic motivational values often lead to an “intergenerational chain of motivation” for becoming a wildlife ranger. Spira et al. (2019) further listed salary, workforce capacity, training, and security as supportive elements towards better job satisfaction among rangers in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. On the contrary, other studies observed motivation from a different perspective, that is, factors leading to demotivation of the workforce. For example, “low salaries or incentives” and “overly loaded tasks” were led to lower job performance of rangers in Yankari Game Reserve, Bauchi, Nigeria (Ogunjinmi et al., 2008).

There are diverse methods of analysing interviews in qualitative research, such as content, narrative, or discourse, methods (Burnard et al., 2008; Wilson et al., 2016). The qualitative method is used to analyse data that emerge descriptively from interviews. Qualitative research tradition revolves around believability, coherence, and truthfulness through a process of verification. Generally, the focus of qualitative research comprises experience, perceptions, and understanding more than one reality (Fraenkel et al., 2011; Locke, 1989). Qualitative research comprises no universally applicable techniques to generate findings; thus, analytical and critical thinking allows no qualitative research to be repeated. This study was thus more likely to assess general motivation factors of the Malaysian orangutan workforce and how these factors interact and reinforce one another rather than precisely “measuring” these motivation factors.

■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Collecting and Recording Data

Data were collected from January 2017 until March 2018. The interviews involved workforce from diverse backgrounds, such as officers, veterinarians, and rangers (referred to as “respondents”) who worked in Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre (SORC) in Sabah, Semenggoh Nature Reserve (SNR) in Sarawak, and Taiping Zoo and Night Safari in Perak (TZ), Malaysia. Each centre comprised six respondents, leading to a total number of 18 respondents for this survey. The number of respondents was limited since each centre does not have a large workforce. Furthermore, there were a few workers who declined to participate. The sample size is thus not representative of the entire Malaysian orangutan conservation centre workforce, but allows to gain a first insight into the range of perceptions and motivational values of the staff at these centres.

The questions of the interview were prepared before the interview sessions as listed in Table 1. However, the structure of the questions slightly varied during each interview due to different probing questions leading to a deeper conversation with the respondent. Respondents were chosen based on their expertise and willingness. Most have worked for more than five years at the centre, except for an intern and a volunteer at SORC.

All interviews were recorded using a voice and camera recorder. One interview could last approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. Data were collected via interviewing the respondents face to face and one-on-one to gain more personal trust and in-depth perspectives of the respondent (Zohrabi, 2013) allowing the interviewer to better navigate the line of questioning.

Besides the permits that were obtained from the centres, respondents were informed about the purpose, expectations, and the benefit of the study, the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences, and the right to question the interviewer. Most importantly, the privacy of all respondents is protected throughout the study, which was conveyed to all respondents prior to the interview.

Table 1: Interview questions

1.	How long have you been working here (in this centre)?
2.	What is your job position?
3.	What is your job description?
4.	How many hours do you work per week?
5.	Do you work independently or in a team?
6.	Do you enjoy your job? Why?
7.	What are your strengths used to perform in your job?

8. What challenges do you have to overcome in performing this job?
9. How do you overcome the above challenges?
10. Should you be given a choice, would you choose another job to pay for your dailies? Why?
11. How long have you been involved with orangutan conservation, before working at this centre?
12. Would you still be working here in 5-year time, and why?
13. In your opinion, what is the 'perfect' conservation plan for orangutans?
14. How is your organization funded? And how is funding obtained?
15. What is your opinion concerning using orangutan as a display asset for ecotourism?
16. How passionate do you think your staff/the staff here is? How do you keep them motivated?
17. In a theoretical situation, when you need to hire staff (that deals directly with orangutan), you are presented with two candidates: the first candidate had shown experience, great interest and passion during the interview, but asked for a higher salary. The second candidate lacks experience and is quite naïve concerning orangutan conservation, but is willing to work for half the salary. Which candidate would you choose? What are your suggestions to handle the second candidate in the future?

3.2 Transcription and Analysis of the Data

For this study, thematic method analysis was used to transcribe and code from the interviews regarding the overall study question "What is the motivation of the workforce of Malaysian orangutan conservation centres?" at SORC, SNR and TZ. The analysis was done manually by defining categories, such as small phrases or words that were repeated by respondents, generally known as "coding". These codes were later clustered into certain themes describing the responses. It is imperative to analyse the interview transcript without determining the value categories before the interview (Campbell & Smith, 2006).

The respondents were grouped according to the centres they belonged to, "Sem" referred to respondents from SNR, "Sep" referred to respondents from SORC, and "Tai" referred to respondents from TZ. The excerpt presented in the results is directly transcribed from the interview transcripts. Therefore, there are grammatical errors in the excerpt, and we believe that this provides a more authentic and honest insight, and that it does not influence the results obtained from the thematical analysis.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Overall Findings of the Study

Five motivational values were derived from the transcript data: "Conservation", "Monetary", "Environment/Surrounding", "Humanistic" and "Personal Development". "Conservation", "Environment/Surrounding" and "Monetary" were the motivation values most often articulated by the respondents (Table 2). Overall, the "Humanistic" motivational value was mentioned least often. All but one respondent mentioned more than one motivational value.

Table 2 Codes for motivation values

Values/ Theme	Criteria/Definition
Conservation	Reference to characteristic codes by the respondents that would contribute to increase the population of orangutan and the motivation of their involvement in orangutan conservation efforts (Dearborn & Kark, 2010). The characteristic codes were "biodiversity value", "extinct", "aesthetic", "endemic", "nationalist".
Humanistic	References for strong emotional values (Campbell & Smith, 2006; Kellert, 1982) such as "trust", "sympathy", "human obligation".
Personal Development	References for respondents' involvement in the orangutan conservation effort, which contribute to their personal development and achievement (Campbell & Smith, 2006; Ros <i>et al.</i> , 1999). The characteristic codes were "career advancement", "sense of contribution", "exposure", and "personal choice", "experience" "exposure."
Environment/ Surrounding	References for environmental or external factors (Campbell & Smith, 2006) such as "opportunity", "supportive colleagues" "restricted employer", "well-equipped", "time flexibility", "gender inclusivity", "family support".
Monetary	References for motivation by economic gain (Ogunjinmi <i>et al.</i> , 2008). The characteristic codes were "costly", "stability", "reputation" and "customer's satisfaction".

Acknowledging orangutan and rainforests as having biodiversity value was one of the most often mentioned motivational values among the workforce. In SORC, all respondents viewed "Conservation" as a motivation value, while 4 out of 6 respondents in SNR agreed on this value. Only 2 out of 5 respondents in TZ stated "Conservation" as a motivation value.

Most respondents expressed that "Environment/Surrounding" was a motivation factor for their job performance. All respondents in TZ agreed, followed by most of the respondents in SNR. Only half of the respondents in SORC stated "Environment/Surrounding" as a motivation value.

Being able to earn a salary, particularly to cater to family needs, was among the highest motivational values in all

conservation centres. “Monetary” values are seemingly important, as 5 out of 6 respondents in SNR and 4 out of 5 respondents in TZ expressed this in the interviews. Half of the respondents in SORC said that financial outcome and stability motivated them to work in the centre (Table 3).

Table 3 Identification and incidence table of motivation values among the workforce

	Monetary	Conservation	Humanistic	Personal Development	Environment/Surrounding
Sem1	X	X	X	X	X
Sem2	X		X	X	X
Sem3	X	X	X		X
Sem4	X	X	X		X
Sem5	X			X	
Sem6	X	X	X		X
Sep1		X	X	X	X
Sep2		X	X	X	
Sep3	X	X		X	X
Sep4		X			
Sep5	X	X		X	X
Sep6	X	X			X
Tai1	X				X
Tai2	X	X			X
Tai3	X				X
Tai4		X		X	X
Tai5	X				X
Total	12	12	7	8	14
%	23.21%	23.21%	12.50%	16.01%	25.00%

Respondents: Sem = Semenggoh Nature Reserve (SNR), Sep = Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centres (SORC), Tai = Taiping Zoo & Night Safari (TZ)

4.1 Motivation Values Transcribed from SNR

The majority of respondents from SNR related to “Environment/Surrounding” as motivational factors. As someone from the professional level of the centre’s management, Sem6 expressed their thankfulness for being able to work with a supportive team. This respondent truthfully felt that the success of the centre is a collective effort:

“We have to listen to what their problem is. I’m very lucky to have this group of people working with me. Otherwise, we are not awarded in best management part.”

Both Sem3 and Sem4 agreed that teamwork made the rigorous work bearable. Supportive teamwork motivated them to work, despite having to take turns or shifts, especially during the festive season. Sometimes, the respondents handled visitors with special needs:

“Our teamwork [is supported] as we use walkie talkie. We made sure the tourists were fully safe and didn’t get bitten by the orangutan, no injuries or accidents, and that we have fully taken care of the visitors. Sometimes, there were times when we obliged to handle people with special needs, so we brought them in even by using wheelchair or carrying them, even across the river. Once, we helped blind people to enjoy the experience of orangutan. Even though it might sound irrelevant, but we did just that, supported them to enjoy even only by instinct. We brought all eleven of them, and improvised the way we deliver our explanation and education awareness.”

As female respondents working in the centres, Sem1 and Sem2 felt the working place provided inclusivity and was conducive for them. The location of the centre and time delegation enable the respondents to handle her responsibility as mother:

“So far it is bearable to work here, although I must admit challenges must occur no matter where we work. Luckily, I have supportive friends and team here that understands a lot, besides ready to exchange view. In addition, here is nearer to my house and my children’s school.”

Some respondents might find that money (“Monetary”) is a crucial motivation, and that the job provides financial stability.

When asked, Sem5 described their reason for working at the conservation centre as:

"I am very happy and grateful for this job as I thought that getting a job is rather difficult, and I need to feed my family. I believe that this job is a better job than my previous ones as contract labour for four years."

For Sem6, the "Monetary" motivation value overlaps with the "Conservation" value as they elaborated on the duty to prioritize orangutan protection over business protection:

"Actually, they [the orangutans] are very gentle. In my experience is that they would like to be slowly talked and slowly called. They also don't want to be provoked too much. If you come to the park and you don't give them [supplementary] food then you destroyed the thing. Because they will show that they are unhappy in our managing. And you are supposed to protect them not the business. The business is secondary. That's what we want to do".

From the management perspective, finding profit is an important motivation to perform in this job. Every orangutan centre in this study is tourist-centric; hence orangutan was seen as a "product" to attract tourists and fulfil the tourists' expectations to gain truthful information about orangutan management. This study coded that "customer's satisfaction" and "reputation" brought revenue, which was a crucial motivation. As Sem6 emphasized:

"We have to have the behaviour study of our orangutan and monitoring our orangutan. That is what our product is. So, everybody must make sure they understood all these things. On our part, you have to love your job and orangutan especially. People will always look and ask whether you do it correctly or not. People want information. People want to know whether you speak the truth or not. Never tell lies and make the management difficult. You have to tell the truth. This is the thing we have to experience that we advise to all to love their job."

Sem4 also listed orangutan "Conservation" as the first reason to enjoy this job, and the second was "Personal Development".

As the conversation continued, Sem4 related to "customer satisfaction" and "reputation" that motivated them to perform at this job. Also Sem4 highlighted that it was important to give the right information to tourists, a motivation for improving English skills and knowledge about orangutans:

"Firstly, the most important [thing] that we have to face is tourists. Tourists are not only local [but could be foreign], so we must know at least basic English. At least some sentences that we could use when people asked in English. And then, secondly, we must not shy away, okay? Don' be shy, although typically we are shy, avoid to feel that even though we speak broken English. Once, my English was weak too, but you keep on talking. Then, you must be brave to face the problem and communicate wisely, especially for English-speaking foreigners. Even with the orangutans too, you must communicate wisely, so that the orangutans look at you as a friend. You must have these traits, or you must train to have these traits. You must train yourself, because orangutan doesn't necessarily show up in the feeding platform, so it is important to train yourself to communicate with the tourists; and entertain them. Keep them happy even when orangutan is absent. But you have to read and know more information regarding the orangutans. That's also important, keep yourself in the know about the information on orangutan".

Besides "Conservation", respondents in SNR also showed a strong "Humanistic" motivation value. For example, Sem1 expressed their sense of "obligation" and strong emotion to fulfil their duty to protect animals as a duty in religion, as well as providing education and awareness about orangutan protection to the visitors:

"We should protect and respect their right of living, and that not only applied to orangutan. We could not be cruel with animals, even though they are not being able to speak with us. In my opinion, [those who did cruelty to animals], clearly have no brains. We are not wisely using our brains' capabilities. In the Quran, there were few mentions that prohibited us on cruelty against animals. Whoever did not abide to the rules, had clearly narrow minds and influenced by money. This is what happened when lust overtaking ourselves, and we couldn't think rationally. There are sometimes that we felt helpless and couldn't directly helped the animals, so what we must do is to spread the right education awareness".

4.2 Motivation Values Transcribed from SORC

Strong "Conservation" motivation value was reflected in SORC as all respondents expressed this during the interviews. Most respondents here were coded as "passionate" and "devoted". Sep1 valued their job as they found a strong "passion" for wildlife, especially orangutan that has high "biodiversity value" because of its endemism in Borneo:

"The most important part is passion in our job. For example, since I work as a wildlife officer, I have passion for this job, I have passion for wildlife [...] because when you need to manage the visitors and orangutan, if you are not passionate enough, you can cause problem. Our orangutan is endemic, even at Sepilok, there are some that born wild back in the forest of Sepilok. This is their home and habitat. So, the rehabilitation centre suits here".

Sep4, an intern was coded as having "passion" and "interest" in wildlife, expressing that:

"I was interested more to animals, that's why I chose to do my internship here in orangutan centre. So, like before [the internship started], we have to choose the agencies and mostly were more on parks. So that's why I chose here, more on wildlife, and maybe can get more time with orangutan".

Two senior respondents agreed that "Conservation" was the biggest motivator to keep working in the centre for many years, even to overcome rigorous tasks. The satisfaction showed by seeing and knowing that the orangutans have recovered from their rehabilitation program, which is the main aim of the conservation centre. Sep5 and Sep2 respectively expressed:

“Yes, I have been working since 1979, ever since that till today I’m still working here [...]. True enough that the work has many challenges. The orangutans might recognize me after all these years, but there are some that still might attack or bite us when they see us [as a sign of protecting themselves]. But that could be a good thing, we have released orangutan that we rehabilitated ever since 1979 to the forest, I expect [them] to recover and lived happily in their home in the forest”.

“Usually, the centre would be closed at 5 p.m. right? If it were for me, 5.30 p.m. I was still in the forest sometimes. When I want to go back home, the orangutan wants to follow me back as well, which is prohibited. So, I waited till late, after they build their nest, even later than 5.30 p.m. After they finished with nest building, then I would go back home. Our intention is to manage and protect the orangutans, so we must be obliged by our duty. Protect them with our heart, because that’s what I did, have passion to do so. [...] Orangutan is a protected and nearly extinct animal. If it’s not us, then who else will help to protect them? If it’s not us that care for their existence, the next generation would not know orangutan. Probably they’d know by our stories, by they could never meet orangutan if we don’t protect the animal. Like dinosaur, we only knew them by pictures”.

The “Conservation” motivation value was followed by the “Personal Development” factor. More than 60% of respondents at SORC expressed that their motivation revolved around the opportunity to develop themselves, rising from their hard work and dedication. Sep5 expressed that their enjoyment led them to get more opportunities and career advancement:

“When I work here, I enjoy myself and it showed through. I think when I did other jobs, I tend to get bored easily. Once when my contract ended, the management just changed and merged, and there was no payment even for a while. I kept on doing my jobs for a month, then they offered me for a permanent placement here”.

The supportive “Environment/Surrounding” motivational value also revolved around the external factor that contributed towards the growth of the centre and its workforce. Sep5 expressed that the centre helped in building capacity for locals:

“There are some locals who chose to work, and not to further studies after completed their secondary schools. So, they opted for job at the centres. [...] Up until now some of these are rangers working [here], probably altogether five of them”.

The centre supported workforce through volunteering and collaboration with a foreign non-governmental organization (NGO). Sep3, felt welcomed in the community, hence motivated in performing the job:

“The people are so friendly, the food is great, and I just love being here. So, after traveling here for a few months, I wrote to the charity [that collaborated with SORC] and asked how I can help”.

As a young professional, Sem6 felt that teamwork dedication helped him building his career in the centre:

“I’ve learnt a lot from the senior staff. They are passionate people and committed too. [...] we always are together. We have an established unit, and a clear objective”.

Sep6 agreed that the strength of the conservation centre, besides its teamwork, is the “Monetary” stability and benefit that is provided by the upper management giving the comfort knowing that funding and housing benefit were guaranteed:

“If I were to seek for jobs, I would choose for other departments of wildlife. But I heard in Peninsular, the process could be tedious, compared to here. In SORC, it is easy to undergo for interview. Also, the management process in SORC is much organized, as we have our own funding, and not like any other typical government departments. We have our own funding [...], but we have close relationship with the main department, so it is easy to communicate”.

4.3 Motivation Values Transcribed from Taiping Zoo

At TZ, all respondents showed motivation through “Environment/Surrounding”, followed by “Monetary” motivation. Both motivation values overlapped and all respondents mentioned that location/distance between work and home could be a major factor leading to the motivating to work at the centre.

Tai1 related to the healthy environment that motivated them to work at TZ, coupled with the supportive teamwork that they had among the staff:

“I love working here because we care for each other and can easily share our problems. There are chances that I will still be here hopefully because it is easier for me since my hometown is nearby”.

This “Environmental/Surrounding” motivational value was also agreed by Tai2, who happened to be one of the team members of respondent Tai1. Working rigorous tasks at the zoo can be eased with cooperation from the team, as stated by Tai2:

“Very happy to work here because the fellow workers are like brothers to me, we’re not selfish and we are always helping each other”.

Working in the zoo allowed the female staff to support their family. Tai2 stated that raising family in the depressive state of the economy leaving her no choice but to work. She stated that:

“I have no choice but to work since my husband’s salary alone is not enough to support my family, not to mention the increasing economic needs lately”.

Tai4 added that “Conservation” could be a motivation factor, also the motivation of working overlapped with “Personal Development” and “Environment/Surrounding”. The transcript coded Tai4 as “passionate”, “animal lover”, who found “personal satisfaction” and “structured”, enjoying routine work:

“The job is demanding as well as it is satisfying for me, personally. The routine could be boring sometimes, but still, I like it. [...] I enjoy my work concerning animal welfare and animal rights, plus animal management issues, I will go for certain extent on, and I also loved being because I have passion towards my profession”.

However, the “Monetary” aspect could also be a reason to leave:

“If I am given a chance, with better position or opportunity, of course I will leave and change my job [...] I will go [change jobs] if I get better position and salary offer, as well as the opportunity to further my studies”.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most respondents expressed “Environment/Surrounding” as motivational factors that made them choose to work in the orangutan facilities. They specifically addressed the importance of teamwork that could lead to the enjoyment of the job. Inclusivity allowed both male and female staff to work together in diverse roles at the centres. For example, at SORC men and women worked together at the indoor and outdoor husbandry sites and feeding platforms. Two out of the three orangutan conservation centres in this study comprised protected forest areas (SNR and SORC), hence the areas where orangutans could roam freely were large. Therefore, working in an outdoor rainforest setting can often be rigorous and challenging, requiring good teamwork and trust. Besides ensuring animal welfare in the captive facilities of the centres, such as providing food, treatment, environmental enrichment, and husbandry, forest patrolling was also done, usually at SNR, to monitor timber poaching and trespassing. In some cases, relocation of the rehabilitated orangutans from SORC to Tabin Forest Reserve was conducted. This task alone requires a specially trained workforce as the safety of the rangers or patrollers might be at risk, especially when monitoring and tracking work is done (Ijeomah & Ogbara, 2013). In some protected areas, Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) devices are deployed by the rangers to monitor their tracking performance in patrolling the forest (Spira *et al.*, 2019). Thus, Spira *et al.* (2019) suggested that employers could monitor the rangers’ performance, and reward them in return, as a sign of appreciation. The IUCN’s Great Ape Tourism further outlines components that touch on the proper management of staff, especially through monitoring, financial monitoring and transparency, program monitoring and program evaluation (Macfie & Williamson, 2010). Good interactions between all staff regardless of professional status can sustain a healthy work environment and motivated the respondents of this study to do their work. Conversely, some studies show that maltreatment by the upper management lowered the motivation of the workers (Ogunjinmi *et al.*, 2008).

The “Conservation” value was expressed by respondents through the appreciation of biodiversity, passion and devotion, endemism/uniqueness of the orangutan, and aesthetic value of the orangutan. This finding showed that the workforce understands the objectives of the conservation centres. Campbell & Smith (2006) state that concern about animal welfare, such as to avoid disturbance of eggs during the nesting process of sea turtles, were majorly led by the scientific objectives. Further, Brouwner *et al.* (1999), Taylor & Douglas (1999), Clark *et al.* (2000) and Campbell & Smith (2006) suggested that respondents are showing devotion and desire to actively contribute to scientific tasks, especially to protect threatened animals, which was not explicitly expressed by the respondents of this study. The “Conservation” motivation value was lower in Taiping Zoo probably due to the location and setup of the centre. Taiping is considered a developed town hence; the local workforce here was maybe focused on finding income regardless of the conservation objective. Indeed, the concept of the “Zoo” usually may focus more on leisure and entertainment of visitors than species conservation (Carr & Cohen, 2011). However, well-managed zoos or other captive wildlife centres should provide comprehensive conservation education to their visitors (Tribe & Booth, 2003). The three orangutan centres in this study aim to achieve their respective conservation objectives, and for all, their revenue is co-supported by tourism. Some centres also encourage volunteerism-based work that is usually largely driven by conservation motivational values (Bjorndal, 1998; Bjorndal *et al.*, 1999), thus Campbell & Smith (2006) question if there is a polarization of interest to work with more threatened and charismatic species (like orangutan), as compared to the less endangered and unique wildlife.

The “Monetary” motivation value was mentioned equally often than “Conservation”. The transcript mostly coded responses as financial “stability”, “reputation”, “salary” and “revenue”. For some respondents, supporting their families may have been the primary reason to work at their job. The facilities opened the opportunity for local communities to build more capacity and enable local socio-economic growth. A better economic status, especially for the workforce with dependent family, could be ensured as both women and men can work at the centres (Sanborn & Schmidt, 1995). Mostly, the funding for the respective centres and staff salaries was provided from different sources, such as visitor revenues, from the government, that is, the municipal council or the state’s wildlife department, and non-governmental organisations, leading to different levels of job security depending on funding opportunities at the different centres, which was not discussed during the interviews. Indeed, motivation to perform in a job could be hindered by low income or inadequate salaries (Clark *et al.*, 2000; Ogunjinmi *et al.*, 2008). In addition to salaries, non-monetary contributions such as equipment, materials, basic necessities (e.g.: electricity, water and internet connection), or accommodation could be provided by the employer, as demonstrated by SORC. Nearby staff quarters can reduce living expenses especially for staff with family, or time for daily commutes for critical staff, such as veterinarian or rangers (Spira *et al.*, 2019).

In line with this, free staff training programs conducted in the centres and building capacity also contributed to the “Personal Development” motivational factor mentioned by the respondents. Many respondents expressed that working in the orangutan centres enabled them to learn new skills and built proficiency and confidence, for example through forest patrolling or visitor management. Indeed, providing learning opportunities and building capacity of the workforce leads to higher staff motivation (Jacobson *et al.*, 2012).

The “Humanistic” motivational value was mentioned least often by respondents and often related to the “Conservation” value. Some respondents mentioned “sympathy”, “trust” and “pride/patriotism” when speaking about working in orangutan conservation. Some mentioned orangutan as a symbol of Malaysian nationality that needs to be protected. A respondent also pointed out their religious obligation as Islam teaches integrity and responsibility. Some conservation practitioners found religious elements crucial to be integrated in practising and strengthening conservation awareness (Clements *et al.*, 2009; Nadkarni, 2004). Appreciation of aesthetic values and fear of losing endemic species was also mentioned in previous studies (Campbell & Smith, 2006).

6.0 CONCLUSION

The main motivation values of staff to work in Malaysian orangutan conservation centres were “Environment/Surrounding”, “Conservation”, “Monetary”, “Personal Development” and “Humanistic”, and often these motivation values overlapped as their drivers and expressions are intricately interwoven and dynamic. Orangutan is listed as Critically Endangered by the IUCN and could attract the workforce in the three centres due to its high conservation value, which also appeals to their humanistic values. Findings from this study highlighted that different

motivational values were more or less pronounced in the three conservation centres, with less emphasis on humanistic values or personal development, but besides money, all staff expressed the importance of good teamwork in orangutan conservation. Therefore, to increase staff productivity and satisfaction, the management, especially from human resources and funding departments, should consider these motivation values to implement policies that translate into staff satisfaction and enhances their performance.

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