



**National Cheng Kung University**

**Institute of International Management**

# **Service Management of Motivating Service Staff**

**Final Report**

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Add family names  
and date

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## 1. Introduction

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According to Robbins (2003), motivation is the process that accounts for an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal. One of the main factors that managers should take into consideration is national culture when managing the company, its people, and its operations. The Chinese culture is more like collectivism while Western culture tends to be individualistic. Inside the cultural values, there are also positive and negative values to influence on service performance of employees (Johns & Yeung, 2003).

~~Motivation is defined as a process that lies behind a person's intensity, direction and persistence of effort toward obtaining a specific goal. How hard a person tries to achieve something is called intensity. But only with direction toward the benefits of the organization, the intensity creates a good result. However, we all know that the key for everything is persistence. If that person stays long enough in their work, and puts enough effort into their work, they can achieve the goal.~~

citation

What we also know is that Chinese business culture is influenced by two concepts which are guanxi (relationship) and mianzi (face). Nevis in his study in 1983 suggested a revision of hierarchy in the Chinese situation. Group loyalty and national unity were found to be addressed before physiological needs. In Asia countries, people do business not only based on benefits and physical values but also based on the relationship. And "face" more reflected belonging, rather than to individual esteem. In Chinese society, which was a highly collectivist society, individual esteem such as personal achievement, independence, reputation might not be relevant or highly evaluated.

Skip the collectivist reference

Asian culture in general and Taiwanese culture in particular are influenced by Confucianism. Asian people respect hierarchy and authority, which are rooted in thousands of years of history. Besides, age also plays an important role, work as a source of authority which is largely unknown in Western business. Therefore, there is a slight difference between what is called motivation in Western culture versus in Chinese culture that we need to discover. Because we cannot just apply what has been found in Western culture and apply mechanically into the Chinese culture where it does not fit in.

Source of these ideas?

## 2. Distinction with Western motivation settings

### 2.1 Theories of motivation

✓ In the area of work and organisational behavior, work motivation theories are considered to be one of the most researched about, well-defined and wide-ranging (Latham & Pinder, 2005; Woods & West, 2010). There are many different theories of motivation, however they can be put into two groups, which are content theories and process theories. The aim of content theories is to identify factors associated with

motivation, whereas the aim of process theories is to explicate the processes underlying motivation. The most well-known content theories are: Maslow's (1943) needs hierarchy theory, McClelland's (1965) three needs theory, Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman's (1959) two - factor theory, McGregor theory X and theory Y, Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory. The most famous for research process theories are: Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, Adams' (1963) equity theory, and Locke and Latham's (1990) goal setting theory (Steers, Mowday & Shapiro, 2004). In the next section, we will select two among several aforementioned motivation theories to discuss further and analyse its application in the context of China and Western countries.

hierarchy of

### 2.1.1 Maslow theories of needs

Maslow's (1943) proposed his research on a person's motivation through the five level of needs, which are ranked from the most important to fulfill to the least one. These needs are physiological, safety and security, belongingness, esteem and self-actualization. Physiological needs refer to basic survival needs of a human such as food, water and sex. Maslow clarified that before achieving other needs, one must be able to achieve the lowest level of need. Next, people need to feel safe and secured in terms of their living environment. For example, people will prefer to live in a friendly neighborhood rather than toxic ones that can harm their physical and mental health. If a person's physiological and safety needs were satisfied then they would seek the feeling of belongingness, which is a need for affection and a place in the group. Self-esteem refers to the perception of people's self-worth, meaning that one would value his self-worth and would expect people to do the same. These needs are in the highest level of Maslow's needs theory and it contains the auxiliary needs of achievement, freedom, independence, recognition and appreciation. Lastly, the highest order needs is self-actualisation and it involves one being able to reach his fullest potential, or as Maslow once said "what a man can be, he must be" (pg. 382).

Maslow's levels of motivation translate well into the work environment. Each level can be directed to an employee, from their onboarding through promotion, training, and leadership. Understanding where an employee is standing in the Maslow's need pyramid can help managers and supervisors decide an appropriate reward, treatments towards that employee. For example, according to Maslow, the most basic needs of an individual (physiological and self-preservation) will motivate the applicant to look for employment opportunities. Employment enables the ability to provide food and shelter (Maslow's Level 1) for basic living standards. Moreover, an applicant may look at the nature of the job if it is dangerous and affects their physical or mental health. A new hire can be classified within these paradigms. When basic needs are fulfilled, a newly hired employee will search for a sense of belonging in a corporation. At this stage an employee wants to create a social bond, connect with other colleagues. If this is achieved, an employee can be motivated to come to work because he feels happy and excited with a supportive environment. When the employee knows well about his job and has great connections with his coworkers, he would want to feel appreciated and

valued for his work. For e  
he would expect at least h  
can boost his self-esteem  
will be developed. Simp  
potential, to feel truly valued

General comment here:

the bottom level of the hierarchy positions people as dependent on the organization. To maintain a healthy balance individuals should avoid become overly dependent here. Organizations in-turn need to focus on what individuals need to become self-actualizing performers

However, this theory is argued for its  
especially in China where there is high collec  
to be more focused on social goals than indivi  
sense of love and acceptance from other peo  
and 4 needs of Maslow's theory.

confused  
All people have  
this need. What  
you are talking  
about in  
collectivism is how  
people organize  
their relationships  
in the environment

ent cultural context,  
cultural setting tend  
they will seek for the  
which is the level 3

### 2.1.2 Equity theory

Equity theory is a theory that individuals will compare between their job output and input with other people to avoid any disadvantages in terms of their benefits. Job input here means the effort, time, knowledge, contribution that he has made to increase the corporation's value. Job output can be interpreted as the benefits that an employee receives for his input such as: salary, bonuses, healthcare plans, promotion, training etc. An employee will evaluate the time, effort, and skill they contribute to an organization and compare that with the benefits of the afore- mentioned employment: pay, health care, hours, etc. Basically, what the theory tells us is about the similarity between the effort and the rewards and it proves invaluable when it is used as a tool to analyze the effort and rewards given employees. In case when input is not equal to output, workplace stress and anxiety will occur. An employee is likely to be unmotivated to contribute to the organization, or make some adjustments to balance the mismatch between output and input. According to research, the adjustments include six actions: change input, change outcome, distort perception of self, distort perceptions of others, choose a different referent, leave the field.

Regarding change input, when an employee is dissatisfied with the compensation, he will make less effort to perform the task. For example, Andy used to work in the Customer Service department and due to the nature of the job, he has to work overtime a lot and he barely gets any compensation from it. His job hour is from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM but sometimes when the company launches a new product, he has to work until 10:00 PM. Although he had mentioned the overtime payment many times to his manager, the manager did not seem to acknowledge his request. Therefore when he was asked to do extra tasks next time, he only did some important tasks and left unimportant ones undone. He adjusted the work efforts, or known as work input, because he felt that his contribution was not valued by the company. The second choice an employee can make is changing the outcomes which he is supposed to deliver. In the case of Andy, besides not giving 100% effort, he could also change the result of his task. For example, he can neglect some customer's questions, or direct them towards the Help Center page without telling them how to find their solution ✓

The third, fourth and fifth choices involve the comparison of one's works with others. He thinks that his effort and contribution is not worthy compared to the others. Taking Andy's case as an example again, he accidentally knew that his junior staff member works less hours but still earns the same amount of compensation as him. He will develop a thought that "why am I the only one working so hard?? Why is everybody's work not as hard as I am". Then, Andy will compare his tasks to others as such: "at least I do more crucial tasks than his! His job is just as easy as pie!". Moreover, he can choose a different person to set as a benchmark for his contribution. Finally, when Andy thinks that there is no chance that the company can see his effort or contribution compared to the others, he will eventually quit the job. ✓

In China's context, the equity theory holds because of the theory of Maoism and Confucianism. Maoist China supported an "egalitarian" state across the levels so that everyone's effort is equal in order to achieve a big business. People may contribute more, or more important than others but their contribution is not valued than others. Therefore, they can choose to be less productive to avoid "loss" for their loss. However, China is currently in the process of reforming its economy to compete globally, and must place more focus on the development of its industries to design an effective performance-based organizational development system.

The ideas here are potentially interesting but need to be explained in more detail

## 2.2. Why are incentives so significant in US business practices?

The reason why incentives are so significant in the US business practices has been well studied before, both theoretically and in practices. Firstly, it is productivity that all of the companies are looking for. The high productivity the employees have, the high profit the company can earn, little input but higher return. What drives employees to keep them motivated at work are incentives, in either moral or physical ways. By offering employees what they deserve, the company can increase the productivity of their employees, making them more motivated. A good benefits package can retain good employees and guarantee what to bring back to the company. To reduce the employees turnover rate, the company can offer incentives during the production season, for example. More tasks of the management, because people can treat their customer in a pleasant way, which does not damage their image. Customer service is crucial for an enterprise. On top of the hierarchy of customer service is customer success, to achieve this the company needs to understand the customer's requirement, sometimes, even the customer does not know what he or she requires. To do that, we need someone who understands customers more than the customers do by themselves. Finishing the task for employees is an easy job to do but making them do what exceeds that is an art and one of the ways to make employees go beyond what he or she is asked to do is motivation. Last but not least, a

There is much debate on this point - one camp argues for incentives to encourage people to work hard. This though assumes people will not work hard by themselves (in my mind a negative assumption). The other camp argues for a more nurturing approach - helping and supporting employees towards good performance while rewarding them well (so that does not need to be discussed)

good incentive plan can help build up a positive company's culture, where talents are recruited and treated equal with what they contribute to the company.

### 3. Distinction with Chinese motivation settings

#### 3.1 Connections of Taoism and Confucianism with Chinese motivation

According to the study of professor Hsu (2017), we could find that the main distinction with Chinese motivation settings are Confucianism and the spiritual characteristic of Taoism. Confucianism in Chinese culture has been rooted for hundreds of years. The definition of Confucianism is the system of ethics; saying the theory of getting along with people (i.e. parents, friends, colleagues, elderlys, etc.) should living with kindness, expressing the love of humanity. Hence, the research shows that the character of "ren" in Madarin Chinese represents an ideal personhood in Chinese culture. The paper shows the meaning of ren can be divided into three kinds: (1) ren with mianzi, (2) pragmatic ren and (3) moral ren. Here we reveal the practical examples of three kinds of ren in Chinese motivation settings.

First of all, in Chinese culture, we are eager to maintain the reputation of others. For instance, we don't talk too straight or harsh words to protect each other's mianzi (face). Therefore, in China, we tend to be more indirect in our communication with their staff. When serving customers, we tend to be more polite. They avoid any unpleasant words or actions. Another, Chinese tends to be more conservative in their behavior. We maintain good relationships with others. We maintain good relationships with others. We maintain good relationships with others. With the belief to conform to the social norms, we tend to be more conservative in our behavior. This is also the presence of confucianism which emphasizes the importance of social harmony. We could perform your external duties with enthusiasm and motivations of things we are planning to do. This is also the presence of confucianism which emphasizes the importance of social harmony.

Sounding a little confused here -

At the root Confucian morality lays the expectation that employees dedicate themselves to "giving of their all" - or apply all their good selves to the task / work in hand. Efforts are positive, constructive and reflect and sense of moral duty to self-cultivation (see work as learning / development opportunities).

If you are giving of yourself all the time (full energy / effort) it is easy to become exhausted. So a Taoist perspective allows people to recover by doing "good enough" work - work that does not create complaints or problems for others but is not their full effort

The study of Hsu's paper called "wu-wei". According to the study, we attempt to align except for good work. In Chinese culture, even pressure of work. In Chinese culture, we develop our guanxi with bosses, colleagues, and customers most of the time, even sacrificing our off work time to build up the bonding and guanxi with ones who're in need. We think this is also the reflection of Taoism in Chinese motivation setting. Sometimes we put our individual desire behind just to adhere the society or the organization. With the morality of taoism, Chinese people tend to focus on collectivism behavior patterns instead of individualism.

In conclusion, with the morality standards of confucian and taoism in Chinese culture, its motivation settings tend to focus on collectivism in a positive way. We can find several organizations conducting the spirit of confucian in their management, while staff try to go with the flow and adhere to the governor's policies.



### 3.2 How do Chinese organizations try to motivate staff?

Based on our research, Chinese organizations always motivate their staff with three different approaches, however, each of the approaches could reveal the shadow of the spirit of confucian and wu-wei. We categorized three approaches to (1) spiritual meaning to staff, (2) actual business encouragement, and (3) self-growth strategy. Except for the second approach, we think the first and the third are the most specific performances in Chinese organizations which we will reveal more information below.

Chinese organizations like to motivate their staff. At first, they always develop many prizes/ contests for their staff. For example: when we walk into a restaurant or convenient store, we can see the competition of the “best employees voting” from time to time. Most employees contribute their best just to maintain their esteem and spiritual power. This approach not only develops staffs’ achievement and motivation but also strengthens the efficiency of service.

Interesting idea -  
but I'm not sure  
how this is spiritual  
- your idea sounds  
more like  
employees doing  
bai-bai to  
encourage support  
from the Gods

The second approach is actual business encouragement which has been conducted not only in Chinese organizations but Western organizations as well. Take promotion as an example, you can earn the equal position based on how much effort you pay for the job. We think this approach is a practical approach for all of the organizations in the world.

Last but not least, self-growth strategy in Chinese society is a common approach nowadays. Since we have a culture of confucianism, we desire to become a better person in spiritual way and physical way. Therefore, organizations always encourage their staff to take some of the business related courses monthly or quarterly. While their staff take the course designed by organizations, they could utilize this opportunity to motivate staff during the training. For example, listening to the feedback from their employees, making employees feel like they matter and they are important, etc.

Ok - more on track

Moreover, some of the restaurants and bakeries will send their chefs to study further for cooking licenses or provide them to the cooking exhibition to learn the latest cooking equipment which are used right now. Furthermore, barber shops’ designers always gather together to create the new fashion style and train their skills. We think Chinese organizations use self-growth strategy to motivate their staff actively.

## 4. Similarities and differences with Chinese and US approaches to incentives

### 4.1 Culture difference (collectivism v.s. individualism)

As we mentioned above, Chinese culture is more like collectivism while Western culture tends to be individualistic. Chinese culture tends to use the public power to influence staff, we usually value our reputation and our status in organization more than our individual needs. On the contrary, Western culture focuses on



individual's needs and desires better. These very two different cultures, we could find the different business in Chinese and Western. For example, in Chinese culture, we use name much more than our own name due to the importance of reputation in where we think we belong. On the other hand, Western culture values their own name and esteem of their own better than organization itself. It's an interesting phenomenon while we observe the two different cultures.

Think too of how organizations are often named after the founder (in the West).

#### 4.2 Similarities

The only similarity that we can find is the application of different aspects of equity theory for both Western and China context. In western countries, employees strive for their own accomplishments and goals, therefore, they believe that the more they work, the more rewards they can get, which will then create equity. In China where Maoism and Confucianism influences strongly, it is believed that everybody contributes an equal part to achieve a big goal. However, in practice, some may work harder and more critical than the others so those will exhibit adjustments for the balance of equity in the long run.

Have a look at Herzberg too - the work itself is motivating reflecting how it can give growth / development opportunities

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