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The Motivation Behind Mortuary Beauticians in the Funeral Business

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Abstract

The funeral business is a profitable business, and it's interesting to be studied, especially on people who want to do extreme jobs that are not common. An important part of this business is the Mortuary Beautician or Funeral Cosmetology profession that is rarely in demand, even though it is of high-income, and professional recruitment is not advertised in the job vacancies. This profession must also have the soul of art and the calling of the soul. This research tries to dig deeper into the motivation and experience of mortuary beauticians in doing their work. This phenomenon is a reality that is rarely excavated and understood. To get a complete understanding of this profession, a research approach is needed that can explore various sources of data and information and gain deep understanding of the reality that occurs; therefore, this research uses a case-study approach. It was found that a strong belief in the mortuary beautician profession makes someone stay in their profession. The finding that enriched previous theory is that one's ultimate motivation in working is not only in self-actualization (according to Maslow) but spiritual motivation, which makes people work more heart-minded and oriented to please their God.

Keywords: funeral business, mortuary beautician, motivation

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1. Introduction

Studies that explore the application of motivation and its challenges are the most frequent topics in organizational behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2015: 214). This issue becomes interesting when examining the motivation on people who want to do extreme jobs that are not commonly done by many people. The funeral business is one of the most profitable businesses, because consumers want to pay dearly to get the best funeral service for their family. Consumer spending for these needs is high, indicating that businesses in this field have good financial prospects. Pilon's study (2012) showed that after cars and homes, funeral rites were the third highest

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monetary investment of households in the West. In North America, for example, the average funeral costs range from $8,000 to $10,000 according to Forbes Magazine (2014 as cited by Korai & Souiden, 2016). The high cost of funerals can be understood because the cemetery's posture itself is quite complex. According to IbisWorld (2015), the funeral services industry includes all activities related to transportation (escorting the mourners to the cemetery chapel, transporting coffins from service to the cemetery, etc.), preparing (applying and keeping the corpse, serving as a liaison with religious leaders, etc.) and managing (interviewing the family for funeral style, how to appreciate the deceased, administration of documents, etc.) and the funeral or burial (Korai & Souiden, 2016).

The lack of available funeral industry data, makes it difficult for a businessman to estimate the market scale accurately. In 2012, consumers from French countries spent more than $2 billion for funeral arrangements. In the last 15 years, the funeral services sector has experienced sustained growth, rising 2% in volume and 50% in value. The burial industry in the UK currently has a value of around one billion Euro and is expected to increase by 3.3% in the coming years. The same performance is also seen in US cemetery industries, estimated to have a value of $20 billion each year while the funeral industry in Quebec is estimated to have a value of $348 million and is expected to double by 2050 because the burial industry there can capture demand and an aging population (Korai & Souiden, 2016). These data indicate that the funeral business is a profitable business and has good prospects in the future. This is in accordance with the opinion of Mr. Ario (the owner of the biggest funeral service, 'Ario, in Surabaya) who said that business in this field was still unique and it is required by many people, because everyone will die.

The mortuary beautician is one of the 'extreme' jobs. The words corpses and cemeteries contain 'negative' and 'frightening' meanings in society, so the profession as a 'corpse cosmetician' is rarely in demand or advertised in job advertisements. However, the rewards for the unfamiliar profession are quite high and one of six unusual professions in America with high incomes, ranging from 46 million per month (www.kompas.com). Different bodies make up with bridal makeup, celebrities or other normal people. A mortuary beautician requires specific knowledge, skill and courage, especially in dealing with 'unusual' corpses from accidents, illness and other unnatural things. Therefore, only few people are able to live this profession, even though it offers a high income.

But is high salary the sole motivation of the mortuary beautician to pursue this profession? According to Rantje Lankum, Manager of Funeral Services Foundation (YPP)

St.Carolus-Salemba-Central Jakarta, quoted by the magazine TRUST, being a mortuary beautician not only capitalizes the courage, but also must have the soul of art and the call of the soul. The mortuary beautician's job is to make the object of makeup (the corpse) to be beautiful, so that it can please the bereaved family. Although classified as unusual, there are still individuals who want to pursue this profession. This cannot be separated from beliefs owned by someone. Buchholz's (1978) study concluded that there are beliefs about working as a human activity and there are five work concepts: the work ethic, the organizational belief system, the Marxist-related beliefs, the humanistic belief system and the leisure ethnic. Buchholz's research framework has been applied to research on intercultural beliefs. Buchholz's research is based on the belief system model proposed by Rokeach (1979) which includes all the beliefs, expectations and expectations that the individual accepts as the truth of the environment in which he lives. Belief about the work is what drives a person to choose a job, regardless of the positive or negative paradigm of the community about the job. The corpse hairdresser profession is in much demand urgent in the funeral business because all the funeral processions will begin after the body is 'ready'; this means the body must be tidied up and hardened to look as decent as when alive, the next step is then the funeral procession. Factors related to culture (religion, local custom, ethnicity, etc.) must be understood also by a mortuary beautician, because each culture has a specificity in displaying the face of the corpse. There is a culture that wants the face of the body to appear bright, but there are those who want it to look natural (www.majalahtrust.com).

Some research has focused more on funeral/burial culture that is associated with the custom and religion of the community. One of them is research from Tanaka (2007) whose focus is to analyze the conceptualization of death through observation of funeral services and the burial industry in Japan. This research is only discussed in terms of service and commercialism. What is interesting about this research, however, is the recognition that funeral services are different from services in general, especially competence demands from human resources, both knowledge, ability, skill or attitude. Interview with a former mortuary beautician and the wife of Ario-Surabaya's funeral home owner revealed that coral makeup requires a separate technique, because the condition of each corpse is different. In corpses that died normally, there were no significant difficulties. But, for bodies damaged by accidents, sickness, suicide, murder victims and other unnatural things, it takes certain techniques and skills to make the damaged corpse look respectable and beautiful. As recognized by Tanaka (2007), in addition to the type and handling of funeral accessories, places of prayer (temples,

mosques, churches, temples, etc.), ceremonial and crematorium halls, knowledge of religious doctrine, religious cults, regional custom, receive guests and how to treat clients who are in a traumatic situation for the loss of a loved one, and many more important items that must be acknowledged and it is difficult to define what matters and what is not important. All such work demands high competence from its human resources, including the post of mortuary beautician, as the professional demands of the consumer will determine the success of the business in this field.

Many studies have related to work motivation, but research on work motivation in extreme jobs (extreme jobs) is still scarce. Some researchers argue that, if someone works 60 hours or more a week, earning a high and holding a position with five or more of the following characteristics, then they can be categorized as having extreme jobs. The characteristics of a job categorized as extreme jobs are as follows (Hewlett and Luce, 2006): (a) Unpredictable workflow; (b) Strict deadlines and fast speed of work; (c) The scope of responsibility is too great; (d) After-hours work events; (e) Availability for clients 24/7; (f) Responsibility for profits and losses; (g) Responsibility for mentoring and recruitment; (h) Frequency of travel, often overseas; (i) A large number of direct reports; and (j) Physical presence in the workplace, at least ten hours a day. Further Hewlett and Luce (2006) say that extreme job holders love their work and are fulfilled by their work. The question that arises is what motivates one to work in extreme jobs? The answers can vary, such as high pay, recognition, status, power, incredible co-workers and adrenaline rush.

Occupation as a mortuary beautician is also an unusual job and is willing to be done by human resources in general and is included in the 'extreme jobs' category. Demands are to work 24 hours a day without rest, seven days per week and repetitive work schedules, overlap, and the need to work quickly because it is associated with the funeral procession schedule and the corruption of corpses (if not using forma-lin (embalming process). Similarly, the principle of the funeral home is that it never rejects the client's request and the work must be completed as soon as death occurs (Tanaka, 2007). 'Frightening stigma' and the ethical value attached to the mortuary beautician made this position rarely announced in job vacancies to attract people to apply for jobs Therefore, it is very interesting to examine what are motivators of the mortuary beautician in wanting to do this work, and how they are able to survive in this profession.

Research on funeral services and business is small, but research related to the cos-metic position is very rare indeed. In the studies of funeral services and business there is also more about funeral techniques tailored to the client's family requests, including

the decoration of the coffin, and the funeral procedure that is usually adapted to the customs and religion of the client's family. The work on a corpse is rarely explored and discussed whereas the mortuary beautician's work is the first job in a funeral session. The focus of this research is to explore more deeply about the motivation and experience of the mortuary beautician in performing their work. This phenomenon is a reality that is rarely excavated and understood, so, to obtain a complete understanding that is able to explore various sources of data and gain a deep understanding of reality, the case study approach is considered as the right choice.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Motivation

Motivation is a common topic that is often discussed in various articles and research. Simply put, Robbins and Judge (2015: 216) define motivation as a process that causes the emergence of the intensity, direction and persistence of efforts of a person toward the achievement of goals. A similar definition is also put forward by Luthans (2011: 157) that motivation is a process that begins with a deficiency or physiological/psychological need that activates behavior or encouragement aimed at purpose or incentive. From the aforementioned definitions, it appears that motivation is something that encourages a person to act or behave in a certain way. Motivation also differentiates a person from his/her career choice, including choice in extreme jobs such as mortuary beautician. There are various approaches or theories in explaining motivation. In general there are four motivational approaches (Woolfok, 2005: 340), namely: (a) Behavioral Approaches to Motivation – motivation is described as 'reward' and 'incentive' in which an interest in an object/event may encourage or not encourage a particular behavior; (b) Humanistic Approaches to Motivation – emphasizes freedom, choice, personal unity and effort to grow personally; (c) Cognitive Approaches to Motivation – believes that behavior is determined by one's thinking, regardless of whether the person has received a reward or punishment for his or her behavior in the past; (d) Social Learning Approaches to Motivation – an integration of behavioral and cognitive approaches and takes into account both the impact/outcome of the behavior and the impact of individual beliefs and expectations.

2.2. Motivation theories

There are various motivational theories that explain a person's work behavior and these theories evolve over time, from content theories, process theories to contemporary theories. Each of these theories has their own assumptions and arguments. One of the most widely known theories is the Hierarchy of Needs Theory of Abraham Maslow, that every human being has a hierarchy of five needs (Luthans, 2011: 162–164), namely: (1) Psychological needs; (2) Safety needs; (3) Love/belongingness/social needs; (4) Esteem needs; (5) Needs for self-actualization.

In addition, Luthans also explained that the motives of insiders may be intrinsic or extrinsic. Extrinsic motivators are tangible and visible like rewards, benefits and promotions, and intrinsic motivators are more internally generated and invisible, but have a more positive impact on work outcomes, such as persistence, performance and productivity. Intrinsic motivators can be feelings of responsibility, achievement, accomplishment, feelings of being challenged or being competitive (Luthans, 2011: 160–161).

2.3. Motivational values

According to Schwartz (1992), the values can be arranged in two dimensions as follows: (a). The dimension of 'self-enhancement' to 'self-transcendence' – a dimension that reflects the difference between values for personal gain and values related to the wellbeing of others; (b). The dimension of 'openness to change' with 'conservation' – values that motivate people to follow their intellectual and emotional interests in an unpredictable and uncertain purpose compared to being the status quo and certainty. Of these two dimensions, Schwartz suggests 10 types of motivational values, namely: Universalism, Benevolence Conformity, Tradition, Security, Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation and Self-Direction

2.4. Funeral cultures

Cultures are closely related to the beliefs of the societies in which they are located. Belief is the deepest acknowledgment of the essential elements of life, representing the main perceptions of society about man, nature and reality (Nicholson & Wong, 2001). Beliefs are the individual assumptions about the world and its surroundings, beliefs are also individual subjective judgments with regard to aspects of the world

(Schein, 2006: 29). This relates to people's understanding of themselves and their environment. The burial homes today not only mediate values that are built culturally and a hatred of secularization, but also provide a series of concepts and practices that are updated or customized for customers just like any other service industry. In the past, the cemetery was viewed as a static and a numerical characteristic of the ontological cycle in which the philosophy of society was widely predetermined and limited. In contrast, commercial cemeteries today have characteristics that are easily shaped and dynamic – as a means of manifesting a positive death and expressing a particular concept (Tanaka, 2007). Suzuki (2000: 6–7), in his writings, said there was a tripartite interaction between consumer (or social relationship), producers (or commodities and services) and cultural values as models to examine the changing concepts of dying, death and the deceased. But Suzuki did not clearly explain the concept of death values in the current situation as well as the analysis of cultural values as regards the cemetery. This causes the emergence of operational difficulties in the funeral home compared with other businesses. In this business, untold elements must be mastered. Regional custom must also be considered, because each region has a different burial ritual, and usually follows the local custom and religion it embraces. The custom area will affect the funeral procession, altar and decoration, consumption, even good makeup for the deceased. In other words, funeral practices are different across the globe, both in Asia, America, Africa, India and Britain and in many other parts of the world.

2.5. Religion

Ceremonial and funeral rituals are also influenced by the religion of the deceased (and his/her family). Each religion has a different approach (Lobar et al., 2006). The role of religion is very important because it answers religious questions about the view of the meaning of life and death. In Indonesia, there are six religions officially recognized by the Government, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Protestant Christianity and Confucianism, and each religion has a different funeral process. Understanding the religion of the deceased (or his/her family) is needed in preparing the funeral as a whole (bathing, make up the corpse; make up the altar, embalming and the funeral procession).

2.6. Methods

This research uses interpretive paradigm (single case study) which aims to build the theory rather than test it and theoretical sampling is appropriate to use. Theoretical sampling means cases are chosen because the case is suitable for illuminating and expanding relationships and logic between constructs (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Theoretical sampling of a single case is easy/clear. The case was chosen because it uncovered remarkable, extreme examples and the opportunity to enter unusual studies (Yin, 1994). Therefore, single-case research is expected to exploit significant phenomena under unusual/extreme conditions (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The mortuary beautician is also an extreme case that is rarely studied. This study selected informants who have pursued the profession in the Funeral Service Ario, Dinoyo Street No. 94–96, Keputran, Tegalsari, Surabaya, East Java 602 65.

According to Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2000), this research data collection method uses multiple sources. The use of multiple data sources and instruments is also intended for triangulation purposes, such as cross-checks to improve the true level of data. This study uses individual interview method, observation and document analysis (Mason 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The number of respondents is two people (one mortuary beautician who is a permanent employee in the Ario-Surabaya funeral services and one former mortuary beautician who is also the owner of Ario Cemetery -Surabaya Cemetery). The data collected are then triangulated between methods and intra methods to minimize the bias of the researchers (Efferin, 2010; Efferin et al., 2008).

3. Results

3.1. Business prospects funeral services

A family business, situated in Dinoyo Street no. 94–96 – Surabaya in East Java, it is owned by Mr. Ario. It serves the funeral process – bathing the corpse, makeup of the body, the funeral/cremation and the disposal of the ashes of the burned bodies. Customer requirements vary according to their culture, religion, or other aspects. The funeral business is a good prospect business, because its existence is required by all people and the number of businessmen who are interested in this field is limited. As Mr. A elaborated:

The funeral business is one of the rare business ventures, the third scarce business in the world. In Surabaya, there are only a few funeral service businesses. Many people will be looking for this business and will not be a short-term business. When compared with 10 years earlier, this business has grown very rapidly, so the demand of employees has increased also, including the need for mortuary beauticians. I 'persuaded' my daughter to pursue the mortuary science in America so she could develop this business better in the future.

From the aforementioned statement it can be stated that business competition in this field is very limited, and the prospects are good also. However, the service orientation of the Ario company is not only for profit, but also customer satisfaction. It is the top priority by treating customers as family members. In this case, Mr. A has incorporated a marketing concept that prioritizes customer satisfaction, so that satisfied customers will recommend to others; as Mr. A noted:

In the funeral business, a company does not form a relationship with a family in mourning like a service business in general (buyer and seller). Profits are not the only major goal. The company is more concerned with the goals and expectations of the bereaved family. If the customer is satisfied with our service, they will definitely recommend to their relatives and friends.

Good service will make the bereaved family happy and satisfied. This can be done if the company has a team consisting of skilled employees in their fields, because competence is demanded in this work, as stated by Tanaka (2007) in that the funeral service is different from service in general, whereby the demand of human resource competence becomes the important thing. One part of the team that supports the success of this funeral service is the mortuary beautician. All members in the team are a unit that support each other, as Mr. A, Mrs. A and Mrs. X commented:

In funeral services, all activities are performed by the team and each team member who provides services is an important part because they are a unit. However, each team must have specific skills to handle the job, for example being creative in handling the various corpses, understanding many cultures and religions, cleanliness and the function of equipment.

This means that cosmeticizing the corpse is only one part of a team's work in funeral services, and its existence is considered as an important part of the whole funeral service process.

3.2. Objectives and history of the mortuary beautician profession

The mortuary beautician profession is a very rare job due to not many people being willing to do it. The mortuary beautician's function is to transform corpses under various conditions in order to become a 'beautiful one', thereby making a positive impression. As Mrs. A and Mrs. X explained: "The aims of the corpse makeup is make a corpse that initially looks bad (messy) to look good and worthy and create a positive impression for everyone." The selection of a mortuary beautician requires various considerations in terms of economic, social, cultural and political aspects, and so on. Family factors play a dominant role in the selection of a person's profession, especially in unusual professions in our society such as the mortuary beautician profession. The informants stated that their family background was in the same field, and this had an influence on the decision to pursue this profession. As Mrs. A, and Mrs. X elaborated: "The family background has long been a profession associated with burial services and cosmeticizing the corpse. This aspect affects the decision to be mortuary beautician."

3.3. Motivation for the mortuary beautician profession

Motivation is a process that account for an individual's intensity, direction and persistence of efforts toward the achievement of goals (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Motivation is a motivator for someone to want to take action, and, within the company, motivation can be a driving activity toward the positive. From various definitions, it can be seen that motivation is something that encourages someone to act or behave in a certain way. Motivation also differentiates a person from his/her career choice, including choice in extreme jobs such as a mortuary beautician. Motivation can be shifted over time, meaning that the initial motivation when a person starts working can be different after many years. At first, the motivation of the second informant (Mrs. X) was the physical needs (the most basic), such as salary and incentives. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, these are the main motivator for people in their first job. However, for the first informant (Mrs. A), the initial motivation to pursue this profession was helping friends (needs affiliation/social needs). Mr. A confirmed this when explaining why the informant decided to be a mortuary beautician: "I guarantee 100% for money (Mrs. X), because I give a decent salary and incentives are quite adequate. Not to mention the tips they receive from the family of the deceased (at least IDR100.000)." Mrs. X also stated: "I want to be a mortuary beautician due to the high fee, also the additional incentives from Ario's owner and tips from the family of the deceased." On

the other hand, Mrs. A explained: " ... hearing the word RIP (Rest in Peace) coming out of the mourner's mouth made my heart rejoice and arose the motivation of my heart to help cheer up the bereaved family by making up the corpse to be as beautiful as possible."

When beginning to pursue this profession, the two informants had different motivations, but, over time, there was a shift in motivation whereby the motivation of informant Mrs. A shifted from social needs to spiritual needs, and the second informant from psychological needs to esteem needs, as they elaborated: "I started corpse makeup to help my friends and to accommodate others, but, over time, this job has become a part of the service to God, thanks to the God for His blessing on my life" (Mrs. A). "I feel I can help others by pleasing a grieving family with my makeup. If the family is happy with my makeup, my heart is relieved, I feel satisfied and appreciated if I can make the grieving family consoled" (Mrs. X).

Despite a shift in work motivation, the second informant has remained in the profession. This is in accordance with the opinion of Buchholz (1978) who said that the persistence of a person in a profession depends on the job. In addition, being a mortuary beautician does not require specific training and formal education, but it is necessary to have high skills to make corpses look good, in accordance with customer wants. Actually, there are many funeral training and schools available overseas, but not in Indonesia. Ario funeral services has applied on the job training practically by using coaching and internships media. The process of establishing the competence of the three mortuary beauticians who are apprenticed to senior employees and practice with them, as Mr. A commented:

> *My mortuary beautician was originally a housekeeper who graduated from elementary school. She helped carry a bag and always followed my wife who did the corpse makeup. When the company was overwhelmed by customer demand, my wife asked her housekeeper to do the corpse makeup and the result was good. She is still a good mortuary beautician and her two younger sisters are also learning from her experience.*

Nevertheless, knowledge is needed in relation to the family's wishes and how the culture of the deceased family may be from different religious or cultural aspects. Every region/tribe has a different approach to the funeral process. This knowledge can be learned from experience by following one's predecessor in the makeup of the corpse (learning by doing) and the mortuary beautician is one part of the whole team that provides funeral services in the funeral home. As Mrs. X stated: "I learned how to apply

corpse makeup corpse by following my older sister when she makes up the corpse. Then I learned to meet what the customer wants. My understanding of funeral culture and religion comes through my experience as a mortuary beautician."

3.4. Experience of the mortuary beautician professions

The mortuary beautician profession is often associated with a 'frightening' stigma, and the mere mention creates goosebumps. Based on mortuary beautician experiences, they have never experienced a strange incident that is supernatural in nature. It indicates that there is really nothing to be afraid of in particular from a person who has died. As Mrs. X elaborated: "... I've never experienced a frightening incident related to doing the makeup on a corpse. At first it appears scary, but over time it becomes common." The condition of a person's death can be diverse and becomes a special challenge for the mortuary beautician. The worse the condition of one's death, it will have an effect on the degree of difficulty when applying corpse makeup, as Mrs. X explained:

> *... The worse the corpse condition, it makes it difficult to apply makeup, especially someone who has died from an accident (being hit or a fire), which damages their body. Handling the damaged body needs specific powder and techniques to make their face look good. So, I always pray the corpses I handle are in good condition.*

3.5. Limitations of research

The informants used in this study have been working for a lengthy period of time (more than 15 years) so they had forgotten their first interesting experience as a mortuary beautician and it was difficult to reconstruct completely from the informants' memories. Another limitation is the limited number of informants and that the interview was conducted in a somewhat noisy office, interrupted by the demand s of the job; as such, the interview results are not optimal.

3.6. Future research

Based on the aforementioned limitations, it is recommended that future work should be done as multi-case research (informants from various funeral services companies) so that new discourse can be obtained. Duration of the study was extended so that a

personal approach could be undertaken with informants before the interview session so as to obtain maximum results.

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