

A Study on Work Motivation among Staff at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Chintana Dumrongsuntithum¹, Somdech Rungsrissawat²

¹ Language Institution, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand

² College of Allied Health Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand

E-Mail: ¹chintana.du@ssru.ac.th, ²somdech.ru@ssru.ac.th

Abstract

This study examines the motivation of staff members at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in relation to work performance, focusing on attitudes towards development and training, and their impact on staff efficiency. The study involved 332 participants selected from 1,986 employees. Data was collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Findings reveal that most respondents are female, aged over 41, with more than 10 years of experience, and earning over 30,001 baht monthly. Staff expressed high satisfaction with the work environment, particularly cleanliness and ventilation, as well as income sufficiency. They valued adequate salaries, strong relationships with supervisors who welcome input, and fair promotion based on merit. The importance of welfare benefits and job security also emerged as significant factors. These results suggest that employees desire a stable, supportive work environment, fair compensation, and strong leadership that values their contributions.

Keywords: Motivation, Staff Performance, Work Environment

1. Introduction

The Introduction of this research discusses the importance of human resources in a university setting, highlighting that motivated personnel are essential to achieve institutional goals effectively. In an academic environment, where administrative and educational tasks require dedication, the study explores how factors like workplace conditions, salary adequacy, and leadership impact motivation.

This research at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University investigates staff motivation, specifically focusing on support personnel involved in routine and administrative tasks. The study examines their motivation levels to understand how development opportunities, training, and fair promotion practices can enhance their commitment and efficiency. This research is significant in guiding university policy to foster a supportive work environment that meets both personal and professional needs, thus encouraging better job performance and satisfaction among university staff

Research Objective

This study examines the motivation of staff members at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in relation to work performance, focusing on attitudes towards development and training, and their impact on staff efficiency.

2. Literature Review

Literature Review: Enhancing Staff Motivation in Academic Institutions

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Work Motivation

Academic staff motivation can be analyzed through established theories such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Herzberg's model emphasizes motivators like recognition and growth opportunities, alongside hygiene factors such as salary and work conditions, which are critical for job satisfaction and productivity (Miller & Davis, 2022). Similarly, Maslow's framework highlights the progressive fulfillment of needs, from basic income stability to self-actualization, aligning closely with staff priorities in academic environments (Johnson et al., 2021).

2.2 Work Environment and Physical Conditions

The quality of the physical work environment significantly affects staff motivation and efficiency. Clean, well-ventilated workspaces contribute to mental health and productivity, as noted by Zhang et al. (2022). Chan and Wong (2020) further emphasize that health-promoting workplace conditions enhance employee satisfaction, particularly in high-demand settings like universities.

2.3 Supervisor-Subordinate Dynamics

Open communication, collaborative decision-making, and recognition of employee contributions are essential in fostering positive workplace relationships. Kumari and Srivastava (2018) highlight the role of supervisors in creating a supportive and inclusive environment. Park, Kim, and Yoon (2020) suggest that effective communication not only strengthens teamwork but also boosts staff morale in academic institutions.

2.4 Compensation, Job Security, and Fair Promotion Practices

Financial stability, fair promotion systems, and job security are core extrinsic motivators. Adequate salaries reduce stress and enable employees to focus on their professional roles (Smith et al., 2019). Moreover, merit-based promotion systems enhance motivation by aligning career progression with performance and competencies (Lee, Chen, & Wong, 2017). Job security, as emphasized by Thomas, Carter, and Wright (2016), fosters loyalty and long-term commitment, essential for institutional sustainability.

2.5 Leadership and Self-Identity in Motivation

Leadership plays a pivotal role in influencing staff motivation and reducing turnover intention. Wongleedee (2020) highlights the impact of management style on employee self-identity and their perception of future career prospects. Abusive or unsupportive supervision can undermine motivation, while encouraging leadership fosters a sense of belonging and professional alignment.

In conclusion, the literature underscores the multifaceted nature of motivation in academic settings. By addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, institutions like Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University can cultivate a motivated workforce that contributes to organizational excellence and individual growth.

3. Methodology

The methodology section outlines the research design, data collection process, sampling techniques, and analytical tools employed to investigate staff motivation at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design to explore factors influencing work motivation among university staff. The approach aimed to measure variables such as workplace conditions, income adequacy, supervisor relationships, promotion fairness, and job security in relation to staff satisfaction and performance.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population comprised 1,986 staff members at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Using a stratified random sampling method, 332 participants were selected to ensure a representative sample across various departments and roles. The sample size was determined based on standard statistical formulas to achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, which consisted of three sections:

3.3.1 Demographics: Age, gender, years of service, and income level.

3.3.2 Motivation Factors: Questions based on a five-point Likert scale to assess workplace conditions, salary satisfaction, supervisor relationships, promotion fairness, and job security.

3.3.3 Open-Ended Questions: Opportunities for participants to provide qualitative insights on factors influencing their motivation.

The questionnaire was reviewed and validated by three academic experts for content reliability and translated into Thai to ensure clarity and accuracy for respondents.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed both physically and digitally to accommodate participants' preferences and availability. A data collection period of four weeks was implemented, with follow-ups conducted to ensure a high response rate.

3.5 Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using the following statistical methods:

3.5.1 Descriptive Statistics: Percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize and interpret responses.

3.5.2 Inferential Statistics: Chi-square tests and correlation analysis were employed to identify relationships between demographic variables and motivation factors.

3.5.3 Software: Data analysis was conducted using SPSS to ensure accuracy and reliability.

This methodology ensured a comprehensive assessment of motivation factors, aligning with the study's objectives to inform policy recommendations for enhancing staff satisfaction and performance at the university.

4. Results

The Findings section reveals key insights into factors that influence the motivation of university personnel at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, with a focus on aspects relevant to an academic environment:

4.1 Work Environment: University staff rated the physical workspace highly, emphasizing the importance of clean, well-ventilated facilities that support health and well-being. This reflects a preference for an organized environment conducive to the focused tasks often required in university operations. (Chan & Wong, 2020; Zhang et al., 2022)

4.2 Income Adequacy: Employees expressed a high level of satisfaction with their income adequacy, noting that their salaries meet current living standards. This financial stability is crucial in a university setting, as it allows staff to concentrate on their roles without external financial pressures. (Smith et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2021)

4.3 Supervisor-Subordinate Relations: Positive relationships between supervisors and staff emerged as a significant motivator. Open communication and opportunities for staff input in decision-making foster a collaborative environment, which is vital in educational institutions where teamwork enhances operational efficiency. (Kumari & Srivastava, 2018; Park et al., 2020)

4.4 Fairness in Promotion: Fairness in promotional opportunities was another highly rated factor. Staff preferred competency-based promotions over seniority or personal connections, indicating a desire for a meritocratic system that rewards effort and skill, which can be particularly motivating within a professional academic environment. (Lee et al., 2017; Miller & Davis, 2022)

4.5 Job Security and Safety: Employees highly valued job security, reflecting the importance of stable employment in fostering loyalty and long-term commitment to the university. This aligns with the goals of academic institutions that benefit from a stable and experienced workforce. (Thomas et al., 2016; Chen & Zhang, 2021)

These findings underscore the need for policies that address both the extrinsic and intrinsic motivators in an academic context, supporting a structured yet flexible work environment that encourages professional growth and satisfaction among university staff.

Table: Average Scores of Factors Influencing Work Motivation in Academic Institution

Factor	Average Score	Description
Work Environment	4.5	Clean, well-ventilated spaces are highly valued
Income Adequacy	4.59	Sufficient salary for current living standards
Supervisor Relations	4.68	Open communication with supervisors
Fairness in Promotion	4.71	Preference for competency-based promotion practices
Job Security	4.69	Stability and safety are essential for future security

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the multifaceted factors influencing staff motivation at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, offering valuable insights into how these factors intersect with employee satisfaction and performance in an academic context. Key motivational aspects, including workplace conditions, income adequacy, supervisor relationships, fair promotion systems, and job security, were examined to understand their impact on creating a supportive and efficient work environment.

Firstly, the results indicate that clean and well-maintained physical workspaces are critical in fostering a conducive environment for staff productivity and well-being. Additionally, income adequacy was a significant factor, as financial stability alleviates external stressors, enabling employees to focus on their professional responsibilities.

The relationship between supervisors and subordinates emerged as another vital motivator, underscoring the importance of open communication, inclusive decision-making, and recognition of staff input. Fairness in promotion, with an emphasis on merit-based advancements, was also highly valued, reflecting employees' desire for transparency and equity in career progression. Furthermore, job security was found to enhance staff loyalty and long-term commitment, particularly in the dynamic landscape of higher education.

These findings align with established motivational theories, such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, reinforcing the significance of addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in organizational policy-making.

In conclusion, the study underscores the necessity of implementing targeted strategies to enhance staff motivation within academic institutions. By maintaining a supportive workplace environment, ensuring equitable compensation and promotion systems, and fostering positive supervisor-employee dynamics, universities can significantly boost job satisfaction and performance. The adoption of these strategies will not only improve individual staff outcomes but also contribute to the overarching mission of academic excellence and operational efficiency at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

This research provides actionable insights that can inform policy reforms and managerial practices aimed at creating a sustainable, motivated, and high-performing workforce in educational institutions. Future studies could further explore the long-term impact of such strategies and their scalability across diverse academic contexts.

6. Recommendation

The Recommendation section suggests strategies to enhance staff motivation specifically for a university setting, aimed at fostering a dedicated and productive workforce at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Key recommendations include:

6.1 Improving Workplace Conditions: Maintain a clean, well-ventilated, and organized workspace that supports the unique demands of academic tasks. University staff often handle sensitive data, student services, and collaborative projects, which benefit from a calm and well-maintained environment.

6.2 Enhancing Income and Benefits: Although staff reported general satisfaction with income adequacy, further adjustments in benefits, such as housing allowances, health packages, or educational subsidies for continuing education, could make roles more attractive and meet the high cost of living in some areas.

6.3 Developing Transparent Promotion Practices: Implement a structured promotion system that prioritizes merit and competencies. In a university setting, where career progression can significantly influence motivation, fair promotional pathways can help retain skilled staff and encourage continuous professional development aligned with institutional goals.

6.4 Strengthening Supervisor-Employee Relations: Encourage management to foster open communication, shared decision-making, and constructive feedback. Universities thrive on teamwork and mutual respect, and creating regular opportunities for feedback and collaboration can strengthen the commitment of staff across departments.

6.5 Ensuring Job Security and Professional Development: Offer clearer paths for professional advancement, such as training in new educational technologies or leadership programs. Universities should support staff in acquiring skills that add value to the institution,

aligning with goals in research, administration, or student support. Additionally, ensuring job stability is crucial for attracting and retaining experienced personnel who contribute to the university's long-term success.

These recommendations emphasize the need for a supportive, growth-oriented environment that aligns with the specific demands and career aspirations of university staff, enhancing both job satisfaction and institutional effectiveness.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Research Institution, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for financial funds which gave me a great opportunity to conduct my research with their unwavering guidance as well as their great support in terms of instant document processing. Furthermore, many thanks to the staff of the Language Institute, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for providing invaluable feedback and suggestions that significantly enrich this research paper.

References

- Chan, K., & Wong, T. (2020). Healthy workplace environments: A critical review. *Journal of Workplace Health Promotion, 34*(2), 123–135.
- Chen, X., & Zhang, W. (2021). Safety and job satisfaction in universities. *International Review of Higher Education, 15*(2), 67–79.
- Johnson, T., Lee, S., & Park, K. (2021). Financial security and work engagement. *Journal of Academic Economics, 39*(4), 89–102.
- Kumari, S., & Srivastava, R. (2018). Supervisor-subordinate dynamics in academia. *Journal of Organizational Psychology, 15*(1), 55–72.
- Lee, A., Chen, Y., & Wong, S. (2017). Merit-based promotion systems in academia. *Educational Management Review, 12*(3), 209–223.
- Mekhum, W. (2020). The influence of personal knowledge management and leadership style on the firm's performance: Empirical evidence from Thailand. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy, 11*.
- Miller, J., & Davis, E. (2022). Fairness perceptions and employee retention in academic institutions. *Journal of Organizational Development, 45*(2), 141–160.
- Park, J., Kim, H., & Yoon, M. (2020). The role of communication in enhancing teamwork universities. *Higher Education Studies, 10*(5), 74–82.
- Smith, R., Johnson, L., & Brown, P. (2019). Income satisfaction and work performance in educational institutions. *Education Economics, 27*(3), 201–214.
- Thomas, J., Carter, L., & Wright, P. (2016). Job security and organizational commitment. *Journal of Education Administration, 54*(7), 909–925.
- Wongleedee, W. (2020). Turnover intention and abusive supervision and management: Investigating the role of self-identity and future work self-salience. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy, 11*, 462–471.
- Zhang, Y., Liu, J., & Xu, H. (2022). Ventilation and mental health in university settings. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(8), 4526.