

## **Factors Affecting Perceived Job Performance among Staff: A Case Study of Ban Karuna Juvenile Vocational Training Centre for Boys**

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The main objectives of this research were (1) to determine the relationships among organizational factors (goal setting, and role ambiguity), personal factor (job satisfaction), and perceived job performance, and (2) to determine the predictive power of organizational factors (goal setting, and role ambiguity), and personal factor (job satisfaction) on perceived job performance. A correlational research design was used. 5 key informants were purposively selected from staff of Ban Karuna (a juvenile vocational training centre for boys in Bangkok) for exploring job performance problems. Information was collected from 95 staff of Ban Karuna. The research instruments consisted of questions for measuring information of (1) a demographic, (2) a goal setting, (3) a role ambiguity, (4) a job satisfaction, and (5) a perceived job performance. Data analysis and hypothesis testing were performed by using Pearson's product moment correlation and multiple regression. The multiple regression model with all three variables could account for 43% of the variance in perceived job performance. However, only Role ambiguity had significant negative effect on Perceived job performance.

**Keywords:** perceived job performance, goal setting, role ambiguity, job satisfaction

Statistics show that juvenile delinquency is increasing every year among Thai youth (Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection, 2010a). Delinquent behavior is shown in selling and using drugs, stealing, rapes, and quarrels. These delinquencies affect not only the juveniles themselves but also their family and the society as well. The data from Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection (2010a) indicates that problem affects social development among young people, and ruins the development opportunities in their lives. This can impact the stability of the nation as well as the welfare of communities. Statistics from 1999 to 2008 (Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection, 2010b) showed that juvenile offenses and juvenile under control of detention centre were 37,388 in 1999 and increased to 46,981 in 2008 - an increase of more than 20%. About 90% of all juvenile were boys, and less than 10% were girls, which mostly were between ages of 15 - 18 years (Department of Juvenile

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Observation and Protection, 2010a). In 2008, there were 46,981 records, and 7,083 juvenile delinquents and about 18.75%, were sentenced to detention home of Department of Observation and Prevention all over the country. As a result, the juveniles who committed an offence in Bangkok and surrounding areas were sent to Ban Karuna (Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection) in Bangkok, Thailand.

Ban Karuna is an institution for juvenile delinquents who are sent there by the Juvenile and Family Court as a protective measure in lieu of a penal sanction. The main goals of Ban Karuna are to provide intervention, treatment and rehabilitation for juvenile delinquency, with the aim to develop the juveniles' ability to function effectively in society, especially their adjustment with peers and family. They are also encouraged to have involvement in productive activities, with the focus on changing the behavior of juveniles. Readjustment to society is also facilitated by promote growth through disciplined communal life, academic and vocational training. The result desired is to enhance their academic and employment opportunity, and support them to reform themselves for a return to the society after release. Staff is very important for any such organization since they are able to push the effective treatment in order to reduce repetition of crimes by juveniles later. Because each staff's job performance influences the group or team performance and overall organizational effectiveness as well (Gibson, 2000). There are many research and studies about juvenile delinquency concerning problem factors such as circumstances, financial condition, society, accommodation, social environment and intention of children and juvenile recidivists, who were waiting for probation or during rehabilitation period (Thesapurana, 1982; Thawornsiri, 1992; Ratanadilok, 1996). However, there has been very little literature on the impact of factors dealing with perceived job performance, with focus on the staff of Ban Karuna.

Job performance is a human behavior the result of which is an important factor for individual work effectiveness evaluation. From this view, it could be said that organization's success or failure depends on job performance of the individuals in that organization. This is similar to Muchinsky (2003) who said that job performance is the set of worker's behaviors that can be monitored, measured, and assessed achievement in individual level. Moreover, these behaviors are also in agreement with the organizational goals. Staff's job performance is important factor to push forward to be excellent organization. In performance appraisal, there are many appropriate panels being the

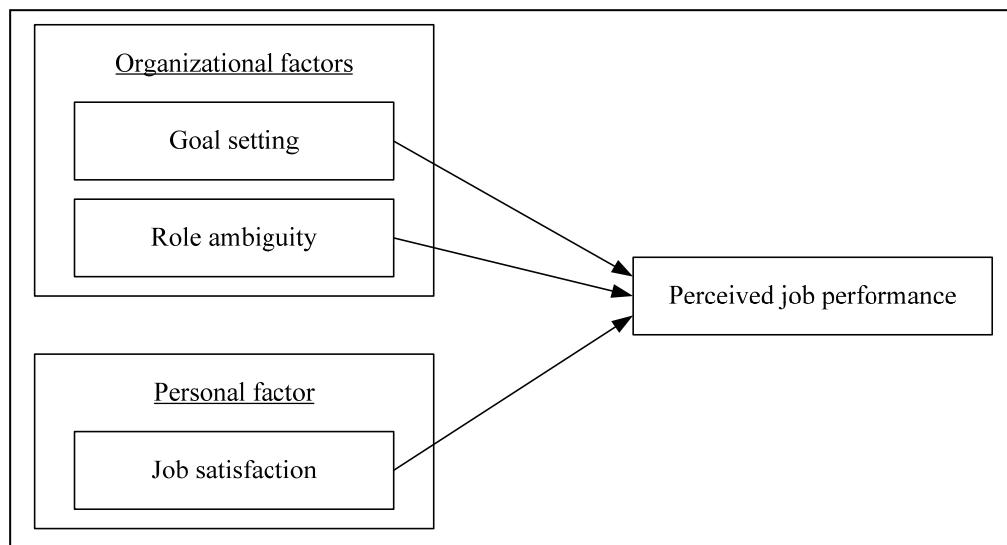
appraisers that each kind of appraisers has different advantages and disadvantages (Smithikrai, 2007); such as immediate supervisor, peer rating, committees, self rating and subordinate. This study emphasized on self-rated job performance that is called "perceived job performance". It is summarized from the reviews of perception and evaluation of staff on their own actions or relevant behaviors and characteristics that influence organizational objectives and responds to organization's tasks. It can be shown by using systematic assessment process whose results can be used for appropriated managing organization's human resources from organizations. The main reason for using self rating scale is because of some special job characteristics of Ban Karuna. Most staff in this case study would finish their tasks or jobs by themselves and often work alone since they have a certain and particular duty of their own, hence their supervisors could not have a chance to follow or observe their performance while they were working. Besides, some of staff works in different workplaces, this implies that each staff might be the most appropriate appraiser for his/her own job performance in this study. Moreover, the limitation on being careful to the mental status of the juveniles imprisoned in this place is important to be concerned.

One factor that affects job performance is goal setting which is a motivational technique that can be used to motivate staff to accomplish on the job that their desire (Locke & Latham, 1984). Locke and Latham identified five main components that were essential to the success of goal setting. In random order these characteristics are clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback and task complexity. After that Lee et al. (1991) presented an analysis of a goal setting which was earlier developed by Locke and Latham (1984). The psychometric properties of the measure were examined by using respondents from employees of a large, west-coast electronics organization. A principal components analysis extracted 10 meaningful factors of organizational goal setting that consists of supervisor support and participation in goal setting and strategies, goal stress, goal efficacy, goal rationale, using goal setting in appraisal, tangible reward, goal conflict, organizational facilitation of goal achievement, dysfunction effects of goal, and goal clarity. Goal setting level significantly affected different employee's job performance (Pantang, 2007) as holding the same goals influenced the staff to move in the same direction leading them to be successful in the long run. As a result, it could be concluded that higher goal setting has high effect on job performance.

The concept of role ambiguity has been described by Kahn et al. (1964) as the single or multiple roles that confront the role incumbent, which may not be clearly articulated (communicated) in terms of behaviors (the role activities or tasks/priorities) or performance levels (the criteria that the role incumbent will be judged by). The multidimensional approaches to the study of role ambiguity began with Bedeian and Armenakis (1981) and have continued with Sawyer (1992). Based on their findings and the foundation provided by these works there are 4 widely accepted dimensions to role ambiguity, which may be experienced by the role incumbents, and are based on the role incumbents' perspective. These dimensions included goal/expectation/responsibility ambiguity, process ambiguity, priority ambiguity, and behavior ambiguity. Yitzhak et al. (1995) studied interactive effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on job performance and found that role ambiguity was negatively associated with job performance ( $r = -.33$ ). As a result, it could be concluded that role ambiguity is negatively associated with job performance.

Job satisfaction is a factor that motivates employees for achieving organizational goals. Job satisfaction is defined as "how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. It is the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs" (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction is typically measured in levels and can be examined from multiple viewpoints using multiple constructs or categories as motivation and hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1966). Motivation factors deal with job content and lead to job satisfaction, consist of growth, work itself, responsibility, achievement, advancement, and recognition. Hygiene factors deal with job context and lead to job dissatisfaction consist of company policy and administration, supervision, interpersonal relations, status, working condition, security, and salary. In a comprehensive review of 301 studies, Judge, Thoresen, Bono, and Patton (2001) found that when the correlations are appropriately corrected for sampling and measurement errors, the average correlation between job satisfaction and job performance was higher .30. In addition, the relationship between job satisfaction and performance was found to be even higher for complex (e.g., professional) jobs than for less complex jobs. Thus, contrary to earlier reviews, it does appear that job satisfaction is, in fact, predictive of performance, and the relationship is even stronger for professional jobs. As a result, it could be concluded that job satisfaction is shown to be positively associated with job performance.

In this study, the researchers were interested in analyzing factors that affect perceived job performance among staff of Ban Karuna. The objectives of this research was to determine the relationships among organizational factors (goal setting, and role ambiguity), personal factor (job satisfaction), and perceived job performance as well as to determine the predictive power of organizational factors (goal setting, and role ambiguity), and personal factor (job satisfaction) on perceived job performance as shown in figure 1. This research was conducted for discovering the factors which might affect the performance outcomes. Furthermore, organizations could use the findings as the direction of improvement in the work effectiveness that may lead to highly effective organization in the future.



*Figure 1.* Conceptual Framework.

Hypotheses of this study were as follows: 1) goal setting will have a positive relationship with perceived job performance, 2) role ambiguity will have a negative relationship with perceived job performance, 3) job satisfaction will have a positive relationship with perceived job performance, and 4) goal setting, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction will be the significant predictors of perceived job performance.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants of this study were 100 staff members of Ban Karuna. After checking completion of the returned questionnaires, the number of valid sample was 95 cases. The majority or 79 (83.2%) of the samples were male. Most of sample (29 participants or 30.5%) were between 39-45 years old, and 52 (54.7%) of the participants had bachelor's degree. The greater part or 41 (43.2%) had 0.5-7 years of work experience. The group of jailors was the largest with 40 participants (42.1%). Most of staff, 65 (68.4%), had job responsibilities cohering with their job positions, the others' responsibilities did not cohere with their position 30 (31.6%).

### **Procedure**

Pilot study was also conducted in this research for exploring job performance problems and relevant factors. In-depth interview technique was used with 5 key informants who were purposively selected from each department to be representatives of staff of Ban Karuna. The data acquired from the pilot study was used for designing the conceptual framework, hypothesized model, and construct the research scales in the main study. After that, 95 staff of Ban Karuna were asked to join on a voluntary basis. Data was collected by using questionnaires. Results were analyzed and discussed.

### **Measures**

In this study, the perceived job performance appraisal of staff of Ban Karuna used graphic rating scale method (Muchinsky, 2003) with self rating due to its convenience and accuracy in measurement administering. The approach used in this appraisal was the approach recommended by National Industrial Conference Board Management Record (Olson, 1981, p. 6), which had been modified by Trakulchai (2002). The questionnaire had 23 items to measure the 11 components — quantity of job, quality of job, job knowledge, ability to learn new job, responsibility, human relations, communication skill, creativity, collaboration and coordination, work behavior and compliance with rules, and trustworthiness, by using a five-point scale to display job performance level described. The Cronbach's Alpha for items was 0.934.

For goal setting appraisal, the researchers modified from Sabaiying's study in 1999, based on Locke and Latham's (1984) concept. The questionnaire had 30 items to measure the 10 components—supervisor support and participation in goal setting and strategies, goal stress, goal efficacy, goal rationale, using goal setting in appraisal, tangible reward, goal conflict, organizational facilitation of goal achievement, dysfunction effects of goal, and goal clarity, by using a five-point scale to display goal setting level described. The Cronbach's Alpha for items was 0.871.

Role ambiguity, in present study, the researchers developed questionnaire from Jensuphakarn (2005) modified version. The approach used in this appraisal was the role ambiguity components of Bauer (1998 cited in Jensuphakarn, 2005). The questionnaire had 18 items to measure the 4 components—goal/expectation/responsibility ambiguity, process ambiguity, priority ambiguity, and behavior ambiguity, by using a five-point scale to display role ambiguity level described. The Cronbach's Alpha for items was 0.668.

Lastly, job satisfaction scale was modified from Baisukunt's study in 2000, based on Herzberg's (1966) theory. The questionnaire had 49 items to measure the 10 components—achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, growth, supervision, interpersonal relation, organizational policy and administration, working condition, and salary and job security, by using a five-point scale to display job satisfaction level described. The Cronbach's Alpha for items was 0.939.

## **Data Analysis**

After checking the precision of data entry and making codes for data analysis with the statistical analysis program, SPSS/PC for Windows, version 15.0, the following statistics were used. Descriptive statistics consisted of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to report information about personal characteristics of sample. For the hypothesis testing part, Pearson's product moment correlation and multiple regression were performed to identify the relationships between independent variables (goal setting, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction) and dependent variable (perceived job performance) respectively.

## Results

In the present study, questionnaires were given to 100 staff of Ban Karuna. After checking completion of the returned questionnaires, the number of valid sample was 95 cases. Results were classified into 2 parts as shown below.

Part 1: Demographic data of the sample and the average scores for each variable

The majority or 79 (83.2%) of the samples were male. Most of the sample 29 (30.5%) were between 39-45 years old, and 52 (54.7%) of samples had bachelor's degree. The greater part or 41 (43.2%) had 0.5-7 years of work experience. The group of jailors was the largest at 40 (42.1%) of samples. Most of staff, 65 (68.4%), had job responsibilities cohering with their job positions, the others' responsibilities did not cohere with their position as 30 (31.6%).

Table 1

*Summary of Descriptive Statistics (n = 95)*

Variables	Mean	SD
1. Goal setting	3.22	.491
2. Role ambiguity	2.54	.342
3. Job satisfaction	3.26	.493
4. Perceived job performance	3.74	.486

Moreover, as shown in Table 1, the average goal setting of Ban Karuna's staff was medium ( $Mean = 3.22$ ,  $SD = .491$ ), as same as their average job satisfaction ( $Mean = 3.26$ ,  $SD = .493$ ). While the average score of role ambiguity was quite low ( $Mean = 2.54$ ,  $SD = .342$ ), and they had quite high perceived job performance ( $Mean = 3.74$ ,  $SD = .486$ ). The range of all scale scores was 1-5.

Part 2: Hypothesis testing

For hypothesis testing, Pearson's product moment correlation was performed to identify the relationships between independent variables (goal setting, role ambiguity,

and job satisfaction) and the dependent variable (perceived job performance) for analyzing Hypothesis 1-3. Besides, multiple regression was used for examining the predictive power of goal setting, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction on perceived job performance. Results of test are shown in Table 2 and 3.

Table 2

*Summary of Correlations Among Variables (n = 95)*

Variables	2	3	4
1. Goal setting	-.510***	.773***	.287**
2. Role ambiguity		-.484***	-.650***
3. Job satisfaction			.323**
4. Perceived job performance			

Note. \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 2 indicated the correlation coefficients of goal setting, role ambiguity, job satisfaction, and perceived job performance. Results revealed that goal setting and job satisfaction had the significant positive relationships with perceived job performance ( $r = .287, p = .005$ ; and  $r = .323, p = .001$ , respectively). On the other hand, role ambiguity had the significant negative relationship with perceived job performance ( $r = -.650, p = .000$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 1-3 was confirmed.

From Table 3, perceived job performance was defined as criterion, while predictors consisted of goal setting, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction. After analyzing with standard regression, the result showed that the multiple regression model with all three variables could account for 43% of the variance in perceived job performance. However, as can be seen in Table 3, only role ambiguity had significant negative effect on perceived job performance after controlling for the other variables in the model. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was partly confirmed.

Table 3

*Summary Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Among Variables (n = 95)*

Variables	B	$\beta$	t	R	$R^2$	$R^2$ adj.	Overall F
Criterion: Perceived job performance				.656	.430	.411	22.86***
Predictors: Goal setting	-.132	-.133	-1.04				
Role ambiguity	-.949	-.669	-7.17***				
Job satisfaction	.100	.102	.80				

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Discussion

The current study set out to examine the relationships among organizational factors (goal setting, and role ambiguity), personal factor (job satisfaction), and perceived job performance, and to determine the predictive power of organizational factors and personal factor on perceived job performance. All the hypothesized relationships between goal setting, role ambiguity, job satisfaction, and perceived job performance were supported. Not surprisingly, goal setting exhibited a significant positive relationship with perceived job performance. Staff of Ban Karuna reported high participatory set goals, plans, and strategies from supervisor, perceived that goals were challenging and linked to these performance appraisal. They understood that through performance appraisal, organization provided facilitation for achieving all individual, department and organizational goals, would have high motivation and willing to work because their directions are clear and fair for everyone. The studies of Pantang (2007) and Sabaiying (1999) have shown similar finding that higher goal setting has a high effect on job performance. Moreover, role ambiguity had negative relationship with perceived job performance. The result supported previous research, (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970; Van, Brief, & Schuler, 1981; Singh, 1998) which shown that there were significant negatively associated with job performance. Role ambiguity implied that if employees have low role ambiguity, they will be able to clarify their job therefore they will be able to work effectively and perceive that their job performance as actual performance. On the other hand, the employees who have high role ambiguity will be confused about what is expected, what should do, who can ask for help, how to get things done, what should be done in, what order, etc. Then they could not work as well as

their potential. Furthermore, job satisfaction had a positive relationship with perceived job performance which was supported by many previous studies (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001).

Job satisfaction implied that if the employees have high job satisfaction, they would be happy and put more effort to get their job done as well as they can. On the other hand, if employees have low job satisfaction since they might think that their own needs could be negligent by organization, they would be bored, show lack of willingness to work, have high conflict, absenteeism, etc. This would definitely affect their job performance.

After determining the predictive power of goal setting, role ambiguity and job satisfaction on perceived job performance, the researchers found that only one significant predictor that of role ambiguity, even though positive relationship between goal setting and job satisfaction were found. As of relationship testing between goal setting, role ambiguity, job satisfaction and perceived job performance which found that relationship between role ambiguity and perceived job performance was high while the relationship between both goal setting and job satisfaction with perceived job performance were low. In the current situation, staff of Ban Karuna might think that role ambiguity would be the most importance factor that was an influence on perceived job performance. However, both goal setting and job satisfaction were not severe factors to affect job performance of staff of Ban Karuna.

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