

# Motivational Factors Influencing Operational Staff Performance: A Case Study of Pimpool Villa Hotel, Nan Province, Thailand

Ratchaphon Santong<sup>1</sup>, Kwanchat Wongchanthip<sup>2</sup> and Pisit Potjanajaruwit<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup>Faculty of Management Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand

E-Mail: <sup>1</sup>s66127336099@ssru.ac.th, <sup>2</sup>kwanchat.wo@ssru.ac.th <sup>3</sup>pisit.po@ssru.ac.th

## Abstract

This study explores the motivational factors influencing the work performance of operational staff at Pimpool Villa Hotel, a small-scale hospitality business in Nan Province, Thailand. A mixed-method design was employed, combining quantitative data from Google Forms questionnaires with qualitative insights from online interviews. The sample comprised 12 operational employees, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. Findings indicate that intrinsic motivation particularly achievement, recognition, and meaningful work was the strongest driver of performance. Extrinsic factors such as salary and benefits were rated as less influential, though supportive supervision and collegial relationships contributed positively to engagement. These results emphasize the importance of cultivating a workplace culture that prioritizes intrinsic motivators while maintaining supportive external conditions.

The study contributes to hospitality HRM literature by underscoring the centrality of intrinsic motivation in sustaining employee performance. Practical implications suggest that small-scale hotels should design HR strategies that emphasize recognition, empowerment, and meaningful work experiences, while ensuring fair compensation and supportive leadership to achieve long-term sustainability.

**Keywords:** Intrinsic motivation, Work performance, Hospitality, Small hotels, HRM

## 1. Introduction

The hospitality industry is a vital driver of Thailand's regional economy, particularly in Nan Province, which is renowned for its cultural heritage and personalized tourism experiences. Small-scale hotels such as Pimpool Villa Hotel depend heavily on operational staff to deliver service quality and create lasting guest impressions. Employee motivation, therefore, is a decisive factor in sustaining performance and competitiveness.

### 1.1 Background and Significance

While extensive research has examined human resource management (HRM) in large hotel chains, limited attention has been given to small, locally operated hotels in rural provinces.

These hotels often face challenges such as limited resources, informal management structures, and high staff turnover. Understanding motivational factors is crucial, as operational staff directly influence guest satisfaction and organizational sustainability.

### 1.2 Research Gap

Three key gaps were identified:

**Contextual Gap:** Prior studies focus on large hotels, with little evidence from small-scale hotels in Northern Thailand.

**Variable Gap:** Motivation and performance have often been studied separately, with limited research on their direct relationship.

**Sample Gap:** Few empirical studies have examined operational-level employees in rural hotel settings.

### 1.3 Empirical Evidence from Survey Data

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	4	30.8%
	Female	9	69.2%
Age	32-64 years	13	100%
Education	Below Bachelor	9	69.2%
	Bachelor	4	30.8%
Tenure	<1 year	4	30.8%
	1-3 years	5	38.5%
	3-5 years	4	30.8%
Salary	10,001-15,000 THB	10	76.9%

*Source: Survey data collected by the researcher (2025).*

Survey results from 13 employees at Pimpool Villa Hotel revealed that intrinsic motivation such as pride in work, recognition, and job satisfaction was consistently rated higher than extrinsic factors. For instance:

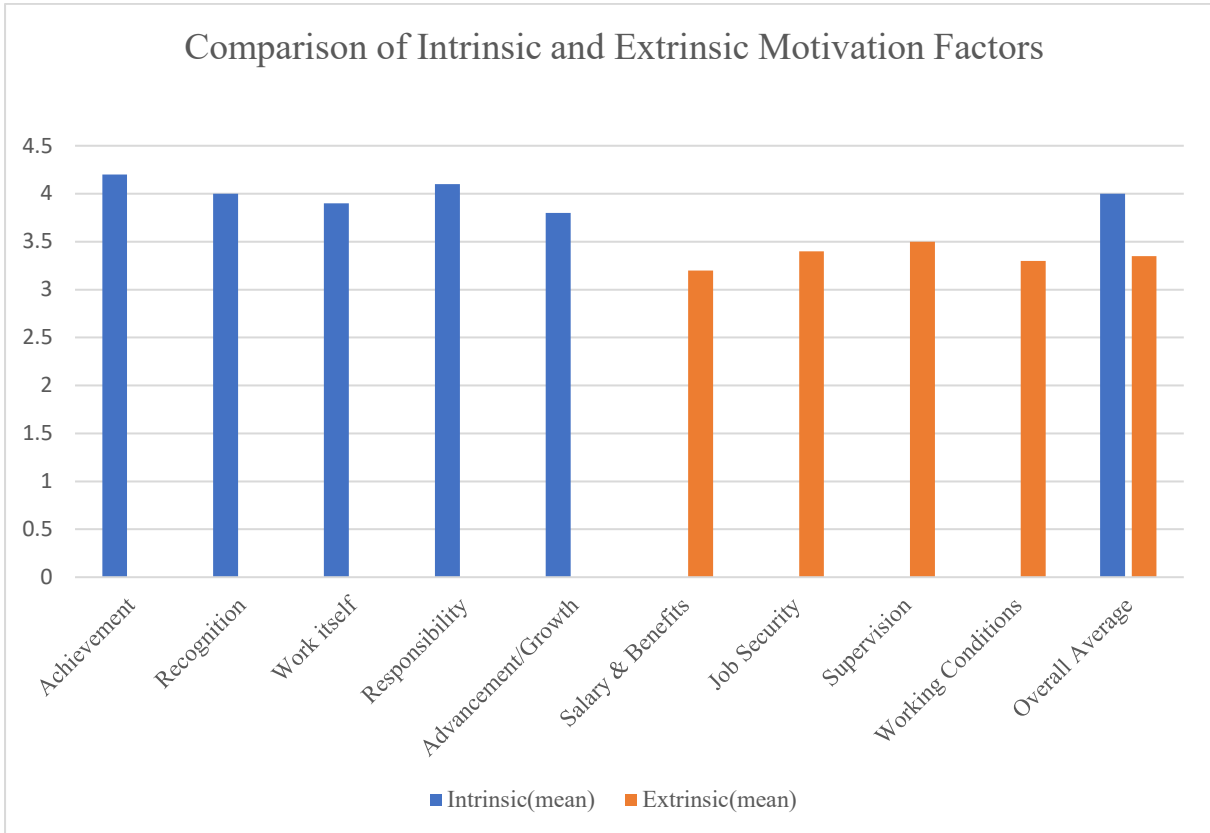
70% (n=9) agreed that recognition from supervisors and colleagues enhanced their performance.

62% (n=8) emphasized the importance of meaningful and challenging work.

In contrast, perceptions of fairness in compensation and long-term job security were moderate.

These findings highlight the centrality of intrinsic drivers in shaping employee engagement and performance.

Figure 1: Comparison of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation Factors among Operational Staff



Source: Survey data collected by the researcher (2025).

As illustrated in Figure 1, intrinsic motivation factors such as achievement and recognition scored higher than extrinsic factors such as salary and working conditions. The evidence underscores intrinsic drivers play a more significant role in influencing employee performance.

Equations

Yamane's Formula

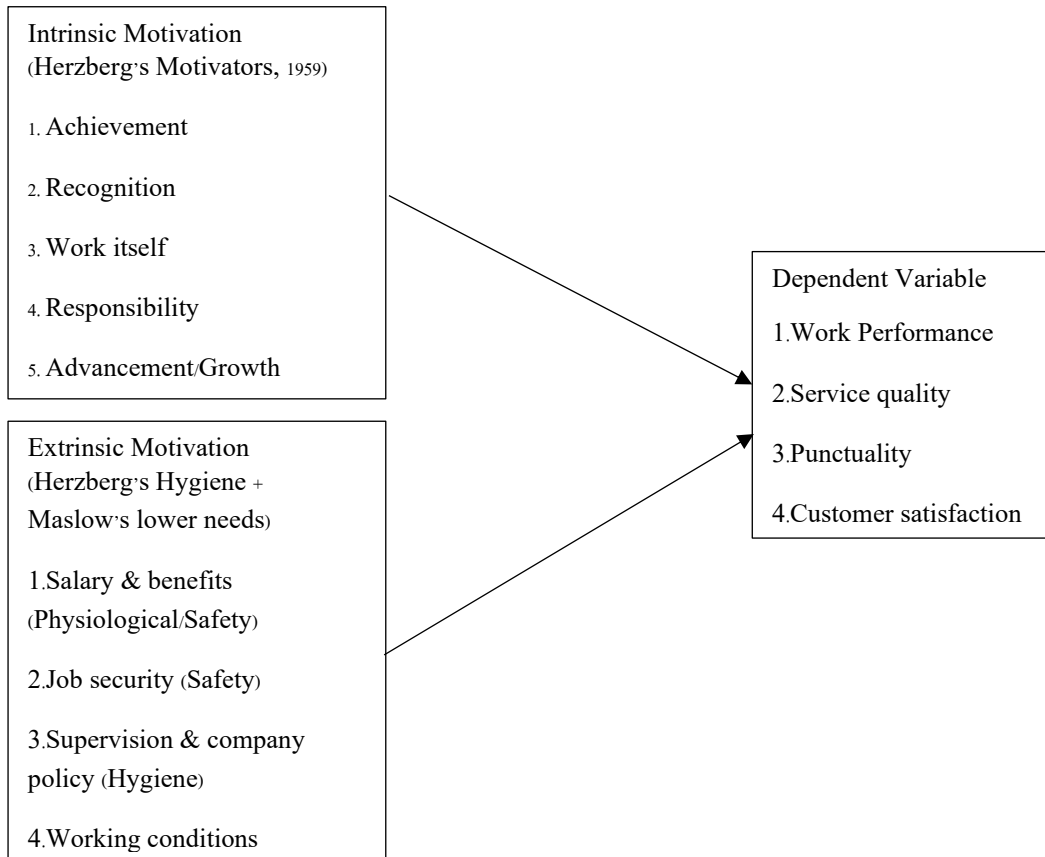
$$N = \frac{N}{1+(e)^2} \tag{1}$$

The sample size was calculated using Yamane's formula (1973) at a 95% confidence level (see Equation 1). Given the small population of 12 operational staff at Pimpool Villa Hotel, the formula indicated a required sample size of approximately 12. Therefore, a census survey was conducted, including all employees.

### 1.4 Conceptual Framework

#### Independent Variables (Motivational Factors)

#### Dependent Variable



#### Hypothesized Relationship

Intrinsic Motivation → Strong positive effect on Work Performance

Extrinsic Motivation → Moderate effect on Work Performance

The conceptual framework of this study was developed based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), and Alderfer's ERG Theory (1969). It proposes that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors influence the work performance of operational staff. Intrinsic factors include achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement, while extrinsic factors include salary, job security, supervision, and working conditions. Work performance is measured in terms of service quality, punctuality, and customer satisfaction. The framework hypothesizes that intrinsic motivation exerts a stronger positive effect on performance compared to extrinsic motivation.

### 1.5 Research Objective

1. To examine personal and motivational factors influencing the work performance of operational staff at Pimpool Villa Hotel.

2. To analyze the relative impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on employee performance.

3. To provide practical HRM recommendations for small-scale hotels in rural provinces.

## 2. Body of paper

### 2.1 Literature Review

#### 2.1.1 Motivation Theories

Employee motivation has long been a central theme in organizational behavior and human resource management. Among the most influential frameworks is Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which distinguishes between motivators such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement that enhance job satisfaction, and hygiene factors including salary, supervision, and working conditions that prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily drive performance.

Similarly, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) conceptualizes motivation as a progression from basic physiological and safety needs to higher-order psychological needs, culminating in self-actualization. This model highlights the layered nature of human motivation, suggesting that once lower-level needs are met, individuals seek fulfillment through esteem and personal growth.

Building on Maslow, Alderfer's ERG Theory (1969) condenses these needs into three categories: Existence (basic material requirements), Relatedness (social and interpersonal relationships), and Growth (personal development and self-fulfillment). Unlike Maslow's rigid hierarchy, ERG theory allows for flexibility, recognizing that individuals may pursue multiple needs simultaneously.

Together, these theories provide a robust foundation for examining how intrinsic and extrinsic factors shape employee behavior and performance, particularly in service-oriented industries such as hospitality.

#### 2.1.2 Motivation and Work Performance

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that intrinsic motivation such as pride in work, recognition, and meaningful tasks exerts a stronger and more sustainable influence on performance than extrinsic rewards. In the hospitality sector, intrinsic drivers are especially critical, as service quality depends heavily on employees' emotional engagement with guests.

Nevertheless, extrinsic factors remain important. Fair compensation, supportive supervision, and favorable working conditions help prevent dissatisfaction and reduce turnover. Recent research in Thailand (e.g., Suksawat & Weerakit, 2023; Promnila et al., 2024) confirms that while intrinsic factors are central to performance, extrinsic conditions such as job security and supervisor support also play a role in employee retention and engagement.

Author/Year	Context	Theory/Focus	Key Findings
Herzberg (1959)	General workforce	Two-Factor Theory	Motivation factors (achievement, recognition) drive satisfaction; hygiene

<b>Author/Year</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Theory/Focus</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
			factors prevent dissatisfaction
<b>Maslow (1943)</b>	General psychology	Hierarchy of Needs	Motivation progresses from basic to self-actualization
<b>Alderfer (1969)</b>	Organizational behavior	ERG Theory	Existence, Relatedness, Growth as core motivators
<b>Recent Thai Study (2021)</b>	Hospitality	Maintenance factors	Job security and supervisor support influence retention
<b>This Study (2025)</b>	Small hotel, Nan Province	Mixed-method	Intrinsic motivation stronger than extrinsic in driving performance

### 2.1.3 Research Gap

Most prior research has focused on large hotel chains, leaving small-scale hotels in rural provinces underexplored. Furthermore, few studies have directly examined the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and operational staff performance in the Thai context. This study addresses these gaps by analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data from Pimpool Villa Hotel in Nan Province.

## 2.2 Methodology

### 2.2.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews. The survey was administered via Google Forms, while interviews provided deeper insights into motivational experiences.

### 2.2.2 Population and Sample

The population consisted of 12 operational staff at Pimpool Villa Hotel (front desk, housekeeping, food and beverage, gardener, security, and systems engineer). Given the small population, the study adopted a census sampling approach, including all employees.

The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (1973) at a 95% confidence level, as shown in Equation (1):

$$N = \frac{N}{1+(e)^2} \quad (1)$$

Where:

N = 12 (population size)

e = 0.05 (margin of error at 95% confidence level)

n =  $12 / \{1 + 12(0.05^2)\} = 12 / \{1 + 12(0.0025)\} = 12 / 1.03 \approx 11.65$

Thus, the calculated sample size was approximately 12, confirming the use of a census survey that included all operational staff.

### 2.2.3 Research Instrument

The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

1. Demographics (gender, age, education, tenure, salary).
2. Motivational Factors (intrinsic and extrinsic, measured on a 5-point Likert scale).
3. Work Performance (quality, punctuality, customer service).

### 2.2.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, standard deviation) and correlation analysis. Qualitative responses were analyzed through content analysis to identify recurring themes.

## 2.3 Results

### 2.3.1 Demographic Profile

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents. The majority were female (69.2%), aged between 32–64 years, with most holding education below bachelor's level (69.2%). The largest salary group was 10,001–15,000 THB (76.9%).

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	4	30.8%
	Female	9	69.2%
Age	32–64 years	13	100%
Education	Below Bachelor	9	69.2%
	Bachelor	4	30.8%
Tenure	<1 year	4	30.8%
	1–3 years	5	38.5%
	3–5 years	4	30.8%
Salary	10,001–15,000 THB	10	76.9%

Source: Survey data collected by the researcher (2025).

### 2.3.2 Motivation Levels

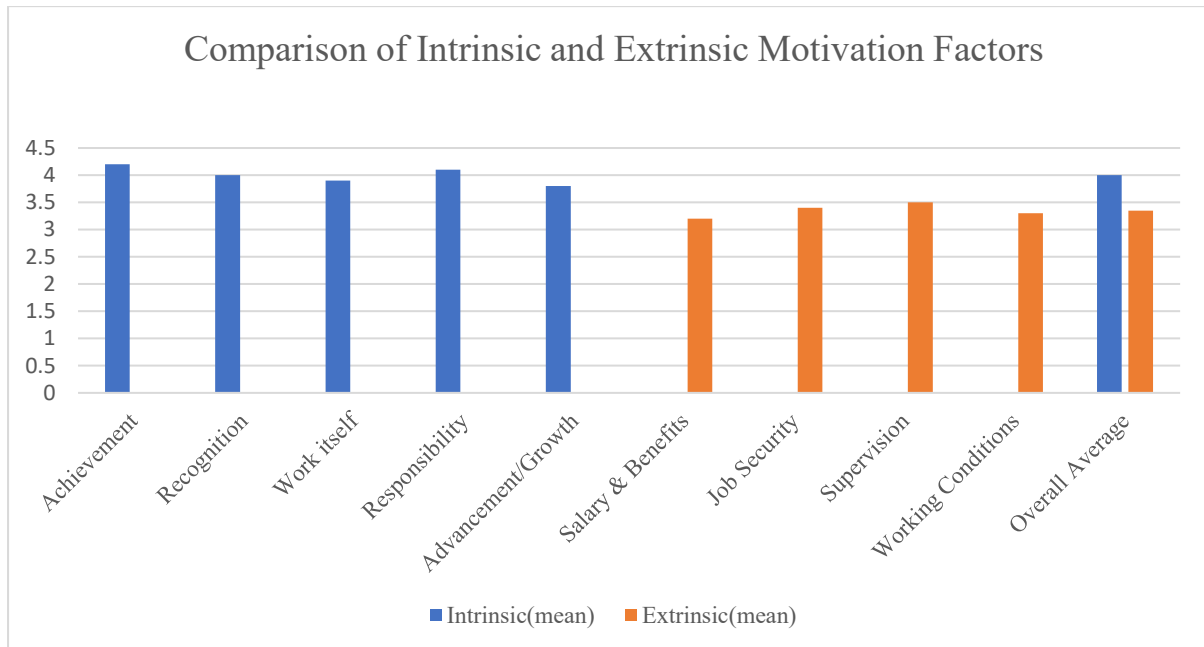
Survey results revealed that intrinsic motivation scored higher than extrinsic motivation. For example:

70% (n=9) of respondents agreed that recognition from supervisors and colleagues enhanced their performance.

62% (n=8) emphasized the importance of meaningful and challenging work.

In contrast, only 38% (n = 5) strongly agreed that salary fully met their needs.

Figure 1: Comparison of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation Factors among Operational Staff



Source: Survey data collected by the researcher (2025).

Figure 1 illustrates that intrinsic motivation factors such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility obtained higher mean scores compared to extrinsic factors such as salary and working conditions. This finding aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which emphasizes the stronger role of motivators in driving employee performance.

### 2.3.3 Work Performance Perceptions

Most respondents expressed satisfaction with their assigned tasks (76.9%, n = 10 agreed or strongly agreed). However, perceptions of career advancement opportunities were mixed, with 30% (n = 4) disagreeing that their job offered long-term growth.

### 2.3.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis indicated a moderate positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and work performance ( $r = .569, p < .05$ ). Extrinsic factors such as salary showed weaker or inconsistent correlations. These results suggest that intrinsic drivers are more influential in sustaining employee engagement and performance in small hotel contexts.

## 5. Conclusion

This study examined the motivational factors influencing the work performance of operational staff at Pimpool Villa Hotel, a small-scale hospitality business in Nan Province, Thailand. By integrating survey data from 12 employees with theoretical perspectives from Herzberg (1959), Maslow (1943), and Alderfer (1969), the findings highlight the central role of

intrinsic motivation particularly achievement, recognition, and meaningful tasks in sustaining employee performance.

In contrast, extrinsic factors such as salary and benefits were perceived as less influential, though supportive supervision and collegial relationships contributed positively to engagement. The results underscore that small hotels, despite limited resources, can enhance service quality and competitiveness by fostering a workplace culture that prioritizes recognition, empowerment, and opportunities for personal growth.

Importantly, the correlation analysis confirmed a significant positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and work performance, reinforcing the argument that intrinsic drivers are more sustainable than extrinsic rewards in hospitality contexts.

Practical implications suggest that hotel managers should design HRM strategies that emphasize intrinsic motivators while maintaining fair compensation and supportive working conditions. By doing so, small-scale hotels can strengthen employee commitment, reduce turnover, and achieve long-term organizational sustainability.

Limitations and future research: This study is limited by its small sample size, which restricts the generalizability of findings. Future research should expand the sample size and compare results across different hotel types and regions. Additionally, qualitative approaches could further explore how cultural and contextual factors shape employee motivation in Thailand's hospitality sector.

### **Acknowledgment**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and the Faculty of Management Sciences for their unwavering support and for granting me the invaluable opportunity to represent the university at the International Academic Multidisciplinary Research Conference in Tokyo 2026. This recognition and sponsorship have been instrumental in transforming my academic aspirations into reality.

My heartfelt thanks go to my esteemed advisor, Dr. Pisit Potjanajaruwit, whose insightful guidance, encouragement, and academic mentorship have profoundly shaped the direction and depth of this research. His dedication to excellence has inspired me to pursue rigorous inquiry and meaningful contribution.

I am also sincerely grateful to the management and staff of Pimpool Villa Hotel, Nan Province, for their cooperation and openness in sharing their experiences, which enriched the practical relevance of this study.

Finally, I extend my appreciation to everyone who has supported me throughout this journey. This achievement not only reflects my academic growth but also reinforces my commitment to advancing knowledge in the field of Business Entrepreneurship, the discipline I am proud to pursue.

## References

- Alderfer, C. P. (1969). An empirical test of a new theory of human needs. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 4(2), 142-175. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073\(69\)90004-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(69)90004-X)
- Chaiyapruksayanonde, C., & Ponchaitiwat, K. (2025). Supportive work environments, innovative work behavior, and job performance in the hospitality industry: Empirical evidence from Thailand. *Tourism and Hospitality*, 6(1), 20. <https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp6010020>
- Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. B. (1959). *The motivation to work* (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>
- Techarattanased, N. (2022). Marketing Mix and Perceived Brand Equity Affecting Consumers' Purchasing Decisions of Vitamin C Beverages in Thailand. *SSRU Journal of Management Science*. 9(2). p.23-42.
- Promnila, N., Srepirote, K., & Pooprueksachai, T. (2024). Exploratory factor analysis of hotel employee competencies in Thailand: Evidence after the COVID-19 pandemic. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1), 2364850. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2364850>
- Suksawat, P., & Weerakit, N. (2023). Motivational factors and their effect on performance of hotel employees in Khao Lak. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, Prince of Songkla University. [Conference paper abstract].