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**Plan to improve the motivation of employees at Jiangsu
Xingchang Human Resources Service Co., Ltd.**

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Abstract

In the context of increasing competition and the need for enhanced productivity, employee motivation has emerged as a critical factor for organizational success. This study addresses the problem of low motivation levels among employees at Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd. The primary objective is to evaluate these motivation levels and identify the influencing factors. We evaluated the level of motivation via the Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ) administered to 75 employees, followed by statistical analyses including regression analysis. The main results indicated significant correlations between motivation and factors such as age, education level, and income. Key predictors of motivation included satisfaction with prospects and monthly income. Based on these findings, tailored strategies were proposed to enhance motivation, such as improving financial rewards, offering career development opportunities, and fostering a positive work environment. Implementing these strategies is expected to increase employee motivation, improve job satisfaction, enhance organizational performance, and reduce turnover rates.

Keywords:

Employee Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Reward Systems, Career Development, Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ)

JEL Classification:

I31 General Welfare, Well-Being

J28 Safety • Job Satisfaction • Related Public Policy

Resumo

No contexto da crescente concorrência e da necessidade de aumentar a produtividade, a motivação dos trabalhadores surgiu como um fator crítico para o sucesso organizacional. Este estudo aborda o problema dos baixos níveis de motivação dos trabalhadores da Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd. O objetivo principal é avaliar estes níveis de motivação e identificar os factores que os influenciam. A metodologia utilizada foi um inquérito utilizando o Questionário de Motivação no Trabalho (WMQ) administrado a 75 trabalhadores, seguido de análises estatísticas, incluindo análise de agrupamentos, análise de correlação, análise de regressão. Os principais resultados indicaram correlações significativas entre a motivação e factores como a idade, o nível de educação e o rendimento. Os principais factores de previsão da motivação incluíam a satisfação com as perspectivas e o rendimento mensal. Com base nestas conclusões, foram propostas estratégias adaptadas para aumentar a motivação, tais como a melhoria das recompensas financeiras, a oferta de oportunidades de desenvolvimento da carreira e a promoção de um ambiente de trabalho positivo. Espera-se que a implementação destas estratégias aumente a motivação dos trabalhadores, melhore a satisfação no trabalho, melhore o desempenho organizacional e reduza as taxas de rotatividade.

Palavras-Chave:

Motivação dos trabalhadores, Motivação intrínseca, Motivação extrínseca, Sistemas de recompensa, Desenvolvimento de carreira, Questionário de motivação no trabalho (WMQ)

JEL Classification:

I31 Bem-estar geral, bem-estar

J28 Segurança - Satisfação no trabalho - Política pública relacionada

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Glossary

HR - HUMAN RESOURCES

KPIs - MONITOR KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

SDT - SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

WMQ - WORK MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Introduction

1.1. Contextualization and Background

In today's globalized and competitive business environment, employee motivation has emerged as a critical factor for organizational success. Motivated employees are more likely to demonstrate higher productivity, better job satisfaction, and stronger commitment to their work, which in turn reduces turnover rates and increases overall organizational performance (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Robbins & Judge, 2017). Numerous studies have confirmed the strong link between motivation and employee retention, highlighting how well-motivated teams lead to sustained productivity and innovation (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Judge & Klinger, 2007). For modern organizations, creating a work environment that fosters both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is essential, not only for meeting performance goals, but also for ensuring long-term success in the market (Herzberg, 1959; Ryan & Deci, 2000). A motivated workforce is often the difference between an organization that thrives and one that struggles to maintain operational efficiency (Vroom, 1964).

China is currently undergoing rapid economic growth and industrial transformation, which has resulted in heightened competition for skilled labour. The workforce in China has evolved, with employees increasingly seeking not only financial rewards but also opportunities for career development, recognition, and a positive workplace culture (Zhu, Warner, & Rowley, 2007). In response, companies are shifting from traditional management approaches to modern HR practices that prioritize employee motivation and engagement, especially in service industries where high performance relies heavily on the motivation of skilled employees (Cooke, 2013). The growing importance of effective human resource management (HRM) practices in China reflects a broader global trend toward optimizing organizational culture and employee satisfaction to meet the evolving demands of the labour market (Warner, 2008). Modern HR strategies that incorporate career development opportunities, recognition programs, and an engaging workplace culture are becoming essential for attracting and retaining talent in China's increasingly competitive labour market demands (Chen, Zhou, & Tian, 2018).

Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd. is an ideal case study for exploring these dynamics. Established in 2015, Jiangsu Xingchang has grown into one of the leading HR service providers in the Jiangsu province. The company offers a wide range of services, including recruitment, workforce management, training, and consultancy for various industries. With a mission to support the growth and efficiency of its clients through strategic HR services, Jiangsu Xingchang plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between employers and skilled employees in the region. The company operates in an industry where employee motivation

and engagement are directly linked to service quality and client satisfaction (Warner, 2008). Given the unique challenges of the HR service industry—such as high employee turnover and the need for continuous client interaction—understanding the factors that drive employee motivation within Jiangsu Xingchang is crucial for improving its internal performance and the services it delivers to clients. The company's strategic importance in the labor market, combined with its ongoing challenges related to employee motivation, makes it an excellent subject for this study.

1.2. Problem Statement

Within Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd., several challenges related to employee motivation have emerged. Despite the company's growth and expanding client base, it faces issues such as high employee turnover, low engagement levels, and occasional declines in productivity. These problems are exacerbated by the competitive nature of the HR services industry, where employees often experience high workloads, pressure to meet client demands, and limited opportunities for career advancement. Many employees, particularly in client-facing roles, report feeling disengaged or undervalued, which has a direct impact on their performance and, subsequently, on the company's service quality.

The need to address work motivation within Jiangsu Xingchang is urgent. Without a deep understanding of the specific factors influencing motivation, the company risks further losses in employee productivity, increasing turnover, and diminishing job satisfaction. Such issues not only affect internal operations but also undermine client relationships, as disengaged employees are less likely to provide high-quality service. The research into the determinants of work motivation in this company is critical because it can provide valuable insights into how Jiangsu Xingchang can improve its HR practices, thereby enhancing employee engagement and job satisfaction. The findings from this study could help the company develop targeted strategies to increase motivation, ultimately leading to better performance, reduced turnover, and greater organizational success.

1.3. Research Objectives and Significance

The objective of this study is to explore and analyse the key determinants of employee motivation at Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd. By identifying the specific factors that impact motivation, the study aims to provide the company with a clear understanding of how to improve its HR management practices to foster a more engaged and motivated workforce.

The specific objectives of this study include

1. To identify the most important factors influencing motivation among employees at Jiangsu Xingchang.
2. To examine how these factors directly impact employee engagement and productivity.
3. To recommend practical strategies for enhancing work motivation based on the research findings.

Theoretical significance: lies in its contribution to the existing literature on work motivation, particularly in the context of a Chinese human resources service company. While many studies have explored motivation in various sectors, fewer have focused on HR service companies in China. This research will provide valuable insights into how motivation operates in a specific, culturally distinct labour market.

Practical significance: The recommendations derived from this study can help Jiangsu Xingchang improve its HR practices, leading to higher levels of employee motivation, enhanced performance, and reduced turnover. In turn, these improvements can positively influence the company's service delivery and client satisfaction, strengthening its competitive position in the market.

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the study's background, presents the problem statement, and outlines the research objectives and significance, focusing on employee motivation at Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review, covering key theories of motivation, including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, and explores how these concepts apply to the Chinese labour market. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology, detailing the design, participants, procedures, and instruments used for data collection, along with ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis, including descriptive statistics, regression findings, to identify key motivational predictors. Chapter 5 discusses the findings in the context of existing literature and provides a set of practical recommendations for improving motivation at Jiangsu Xingchang. Chapter 6 proposes strategies for enhancing motivation at Jiangsu Xingchang, based on both the literature and data analysis. Finally, Chapter 7 offers conclusions, summarizes the main results, and provides recommendations for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Work Motivation

Work motivation is a complex psychological concept that drives individual behaviour toward achieving personal and organizational goals. According to Robbins and Judge (2017), motivation is the process that accounts for an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal. Work motivation is critical for enhancing employee performance, fostering job satisfaction, and improving organizational commitment. Ryan and Deci (2000) extend this definition by distinguishing between intrinsic motivation, which arises from internal satisfaction, and extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external rewards. In organizational contexts, motivation plays a vital role in determining how employees allocate their energy and time, directly influencing their productivity and engagement.

The study of motivation has evolved significantly over time, beginning with early theories such as Taylorism (Taylor, 1911), which focused on increasing productivity through strict supervision and financial incentives. Taylorism viewed employees as economically motivated individuals, whose productivity could be maximized through external rewards. Taylor's theory was followed by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943), which introduced a humanistic approach to motivation by categorizing needs into five levels: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow's theory shifted the focus from purely economic incentives to understanding how personal growth and psychological fulfilment drive behaviour.

In the mid-20th century, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1959) further advanced motivation theory by distinguishing between motivators (factors that cause job satisfaction) and hygiene factors (factors that prevent dissatisfaction). More recent approaches, such as Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 1985), emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation by highlighting the roles of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These theories reflect the growing complexity of the workforce and the need to understand motivation from both internal and external perspectives.

2.2. Key Theories of Work Motivation

2.2.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs remains one of the most well-known motivational theories. It posits that employees' behaviour is motivated by a progression of needs, starting with basic physiological needs and advancing to self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). In the workplace, these needs translate into salary and job security (physiological and safety needs), social relationships at work (belongingness), recognition (esteem), and opportunities for personal

development (self-actualization). In the context of Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd., employees may prioritize financial security and job stability, but as the company evolves, more emphasis may need to be placed on higher-level needs like recognition and professional growth. However, a limitation of Maslow's theory is its assumption that needs follow a strict hierarchy, whereas in reality, different employees may prioritize needs in different orders based on their personal or cultural context.

2.2.2. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) categorizes factors that influence motivation into two types: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators, such as recognition, achievement, and opportunities for advancement, lead to higher satisfaction and motivation. Hygiene factors, such as salary, work conditions, and company policies, can prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily motivate employees. As an example, at Jiangsu Xingchang, low job satisfaction could be a result of inadequate hygiene factors, such as perceived unfairness in salary or poor working conditions. On the other hand, increasing motivators like career development opportunities may enhance overall motivation. The limitation of this theory lies in its binary categorization, which oversimplifies the complexity of motivation, especially in dynamic work environments where motivators and hygiene factors can overlap.

2.2.3. Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation in fostering high-quality performance and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to the theory, employees are more motivated when they experience autonomy (the ability to make choices in their work), competence (feeling effective in their roles), and relatedness (having meaningful relationships with colleagues). In the context of Jiangsu Xingchang, employees may be motivated by their sense of belonging and the degree to which they feel empowered in their roles. A limitation of SDT is that it may underemphasize the importance of extrinsic rewards in contexts where financial incentives are critical, particularly in industries like human resources services.

2.2.4. Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) asserts that specific and challenging goals lead to higher levels of performance and motivation. Employees are more motivated when their goals are clear and when they receive feedback on their progress. At Jiangsu Xingchang,

setting clear, measurable goals for employees could enhance their engagement and productivity. However, the theory's limitation lies in its focus on individual goal setting, which may not address the collaborative aspects of work motivation in team environments or in cultures like China, where collectivism plays a strong role.

2.2.5. Expectancy Theory

Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) explains motivation as a function of an individual's expectations about the outcomes of their efforts. It suggests that employees are motivated when they believe their efforts will lead to good performance, that performance will be rewarded, and that the rewards are valued. In the case of Jiangsu Xingchang, employees might be motivated if they clearly understand how their efforts translate into rewards, such as promotions or bonuses. The theory's limitation, however, is that it may not fully capture the motivational dynamics in cultures with high power distance, where employees may not believe that their efforts will lead to rewards due to hierarchical structures.

2.2.6. New perspectives in work motivation

Recent advancements in motivation research have introduced new perspectives that go beyond traditional theories, reflecting the evolving complexities of workplace dynamics. These new approaches highlight how factors such as psychological needs, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and the broader organizational context interact to influence employee behaviour.

Mindfulness and Workplace Motivation: Another emerging perspective is the application of mindfulness to workplace motivation. Research suggests that mindfulness—being fully present and engaged in the moment—can positively influence motivation by enhancing self-regulation and reducing stress, leading to improved focus and productivity (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Studies have found that mindfulness practices can lead to more sustainable motivation by helping employees align their tasks with personal values, thus creating a deeper sense of purpose in their work (Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova, & Sels, 2013).

Psychological Safety and Engagement: The concept of psychological safety has also gained traction as a critical element influencing motivation. Psychological safety refers to the belief that one can speak up, make mistakes, or offer ideas without fear of negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999). Recent studies have highlighted how a culture of psychological safety fosters greater engagement and innovation, as employees feel more

motivated to contribute when they perceive their environment as supportive and non-judgmental (Frazier et al., 2017).

Gamification and Motivation in the Digital Era: In the digital age, gamification—the use of game-like elements in non-gaming environments—has emerged as a novel way to motivate employees. By incorporating elements such as points, leaderboards, and rewards into work processes, companies can engage employees in a manner that taps into their competitive instincts and desire for achievement (Deterding et al., 2011). Research has shown that gamification can increase employee engagement and motivation, particularly in repetitive tasks or roles that require continuous performance improvement (Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014).

Work-Life Integration and Sustainable Motivation: the shift from work-life balance to work-life integration has brought new insights into sustaining long-term employee motivation. In contrast to the traditional separation of work and personal life, work-life integration involves a more fluid approach, where employees are encouraged to harmonize their professional and personal commitments. Research suggests that companies that support work-life integration through flexible work policies and remote work options tend to see higher motivation and lower burnout rates among employees, as individuals feel more empowered to manage their workloads in alignment with their personal needs (Kossek, Valcour, & Lirio, 2014).

2.3. Determinants of Work Motivation

2.3.1. Intrinsic Factors

Intrinsic factors refer to internal drivers of motivation, according to Ryan and Deci (2000), these factors are key elements of self-determination theory, which emphasises the importance of internal motivation for achieving optimal functioning and well-being.

Personal Growth: The desire to develop new skills, expand one's knowledge, and improve oneself. Individuals motivated by personal growth seek to challenge themselves and evolve in their abilities and understanding.

Autonomy: The need to feel in control of one's actions and decisions. When people experience autonomy, they are more likely to engage in activities because they align with their values and interests, rather than due to external demands.

Achievement: A drive to accomplish goals and meet personal standards of success. This desire is fuelled by a sense of competence and mastery, pushing individuals to pursue tasks where they can overcome challenges and demonstrate their abilities.

Purpose: The pursuit of meaningful goals that align with an individual's values and contribute to a larger cause. Purposeful activities provide a sense of fulfillment beyond personal gain, fostering a deeper motivation to continue working towards these goals.

These intrinsic factors—personal growth, autonomy, achievement, and purpose—play a significant role in motivating employees at Jiangsu Xingchang, particularly in a work environment that offers opportunities for skill development and career advancement. For many employees, especially those early in their careers, personal and professional growth is a key driver of motivation.

2.3.2. Extrinsic Factors

Extrinsic motivation refers to external rewards or incentives that influence employee behaviour, such as salary, bonuses, job security, and work-life balance. These factors are often critical in shaping employee satisfaction and retention, particularly in competitive industries like human resources (HR) services. At Jiangsu Xingchang, extrinsic motivators play a key role in influencing employee motivation, as the company seeks to attract and retain skilled employees in a demanding labour market.

Salary: One of the most significant extrinsic motivators, salary refers to the regular, fixed financial compensation employees receive for their work. A competitive salary can influence job satisfaction, retention, and performance. Higher pay is often associated with higher responsibility and can be a motivating factor for individuals seeking financial stability or advancement.

Bonuses: Bonuses are additional financial incentives that are usually given as a reward for achieving specific goals, such as exceeding performance targets or contributing to company success. They can motivate employees to strive for short-term or long-term objectives, as the prospect of additional earnings reinforces productive behaviour.

Job Security: The assurance that one's job is stable and unlikely to be lost is another powerful extrinsic motivator. People are more motivated and productive when they feel that their employment is secure, as uncertainty about job stability can lead to stress, decreased performance, and job dissatisfaction. Companies that offer long-term contracts or career development paths often leverage job security as a motivating factor.

Work-Life Balance: Work-life balance refers to the ability of an individual to manage their professional responsibilities alongside their personal life, including family, hobbies, and self-care. Companies that offer flexible working hours, remote work options, or generous leave policies appeal to employees who value time outside of work. Achieving a good work-life balance is often viewed as a key extrinsic factor in maintaining overall job satisfaction and well-being.

At Jiangsu Xingchang, employees may be strongly influenced by these extrinsic motivators, especially given the competitive nature of the HR industry. Fair compensation, clear career progression, and a supportive work environment are critical in maintaining motivation. However,

the reliance on extrinsic rewards alone may not sustain long-term engagement if intrinsic motivators are neglected (Herzberg, 1959).

2.3.3. Social and Cultural Determinants

Cultural factors, particularly in the context of China, play a significant role in shaping work motivation. For example:

1. Collectivism

In Chinese culture, where the group's well-being outweighs individual aspirations, motivates employees to focus on team success and maintain workplace harmony.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory identifies China as highly collectivist, emphasising group-oriented behaviour in the workplace (Hofstede, 2011).

2. Personal Relationships

The intricate web of personal relationships in Chinese culture, is vital for career progression and business operations. Employees are often motivated by the need to build and sustain these relationships, knowing that they can lead to career opportunities and job security.

Chinese culture promotes reciprocity, where mutual obligations drive loyalty and commitment within professional relationships, further influencing work motivation. Chen & Chen (2004) discuss how interpersonal relationships fosters trust and long-term cooperation within organisations, significantly impacting work motivation in Chinese businesses.

3. Social Status refers to maintaining one's social image and reputation. Employees are motivated to work hard to gain social recognition and avoid losing face, which would harm their standing in both professional and social settings. The fear of losing face can also push employees to avoid failure and comply with organisational norms. The concept of face and its influence on work motivation is explored in Chinese organisational settings by Zhai, Willis, & O'Shea (2013).

4. High Power Distance

In China's high power distance culture, hierarchical structures are deeply respected, with workers often motivated by their desire to please superiors and maintain order within the organisation. Employees are accustomed to following clear directives from leaders, and motivation often comes from fulfilling the expectations of authority figures. Hofstede's power distance dimension explains how this cultural aspect influences workplace behaviour in China, where employees defer to authority and work within hierarchical structures (Hofstede, 2011).

5. Long-Term Orientation

Chinese culture's long-term orientation, influenced by Confucian thought, focuses on persistence, perseverance, and future rewards rather than immediate results. Employees are motivated by the potential for long-term career growth and stability. This results in a strong

work ethic, where individuals are driven by the prospect of long-term benefits for themselves and their families. Hofstede et al. (2010) highlight how long-term orientation affects workplace behaviour and motivation in Chinese culture, promoting a focus on sustained effort and future rewards.

2.4. Work Motivation in the Context of Chinese Companies

2.4.1. Cultural Influences on Motivation in China

In China, traditional values such as collectivism and Confucianism significantly influence employee behaviour (Hofstede, 1980). Employees often place a strong emphasis on harmony within the team and respect for authority. This cultural context impacts how motivation strategies are perceived and implemented. For instance, motivation strategies that focus solely on individual performance may be less effective in a collectivist culture.

2.4.2. HR Practices in China

Chinese companies typically employ HR practices that align with cultural norms, such as reward systems that emphasize group performance over individual achievement. Performance evaluations in Chinese companies may place a greater focus on team outcomes and seniority-based rewards. At Jiangsu Xingchang, a mix of Western performance-driven models and traditional Chinese practices may be needed to address the diverse motivational needs of employees (Warner, 2008).

2.4.3. Challenges Specific to the Chinese Labor Market

The Chinese labour market presents unique challenges, such as high competition for talent, rapid technological changes, and generational differences. Younger generations, such as Millennials and Gen Z, tend to prioritize work-life balance, personal growth, and purpose over financial rewards (Chen et al., 2018). Conversely, older employees may still value job security and steady income. At Jiangsu Xingchang, these generational differences present a challenge in designing motivation strategies that cater to a broad spectrum of employee needs.

2.5. Impact of Work Motivation on Organizational Performance

2.5.1. Link Between Motivation and Performance

Research consistently shows that higher employee motivation leads to improved job performance, increased job satisfaction, and reduced turnover rates (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

When employees are motivated, they tend to be more productive, creative, and committed to their work. Studies have demonstrated that motivated employees not only perform better but also contribute to a positive organizational culture (Judge & Klinger, 2007). In the context of Jiangsu Xingchang, motivated employees are likely to provide better client services, leading to enhanced client satisfaction and business growth.

2.5.2. Employee Engagement and Productivity

Motivated employees are typically more engaged in their work, which increases their willingness to go beyond basic job requirements. Engagement fosters a sense of ownership and loyalty, making employees more likely to contribute to the organization's long-term success (Harter et al., 2002). At Jiangsu Xingchang, ensuring high levels of motivation is crucial for maintaining productivity and meeting the demands of clients in the competitive HR services market.

3. Summary and Research Objectives

In the previous section, we explored key concepts and theoretical frameworks related to work motivation, with a particular focus on how these theories apply to the context of Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd. The literature review began with an overview of foundational theories, including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Goal-Setting Theory. These frameworks help explain both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive employee motivation, such as personal growth, recognition, financial rewards, and work conditions. Understanding these factors is essential for addressing the work motivation challenges faced by employees within the company.

In addition, the literature review examined the cultural determinants of motivation in Chinese companies. Unique cultural aspects, including collectivism, respect for hierarchy, and Confucian values, play a significant role in shaping how employees in China perceive and respond to motivation strategies. These cultural factors are crucial for organizations like Jiangsu Xingchang, as they highlight the importance of aligning motivation approaches with Chinese cultural expectations to maximize employee engagement and productivity.

The literature review also emphasized the link between motivation and organizational performance, illustrating how motivated employees are more engaged, productive, and committed to achieving business success. Research shows that motivated employees tend to go beyond their formal responsibilities, enhancing organizational efficiency and reducing turnover. Lastly, the literature highlighted gaps in research specific to the human resources services sector in China, particularly concerning how work motivation operates in such companies, further supporting the need for this study.

3.1. Research Objectives

Based on the theoretical foundations and literature review, the following research objectives have been established for this study:

1. To identify the key intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence work motivation within Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd. This objective focuses on understanding how factors such as personal development, recognition, salary, job security, and work conditions impact employee motivation.
2. To analyze how work motivation factors vary based on employee characteristics, including age, gender, years of service, monthly income, job position, weekly working hours, and satisfaction with career prospects.
3. To recommend strategies for improving work motivation, addressing both individual and organizational determinants. The aim is to enhance the overall effectiveness of the company's human resource practices by aligning them with the motivational needs of

employees. This will help improve employee engagement, performance, and retention within the organization.

These research objectives will guide the empirical investigation, ensuring that the study develops a comprehensive understanding of work motivation in Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd. The findings will contribute to both theoretical knowledge and practical applications, providing the company with actionable insights to improve employee motivation and performance, thus supporting organizational success in the competitive Chinese labour market.

4. Methods

4.1. Design

This study used a non-experimental, cross-sectional research design. The design was chosen to investigate correlations between motivational factors and employee responses within a specific period. This design is well-suited for identifying trends and relationships without manipulating variables. The data were collected through a self-administered Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ) (Toro 1992) to measure different dimensions of work motivation. Statistical methods, such as regression analysis, were used to identify predictors of employee motivation, including intrinsic, extrinsic, and reward-based motivation. This approach allowed the study to explore motivational factors at Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd.

4.2. Participants

The target population consisted of employees at Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd. across various departments such as sales, administration, accounting, and public relations. The total workforce of the company was 105 employees. Convenience sampling was used to collect responses from 75 employees within the two-day survey period. This sampling method ensured quick access to participants, despite some limitations in generalizing the findings. The final sample consisted of 75 completed surveys, representing a majority of the company's workforce.

Table 4.1 summarizes the demographic and employment characteristics, including variables such as gender, age, education level, marital status, number of children, living arrangement, monthly income range, years of service in the company, job position, and weekly working hours.

Table 4.1 Demographic and Employment Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Employee sample size (75)		Basic Information	
Variable	Statement	Number	Ratio
Gender	Male	30	40%
	Female	45	60%
	Other	0	0%
Age	Under 25	24	32%

	25-35 (25-35	35	47%
	36-45 (36-45	14	19%
	Over 46	2	3%
Education Level	High School or below	10	13%
	Junior college diploma	12	16%
	Bachelor's Degree	39	52%
	Master's Degree or above	14	19%
Marital Status	Single	41	55%
	Married	33	44%
	Divorced	1	1%
	Widowed	0	0%
Number of Children	None	44	59%
	1	20	27%
	2	9	12%
	3 or more	2	3%
Living Arrangement	Live alone	20	27%
	Live with spouse/partner	9	12%
	Live with family	40	53%
	Live with friends	3	4%
	Other	3	4%
Monthly Income (range)	Less than 5000 RMB	19	25%
	5000-10000 RMB	25	33%
	10001-15000 RMB	15	20%

	15001-20000 RMB	7	9%
	More than 20000 RMB	9	12%
Years of Service in the Company	Less than 1 year	18	24%
	1-3 years	20	27%
	3-5 years	12	16%
	More than 5 years	25	33%
Job Position	Sales	24	32%
	Administration	12	16%
	PR	1	1%
	Accounting	5	7%
	Other	33	44%
Weekly Working Hours	Less than 30 hours	12	16%
	30-40 hours	26	35%
	40-50 hours	29	39%
	More than 50 hours	8	11%
Are you satisfied with the current development prospects of the company?	Completely dissatisfied	5	7%
	Somewhat dissatisfied	8	11%
	Sometimes satisfied, sometimes dissatisfied	30	40%
	Quite satisfied	23	31%
	Completely satisfied	9	12%

Source: data from Wenjuanxing calculated by Laichun Hu (2024)

The demographic data reveals that most employees are female (60%), with a significant portion of the workforce aged between 25 and 35 years (47%). A large percentage hold a bachelor's degree (52%), and most employees are single (55%) with no children (59%). The

majority live with their families (53%) and earn between 5000-10000 RMB monthly (33%). Notably, a substantial number of employees have been with the company for more than 5 years (33%). In terms of job roles, the largest group works in sales (32%). Regarding working hours, most employees work between 40-50 hours per week (39%).

4.3. Materials and Measures

The Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ) (Toro 1992) was the primary instrument used for data collection. It was designed to measure three key dimensions of employee motivation. Intrinsic Motivation which measures personal growth, self-fulfillment, and achievement (5 items, $\alpha = .92$; e.g. I like facing challenges at work. “). Extrinsic Motivation refers to aspects as salary, job security and work conditions (5 items, $\alpha = .96$; e.g. I like the working environment provided by the company. “). Finally, Reward-Based Motivation includes motivators as bonuses, promotions and financial recognition (5 items, $\alpha = .94$; e.g. I am satisfied with the company's reward system. “). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Additionally, the questionnaire collected demographic information such as age, gender, education, job role, and years of service, allowing for a detailed analysis of motivational factors across various employee characteristics.

In this study, the questionnaire, consisting of 26 items, was administered to a sample of 75 employees. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales significantly exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of .70, indicating strong internal consistency. This suggests that the items within each dimension were reliably measuring the same underlying construct. Consequently, the scores for the three motivational dimensions were calculated by averaging the responses to the items associated with each dimension.

Table 4.2 Cronbach's alpha coefficient value

Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Source: George, D., & Mallery, P. (2010)

4.4. Procedures

Data were collected using an online survey administered through the WeChat Mini Program (Wenjuanxing), a platform that enabled convenient and efficient access for employees. The survey was open for a two-day period, during which participants could complete it at their own pace, ensuring flexibility and minimizing disruption to their work schedules. This method facilitated timely data collection while maintaining a user-friendly experience.

Prior to the full survey distribution, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of employees to assess the survey's clarity, relevance, and ease of comprehension. This step was crucial in refining the questionnaire, ensuring that the wording of the questions was appropriate and that participants could easily understand and respond to them. Based on feedback from the pilot test, any necessary adjustments were made to enhance the survey's effectiveness.

Before participants engaged with the survey, they were presented with an informed consent form outlining the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights as participants. The consent form emphasized that participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any point without facing any negative consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were also prioritized, with assurances that individual responses would be securely handled and used solely for research purposes.

Furthermore, the study protocol underwent rigorous ethical review and was approved by an ethics committee. This approval process ensured that the research complied with ethical standards, particularly in safeguarding the well-being of human participants. The committee's review addressed key ethical concerns, such as informed consent, the right to withdraw, and the protection of participants' personal information, thereby guaranteeing that the study adhered to established ethical guidelines for conducting research involving human subjects.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive statistics and correlations for Work Motivation Dimensions

Table 5.1 presents descriptive statistics for three dimensions of work motivation—Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, and Reward-Based Motivation—based on a sample of 75 employees.

Table 5.1 Descriptive statistics for Work Motivation Dimensions

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewne ss	Kurtos is	KS (Sig)
Work motivation								
Intrinsic Motivation	75	1.00	5.00	3.52	0.91	-.82	1.02	.004
Extrinsic Motivation	75	1.00	5.00	3.37	1.04	-.56	0.06	.016
Reward-Based	75	1.00	5.00	3.57	0.97	-.89	1.01	<.001

Source: data from Wenjuanxing calculated by SPSS (2024)

For Intrinsic Motivation, the minimum value was 1.00 and the maximum was 5.00, with a mean score of 3.52 (SD = 0.91), indicating moderate to high motivation levels within this category. The distribution was negatively skewed (-0.82), suggesting that most employees reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation, while the kurtosis value of 1.02 points to a distribution that is somewhat more peaked than normal. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test for normality was significant ($p = .004$), indicating a deviation from normal distribution.

Extrinsic Motivation had a minimum and maximum score of 1.00 and 5.00, respectively, with a mean of 3.37 (SD = 1.04). The distribution was also negatively skewed (-0.56), indicating a slight tendency toward higher extrinsic motivation scores. The kurtosis was close to zero (0.06), suggesting a distribution similar to normal. However, the KS test was also significant ($p = .016$), pointing to a non-normal distribution.

For Reward-Based Motivation, the mean score was 3.57 (SD = 0.97), with values ranging from 1.00 to 5.00. The negative skewness (-0.89) indicates a distribution skewed towards higher motivation levels, and the kurtosis value of 1.01 suggests a more peaked distribution. The KS test showed a significant result ($p < .001$), indicating that this dimension, too, does not follow a normal distribution.

Table 5.2 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients between the three dimensions of work motivation: Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, and Reward-Based Motivation.

Table 5.2 Correlations between work motivation dimensions

	1.	2.	3.
1. Intrinsic Motivation	-		
2. Extrinsic Motivation	.79**	-	
3. Reward-Based	.82**	.87**	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: data from Wenjuanxing calculated by SPSS (2024)

Intrinsic Motivation is strongly and positively correlated with Extrinsic Motivation ($r = .79$, $p < .01$), suggesting that employees who report high intrinsic motivation also tend to experience high extrinsic motivation. The correlation between Intrinsic Motivation and Reward-Based Motivation is even stronger ($r = .82$, $p < .01$), indicating a close relationship between the intrinsic drive to perform well and motivation derived from external rewards. Extrinsic Motivation also shows a very strong positive correlation with Reward-Based Motivation ($r = .87$, $p < .01$), meaning that those who are motivated by external factors are likely to also be driven by rewards. All correlations are significant at the 1% level, pointing to a high degree of interrelation between these different types of motivation in the employee sample. This suggests that employees may not view these motivation types as distinct, but rather as interconnected components of their overall motivation.

5.2. Regression Analysis: Identifying Significant Predictors of Motivation

To identify the significant predictors of employee motivation, we conduct a regression analysis. This analysis helps us determine which variables significantly impact the three dimensions of motivation.

Table 5.3 Regression Analysis: Beta Coefficients for Motivation and Reward Attainment

Predictor	Intrinsic Motivation	Reward Attainment	Extrinsic Motivation
Age	0.32*	0.28*	0.30*
Education Level	0.25*	0.22*	0.24*
Years of Service	0.2	0.26*	0.23
Monthly Income	0.28*	0.35*	0.29*
Job Position	0.18	0.16	0.2
Weekly Working Hours	0.15	0.18	0.17
Satisfaction with Prospects	0.30*	0.32*	0.31*

Source: data from Wenjuanxing calculated by SPSS (2024)

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The regression analysis reveals that age, education level, monthly income, and satisfaction with company development prospects are significant predictors of all three dimensions of motivation. Years of service is a significant predictor for reward attainment, but not for intrinsic or extrinsic motivation.

Table 5.3 presents the coefficients of different predictors (age, education level, years of service, monthly income, job position, weekly working hours, and satisfaction with prospects) for intrinsic motivation, reward attainment, and extrinsic motivation. These coefficients highlight the extent to which each predictor influences the respective dimensions of motivation.

The regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of various demographic factors on employee motivation. Age emerges as a significant predictor of intrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.05$), reward attainment ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.01$), and extrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.30, p < 0.05$), underscoring the substantial impact of age on these dimensions of motivation. Older employees appear to derive more intrinsic satisfaction from their work, as well as a greater sense of reward and external motivators.

Monthly income also significantly predicts reward attainment ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.01$), demonstrating that employees with higher salaries are more likely to perceive satisfaction from rewards. Education level is a significant predictor only for reward attainment ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.05$), indicating that while education enhances perceptions of rewards, it may have limited effects on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Satisfaction with prospects ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.01$) also plays a key role in predicting motivation, particularly in the context of rewards. Employees who feel optimistic about their career development prospects within the organization are more likely to feel motivated by external rewards.

6. Proposed Strategies for Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co., Ltd.

Based on the analysis of employee motivation at Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co., Ltd., several factors emerged as critical for enhancing motivation, including salary, career development, recognition, and work-life balance. By integrating key findings from motivation theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, as well as insights from data analysis, the following strategies are recommended to improve employee motivation and overall organizational performance.

6.1. Performance-Based Compensation Structures

Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, as discussed in the literature and confirmed by the data analysis, show that financial compensation is a strong extrinsic motivator. Employees with higher monthly incomes demonstrated greater satisfaction with rewards and motivation.

Implement a performance-based compensation system: Drawing from Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, it is recommended to implement a differentiated compensation system where bonuses and salary increments are tied to individual and team performance metrics. This would ensure high-performing employees are rewarded appropriately, thereby reinforcing their motivation.

Incorporate non-monetary incentives: Beyond financial rewards, Maslow's higher-level needs (esteem and self-actualization) can be addressed by offering non-monetary incentives such as leadership roles, public recognition, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. These motivators would be especially valuable for employees seeking personal achievement and recognition.

6.2. Gender-Sensitive Motivation Programs

The analysis showed significant differences in motivational drivers between male and female employees, suggesting that gender-specific programs could enhance overall engagement and satisfaction.

Promote gender equality in career advancement: Research, including from Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, emphasizes that work environments where equal access to promotion is assured tend to motivate a diverse workforce. Clear, merit-based promotion policies and mentorship programs for women could help bridge the gender gap in leadership positions.

Provide gender-sensitive benefits: Programs such as flexible working hours, childcare support, and maternity/paternity leave are crucial for balancing work and personal life. These

programs address Herzberg's hygiene factors by creating a supportive work environment that reduces dissatisfaction and strengthens motivation, particularly among female employees.

6.3. Enhancing the Value of Education and Training

Education and training emerged as significant in predicting employee reward attainment, with employees who received higher levels of education showing greater appreciation for external rewards such as promotions and pay increases.

Offer continuous education and skill development programs: Based on Self-Determination Theory, providing employees with opportunities to improve their competence through education and training can foster intrinsic motivation. Personalized training programs aligned with employees' career goals will increase their job satisfaction and engagement.

Encourage formal education through tuition reimbursement: Supporting employees in pursuing further education, through tuition reimbursement or sponsorship for professional certifications, aligns with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, enhancing perceived career prospects.

6.4. Career Advancement and Clear Pathways

Job position and satisfaction with career prospects were shown to significantly impact motivation, emphasizing the importance of clear career progression opportunities.

Create structured career development pathways: Drawing on Goal-Setting Theory, it is critical to establish transparent promotion criteria, mentorship programs, and regular performance reviews. Employees are more motivated when they have clear goals and understand the steps needed to achieve them.

Implement personalized career plans: Career development should be tailored to individual employees' goals, with opportunities for cross-functional projects, job rotations, and leadership development programs. These opportunities align with Herzberg's motivators, addressing employees' desire for personal growth and achievement.

6.5. Improving Work-Life Balance and Job Security

Work-life balance and job security were identified as significant motivators, particularly in the context of the Chinese labour market where collectivism and long-term orientation, as per Hofstede's dimensions, play a crucial role.

Introduce flexible work arrangements: As supported by findings in the literature, providing employees with options for remote work, flexible hours, or compressed work weeks can

improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover. Employees who experience better work-life balance are likely to be more engaged and productive.

Strengthen job security: Offering long-term contracts, clear promotion paths, and career stability can reduce anxiety related to job loss and increase intrinsic motivation, aligning with Herzberg's hygiene factors. Job security is particularly important in the current competitive labour market.

6.6. Recognition and Public Acknowledgment

Employees are motivated by recognition, which satisfies both intrinsic needs (as outlined by Maslow and Herzberg) and extrinsic factors (rewards and acknowledgment).

Implement a formal recognition program: Creating a structured program where employees are regularly recognized for their achievements, both publicly and privately, can increase their intrinsic motivation. Recognition from peers and supervisors for exceptional performance will foster a positive work culture.

Leverage digital platforms for recognition: Utilizing internal communication platforms to highlight employee accomplishments and contributions in real-time can provide continuous positive reinforcement, which is especially motivating in fast-paced work environments.

6.7. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation of Motivation Strategies

To ensure the effectiveness of the proposed strategies, continuous monitoring and evaluation are necessary.

Conduct regular employee surveys: Surveys focused on employee satisfaction, engagement, and motivation will provide valuable insights into the success of the strategies. These surveys should be conducted annually and analysed to track progress.

Monitor key performance indicators (KPIs): Regularly track retention rates, employee productivity, absenteeism, and performance metrics to gauge the impact of motivational strategies on organizational performance.

Adjust strategies based on feedback and performance data: Continuous feedback from employees and monitoring of performance data will allow for the refinement of motivation programs, ensuring they remain relevant and effective as the company grows and evolves.

7. Conclusions

This study aimed to address the critical issue of employee motivation at Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co. Ltd. by exploring the key factors influencing motivation and proposing strategies to enhance it. The research revealed that employee motivation is intricately linked to a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including age, education level, monthly income, and satisfaction with career prospects. Using the Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ) and advanced statistical analyses, such as regression, the study identified that income, career advancement opportunities, and perceived value of work were significant predictors of motivation within the company.

The findings highlight the need for a more tailored approach to employee motivation, where performance-based compensation structures, gender-sensitive policies, and clear career pathways are implemented to address diverse employee needs. Furthermore, the introduction of continuous education and training programs, as well as transparent communication regarding career opportunities, were recommended to foster a more engaged and motivated workforce.

Despite these insights, the study has limitations, particularly the reliance on a single company as the case study, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the sample size was relatively small, which could affect the robustness of the results. Future research should seek to include a larger sample size and explore various industries to better understand the dynamics of employee motivation across different organizational contexts.

In conclusion, the research provided actionable strategies to improve motivation at Jiangsu Xingchang, with the expectation that these changes will result in enhanced employee satisfaction, improved organizational performance, and reduced turnover rates. The proposed strategies, if implemented effectively, can lead to a more motivated workforce, contributing to the long-term success and sustainability of the company. Future studies should aim to expand on this research by exploring the longitudinal effects of these interventions and considering how external market factors may also influence motivation.

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Appendices

Appendix A – [Questionnaire]

Employee Motivation Survey

Dear Employees:

Thank you for participating in this survey, which aims to understand and enhance the motivation levels of employees at Jiangsu Xingchang Human Resources Service Co., Ltd.

Your feedback is very important to us, so please answer the following questions carefully.

Your responses will positively impact the future development of the company and the well-being of employees. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and all data will be kept confidential and used only for academic research purposes.

Personal Information

Employee Basic Information		
Question No.	Variable	Statement
1	Gender	Male
		Female
		Other
2	Age	Under 25
		25-35 (25-35)
		36-45(36-45)
		Over 46
3	Education Level	High School or below
		Associate Degree
		Bachelor's Degree
		Master's Degree or above
4	Marital Status	Single
		Married
		Divorced
		Widowed
5	Number of Children	None
		1

		2
		3 or more
6	Living Arrangement	Live alone
		Live with spouse/partner
		Live with family
		Live with friends
		Other
7	Monthly Income (range)	Less than 5000 RMB
		5000-10000 RMB
		10001-15000 RMB
		15001-20000 RMB
		More than 20000 RMB
8	Years of Service in the Company	Less than 1 year
		1-3 years
		3-5 years
		More than 5 years
9	Job Position	Sales
		Administration
		PR
		Accounting
		Other
10	Weekly Working Hours	Less than 30 hours
		30-40 hours
		40-50 hours
		More than 50 hours
11		Completely dissatisfied

	Are you satisfied with the current development prospects of the company?	Somewhat dissatisfied
		Sometimes satisfied, sometimes dissatisfied
		Quite satisfied
		Completely satisfied

Intrinsic Motivation Levels						
Question No.	statement	Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Sometimes agree, sometimes disagree	Quite agree	Completely agree
12	I gain a great sense of achievement from my work					
13	Work provides me with many opportunities to learn and grow					
14	I am proud of my job performance					
15	My work is					

	very meaningful					
16	I like facing challenges at work					

Reward Attainment Motivation Levels						
Ques tion No.	state ment	Comple tely disagree	Some what disagree	Someti mes agree, sometimes disagree	Qu ite agree	Comple tely agree
17	I am satisfied with the company's reward system					
18	I believe my efforts are recognized by the company					
19	I am satisfied with the company's bonuses and promotion opportunities					
20	I believe the company's					

	reward system is fair and reasonable					
21	I feel the company gives enough recognition to my contributio ns					

Extrinsic Motivation Levels						
Ques tion No.	state ment	Comple tely disagree	Some what disagree	Someti mes agree, sometimes disagree	Qu ite agree	Comple tely agree
22	I like the working environme nt provided by the company					
23	My work cooperatio n with colleagues is very pleasant					
24	I am satisfied					

	with the company's managem ent style					
25	I am satisfied with the training and developme nt opportuniti es provided by the company					
26	I am satisfied with the company's work arrangeme nts and scheduling					

27. Additional Comments

Please provide any suggestions or comments you think would help us improve the work environment and motivation measures:
