

Analysis of Influencing Factors of Work Motivation of Government Employees Based on MaxDiff Model: Evidence from Jiangmen City

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to use the MaxDiff model to explore the factors influencing the work motivation of staff in certain government agencies in Jiangmen City, and to conduct relevant empirical analyses. The study aims to propose strategies for improving work motivation among these staff members. The results indicate that the most significant factors affecting the work motivation of staff in Jiangmen government agencies are salary and remuneration, additional welfare benefits, and the power to make decisions about their own work. In contrast, factors such as a sense of belonging to the work unit, recognition of their work, and job security are less important. Therefore, it is recommended that government agencies in Jiangmen City increase the salaries and benefits of their staff and provide them with more decision-making power. This approach will stimulate their desire to work, enhance their motivation, improve the efficiency of government agencies, and elevate the level of public service. Ultimately, these measures will support the construction of a harmonious, stable, and orderly society.

Keywords: Government agency workers; Job motivation; MaxDiff model

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1. Introduction

Since the 18th National Congress of the Party, the Central Government has actively promoted the construction of efficient authorities ^[1]. In response, various government agencies in Jiangmen City have followed the leadership of the province and the central government, striving to improve efficiency and enhance the overall impression and satisfaction of the public towards government agencies.

Currently, the work motivation of government staff has been a focal point for managers and researchers. The motivation to work significantly influences staff efficiency. Research has shown that factors such as salary and benefits impact the work motivation of civil servants. However, there is a need for more in-depth analysis and research on the factors influencing the work motivation of government agency staff.

Therefore, this thesis aims to conduct an empirical study using the MaxDiff model, focusing on certain

government agencies in Jiangmen City. The study will delve deeper into the intrinsic factors affecting the work motivation of government agency staff through questionnaire surveys and data analysis. This research will provide a theoretical basis and practical reference for motivation strategies and other aspects of work motivation for government agency employees. It will also offer effective support for enhancing work motivation and the organizational development of government agency employees.

2. Literature review

The research literature on the MaxDiff model and factors affecting the motivation of government agency workers can be categorized into three main areas: methods of measuring motivation factors in public service, exploration of factors affecting motivation in public service, and scoring methods and analyses using the MaxDiff model.

Zhang Lin (2022) ^[2] conducted a systematic literature review and analysis on the conceptual definition, structure, and measurement of public service motivation, antecedent variables, outcome variables, and mediating/moderating roles. Zhang identified issues such as a single measurement method, a lack of longitudinal comparative studies, limitations of the research object, and a lack of localization in research. Zhang emphasized the need to optimize measurement methods of public service motivation and expand dynamic panel data research to broaden the research scope and strengthen the exploration of public service motivation from a Chinese perspective.

Xue Bowen (2021) ^[3] suggested that improving the efficiency of local governments requires following the basic path of “strong motivation - strong incentives - strong protection - strong constraints.” This involves strengthening the cultivation of political ethics among officials, improving mechanisms for their political promotion, aligning financial and administrative powers with officials’ responsibilities, and enhancing monitoring of officials’ power constraints.

Muhammad (2021) ^[4] stated that wage remuneration does not necessarily motivate government employees; instead, it can sometimes inhibit their desire to work. The survival of any organization depends primarily on the motivation of its representatives. Both budgetary and non-financial aspects should be continuously and proactively evaluated to understand employee expectations and needs. Organizations should create an atmosphere of cooperation and sharing, emphasizing the role of leadership and organizational climate.

Wang Xuefang (2020) ^[5] pointed out that civil servants’ motivation and initiative are influenced by various factors, necessitating a comprehensive and systematic approach using the two-factor theory of motivation. Wang also proposed talent attraction policies related to motivational factors and human resource management policies related to hygiene factors.

This paper aims to provide new perspectives and insights for future research on public service motivation by drawing on relevant research findings from foreign scholars and achievements made by domestic scholars in this field.

3. Research hypothesis and MaxDiff model

3.1. Analysis of factors affecting work motivation in the government sector and research hypotheses

Based on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory and ERG theory, the factors affecting work motivation in government departments include salary and additional benefits (which fulfill the first level of needs, or survival needs), job security (related to Maslow’s need for safety and security), job recognition, and a sense of belonging

to the organization (related to social needs, esteem, and self-actualization). Additionally, Adams' equity theory emphasizes the importance of fairness in treatment, while self-determination theory and control point theory highlight the role of decision-making power as a significant motivational factor^[6-8].

From the above analysis, seven indicators influencing work motivation can be identified: remuneration, additional benefits, job security, job recognition, sense of belonging, equality of treatment, and decision-making power.

Based on these indicators, the following research hypotheses are proposed to examine their impact on government agency staff motivation:

- (1) H1a: Wages and salaries are not related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (2) H1b: Wages and salaries are related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (3) H2a: Additional benefits are not related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (4) H2b: Additional benefits are related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (5) H3a: Sense of belonging to the unit is not related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (6) H3b: Sense of belonging to the unit is related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (7) H4a: Equality of treatment has no relation to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (8) H4b: Equality of treatment is related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (9) H5a: Recognition of work is not related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (10) H5b: Recognition of work is related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (11) H6a: Decision-making power over work is not related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (12) H6b: Decision-making power over work is related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (13) H7a: Job security is not related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.
- (14) H7b: Job security is related to the motivation of the staff of governmental bodies.

3.2. MaxDiff model

The MaxDiff model is a powerful tool for identifying key factors that influence employees' work motivation. It provides valuable support for research on various aspects such as salary, promotion opportunities, job content, and work environment^[9,10]. Researchers can design different MaxDiff research protocols based on specific research objectives and questions, collect and analyze data to determine the most important motivational factors and propose relevant suggestions and countermeasures.

In the study of government departments in Jiangmen City, the MaxDiff model was employed to examine the factors affecting the work motivation of governmental agency staff. The aim was to identify ways to enhance staff motivation and improve work efficiency within these departments.

4. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire is divided into two parts:

- (1) Personal information: This section includes six items regarding gender, age, education level, tenure with the organization, and position held.
- (2) MaxDiff Experimental Section: Respondents are required to select the most and least important factors affecting work motivation among several options. This section involves comparing seven factors: salary and pay, fringe benefits, job security, job recognition, decision-making power, equality of treatment, and a sense of belonging to the organization. Participants are given seven tasks, each involving a choice

between four factors, where they select the most and least important factors.

The survey was administered to staff at several governmental agencies in Jiangmen City, including the Reform and Development Bureau, Market Supervision Administration, Finance Bureau, Education Bureau, and the Pengjiang Branch of the Public Security Bureau. A total of 132 questionnaires were collected, with 102 responses from male staff and 30 from female staff.

5. Empirical results and analyses

The MaxDiff model was analyzed using the questionnaire analysis function in SPSS Pro software, yielding the results shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. MaxDiff model attribute estimation results

Attribute	Utility coefficient	Standard error	<i>z</i>	<i>P</i>	Most important	Least important	Number of occurrences	Preference share
Wage	1.208	0.073	16.518	0.000***	317	32	528	37.344%
Additional benefits	0.519	0.064	8.155	0.000***	241	107	528	18.754%
Work safety	-0.793	0.066	-11.933	0.000***	40	239	528	5.051%
Recognition of work	-0.495	0.063	-7.798	0.000***	69	197	528	6.806%
Decision-making power on work	0.244	0.062	3.929	0.000***	155	91	528	14.241%
Equality of treatment	0.106	0.062	1.722	0.085*	75	47	528	12.412%
Sense of belonging to the organization	-0.727	0.066	-11.079	0.000***	27	211	528	5.393%

Table 1 indicates that six of the seven factors have a *p*-value less than or equal to 0.05, suggesting statistical significance. The only exception is “equality of treatment,” which has a *p*-value greater than 0.05, indicating it does not significantly affect motivation. Thus, at a 95% confidence level, equality of treatment appears to have a minimal effect on the motivation of government sector workers. The remaining six factors—salary and remuneration, additional benefits, sense of belonging to the organization, job recognition, decision-making power, and job security—significantly influence job motivation.

6. Conclusions

This study explores the factors affecting the work motivation of staff in Jiangmen City governmental organizations through MaxDiff experiments. The following conclusions were drawn:

- (1) **Wages:** Wage is the most significant factor influencing work motivation among staff in Jiangmen City government departments. Increasing wages is likely to enhance staff motivation.
- (2) **Additional benefits:** Fringe benefits are also a crucial factor affecting motivation. Providing more welfare benefits can further boost staff motivation.
- (3) **Decision-making power:** The ability to make decisions is another important factor. Employees should continually improve their professional skills and build harmonious relationships with colleagues and superiors to gain more control and decision-making authority. Superiors should offer more opportunities for staff involvement in decision-making, fostering a democratic organizational atmosphere and enhancing staff skills and capabilities.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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