

## Motivation in Human Resource Management

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**Abstract;** Motivation plays a central role in human resource management because it directly shapes employee performance, commitment, and retention. As a core managerial function, motivation enables an enterprise to accomplish organizational tasks through a structured system of incentives and supportive measures. A well-designed motivation system requires managers to apply relevant motivational theories, which help explain how employees' behavior can be influenced and guided more effectively. Importantly, these theories also demonstrate that financial rewards are not the only drivers of work behavior: employees differ in their needs, expectations, and values, which makes it necessary to employ varied motivational instruments to sustain engagement and reduce turnover.

In recent years, attention to motivation as a management function has grown considerably. Many organizations now prioritize motivational practices in order to strengthen effectiveness and improve overall productivity. The successful operation of any institution depends largely on the quality of its workforce and the professionalism of managerial leadership. For this reason, enterprises must develop improved systems of motivation and encouragement that stimulate both the collective team and each individual employee to work efficiently toward shared objectives. Sustainable success is typically achieved by leaders who recognize that people are the main driving force of organizational development. In this context, motivation can be understood as the process of encouraging employees toward productive and goal-oriented activity.

*Keywords:* approach, motivation, salary, credit, personnel

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation functions as an important performance-management mechanism because it supports the achievement of organizational goals through the regulation and development of employee behavior. A fundamental principle of human resource management is the recognition that human resources differ substantially from other organizational resources (e.g., material or financial assets). These differences can be summarized as follows:

1. Employees possess the capacity for continuous development and professional growth.
2. Employment relationships tend to be long-term due to the alignment or intersection of organizational and individual interests.
3. Human resources contain intellectual potential, which strongly influences innovation and decision-making.
4. Employees are able to pursue and satisfy their own needs, which shapes motivation and work behavior.
5. The individuality of employees contributes to the formation of a unique corporate culture.

Labor incentives may be divided into material and non-material forms. Material incentives remain one of the most influential tools for stimulating work behavior because they can rapidly increase employee activity and productivity. This category includes both monetary rewards (e.g., wages, bonuses, performance-based payments) and non-monetary material benefits. In particular, material incentives often involve direct cash compensation linked to work results and performance outcomes (Ashenfelter et al., 2006).

It is widely accepted that financial incentives are among the most effective mechanisms for influencing employee effort; however, non-material incentives may also carry significant moral and practical value. A major category within non-material stimulation is moral incentive, which can include social recognition, aesthetic appreciation, socio-political approval, ethical acknowledgement, and informational support. At present, moral incentives are often viewed as especially important because they communicate respect and recognition of an employee's contributions. The key function of moral stimulation is to present and reinforce information about employee merit and achievement (Amrahov, 2023).

Non-material incentives may include support for tuition and training, consulting services, life insurance, public praise, holiday recognition, incentive trips, seeking employee advice, opportunities for workplace communication, and structured knowledge transfer to younger staff. Personnel training is frequently considered a strategic foundation for organizational success. Developing employees' professional knowledge, skills, and competencies contributes to higher performance and supports the achievement of institutional goals. Training methods may vary widely and include workshops, seminars, lectures, internships, self-study, distance learning, and professional placements (Mustafiyanti et al., 2023).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

It is also important for managers to consult employees when making key decisions. In such situations, employees are more likely to feel that they are an essential part of the team. Successful leaders should be familiar with the main motivation theories used in management practice, because these theories help explain how to encourage employees to work voluntarily, responsibly, and effectively. Existing motivational approaches make it possible to clarify the mechanisms of stimulation and to select more appropriate tools for the motivation process (Mirzazada, 2025).

In general, motivation theories are commonly divided into two broad groups: content theories and process theories. Content theories focus on what motivates people and which factors lead them to behave in a certain way. Process theories, in contrast, explain how motivation develops through cognition, perception, and decision-making.

One well-known content approach identifies five levels of human needs: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Amrahov et al., 2024). This system is hierarchical, meaning that each higher level becomes important only after the previous level is sufficiently satisfied. Therefore, in order for a person to remain motivated, basic needs must be met first. At the same time, once higher needs are satisfied, motivation does not simply end; the desire for self-actualization can continue to develop, which highlights the role of ongoing motivation in human life and work (Amrahov et al., 2023).

This theory can be applied in practice in several ways. The employer's task is to create comfortable working conditions and ensure that employees' work-related needs are met, such as a safe workplace, acceptable pay, and insurance. Organizations often offer different incentives that help employees "move upward" within the hierarchy. Managers who follow this approach try to meet the needs that are most relevant at a

given time. In some cases, however, employees may remain focused on lower-level needs, particularly the need for communication and belonging. In such situations, management should take timely measures to strengthen communication and interaction in the workplace so that employees can later focus on self-realization and professional development (Amrahov et al., 2023).

Another content approach divides needs into three main groups: power needs, achievement needs, and affiliation-related needs (Mirzazada, 2025). The need for power is connected to the desire to influence other people's actions. Individuals who seek power may be divided into two types: those who want dominance and strict control over others, and those who seek influence in order to achieve organizational goals by uniting employees' efforts and coordinating their work (Amrahov et al., 2023).

To use this theory effectively in practice, it is important to:

1. identify which needs are dominant for each employee (or create conditions for employees to evaluate their own needs), and
2. give employees opportunities to adjust their behavior and work approach based on this information.

Another widely applied theory is based on two groups of factors: hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors include organizational policy, working conditions, salary, relations with superiors, the level of direct control over work, and social security. Motivators include success, recognition, advancement, responsibility, creativity, and opportunities for development (Amrahov, 2022). If hygiene factors are weak or absent, employees typically become dissatisfied. If motivators are absent, employees may not necessarily feel dissatisfied, but their engagement and enthusiasm tend to decrease. In practice, assigning employees tasks is not simply about keeping them busy; the aim is to make work more meaningful and interesting, including tasks of different complexity levels (Amrahov, 2015).

Providing employees with more challenging tasks—especially within team projects—often strengthens their sense of achievement. Giving employees more authority to make decisions related to their work also increases responsibility and involvement, which can improve motivation (Ismayilov, 2019).

In addition, some approaches assume that employees are proactive, ready to accept responsibility, and that the work itself can act as a stimulus. For such employees, a key motivational method is to provide greater freedom for creativity and independence. Under these conditions, strict rules may become less necessary because employees are able to self-regulate and maintain discipline. As a result, a more democratic management style becomes effective (Mirzazada & Camalov, 2025).

Finally, it is important to consider the relationship between goals and performance. Motivation can be influenced by an employee's ability, independence, and participation in goal setting. When employees are involved in setting goals and understand their role in achieving them, goal implementation tends to be stronger. Goal-setting theory highlights that goals should be specific, challenging, supported by commitment, and acceptable (Mirzazadeh & Zeynalli, 2024). In this framework, motivation depends not only on needs, but also on the employee's thinking process—how they evaluate the realism of achieving the goal and receiving a reward. If employees believe that effort will lead to a real reward, their performance usually increases (Amrahov et al., 2025).

For example, employees preparing for professional development exams may become more motivated if previous promotions were successful and resulted in salary increases. In this case, motivation is supported

by self-confidence, positive experience, and the desire to earn additional bonuses (Abbasova et al., 2025). On the other hand, if an employee doubts that training will be completed successfully or that it will lead to future rewards, motivation decreases. Expectancy theory helps explain how employees choose between behavioral alternatives at work and why the credibility of rewards is essential for effective motivation.

### 3. RESULTS

The major practical value of motivation theory lies in the idea that rewards should be clearly connected to performance and that the procedure for selecting and distributing rewards must be understandable, transparent, and perceived as earned and meaningful. At the same time, employees' evaluations of fairness are often highly subjective: it may seem to an employee that someone received a larger bonus or more recognition, even when the system is formally consistent. As a result, psychological tension can arise, and managing motivation becomes more difficult under conditions of perceived inequality (Crompton, 2006).

In many cases, an automatic behavioral reaction appears: employees who believe they are rewarded unfairly tend to reduce their work intensity, whereas those who perceive rewards as fair usually maintain or even increase their performance. In such situations, it is important to explain why salary and reward differences exist—for example, by emphasizing that higher pay is linked to greater experience, higher productivity, or stronger responsibility, and that employees have opportunities to increase earnings through professional development and improved results. Some organizations attempt to avoid conflict by keeping bonuses confidential (for instance, distributing them in envelopes). However, practice shows that secrecy does not always solve the problem and may even create additional distrust and informal speculation (Zubareva & Pilipenko, 2016).

A key aspect of how employees evaluate their position in an organization is comparison: people naturally compare their rewards with the rewards of others. If an employee observes what appears to be an obvious injustice, motivation usually declines rapidly. In this context, elements associated with expectancy theory and fairness-oriented approaches may be summarized as follows (Yermekova et al., 2024):

1. **Probability of payment**—the employee's internal belief that effort will actually be rewarded;
2. **Extrinsic reward**—material components of reward (salary, bonuses, awards, promotion, etc.);
3. **Intrinsic reward**—non-material motivation (praise, recognition, authority, leadership opportunities, honor boards, etc.);
4. **Perception**—the value of the reward to the employee and attitude toward the promised compensation;
5. **Effort expended**—the level of activity, dedication, and intensity of work;
6. **Expected reward**—the employee's personal forecast of what reward should follow;
7. **Results**—quality, quantity, and time spent on the work performed;
8. **Employee role**—the nature and complexity of assigned tasks;
9. **Satisfaction level**—the match between expectations and the real evaluation of one's work;
10. **Competence level**—knowledge, skills, and the ability to use tools required for task completion.

These elements are interconnected. In general, employees increase effort when they believe the expected reward is realistic and proportional to their contribution. However, motivation alone is not sufficient to reach high performance: skills, abilities, and professional competence are also decisive. If employees do not understand their role or lack necessary tools and competencies, effective results are unlikely. At the same time, employees' self-evaluation strongly affects expectations: the higher they evaluate their contribution, the more they expect from management. Therefore, the morale and satisfaction of employees depend both on the effort they invest and on the fairness and clarity of the reward system. When tasks are set correctly and performance is evaluated objectively, work results create satisfaction, and satisfaction, in turn, supports stable performance. A fairly assessed salary remains one of the key factors that positively influences staff efficiency and satisfaction with working conditions (Amrahov, 2014).

#### 4. DISCUSSION

In economic and social science literature, there is still no single agreed interpretation of the concepts motive, motivation, and incentive. Different disciplines—economics, sociology, and psychology—approach motivation from different perspectives. Some scholars treat motivation and labor stimulation as identical, others oppose these categories, and some consider stimulation to be only one method within a broader motivational system.

Because motives are internal and incentives/stimuli are external influences that shape employees' attitudes to work, it is not accurate to equate the concepts of "motive" and "incentive." Motivation may be defined as a process through which individuals encourage themselves and others to act in order to achieve personal and organizational goals. A motive, on the other hand, is the inner reason that causes a person to act in a particular way. Motives have a subjective, personal nature and are formed under the influence of multiple internal and external factors, including other motives that may arise simultaneously. A motive not only pushes a person toward action but also shapes what exactly should be done and how the action will be carried out. Importantly, motives are conscious: individuals can influence their motives, suppress them, or even replace them with new ones (Amrahov et al., 2022).

Human behavior is rarely determined by a single motive; rather, it is usually shaped by a combination of motives that differ in strength and influence. For this reason, we can speak about a person's motivational structure. Incentives, in turn, act as means of influence that activate certain motives. In practice, incentives may include any benefits surrounding labor activity; when a benefit becomes meaningful for the worker, it turns into a stimulus that strengthens motivation. In other words, labor motives are closely connected with the desire to obtain certain benefits through work.

The use of different stimuli to activate employees is commonly described as the stimulation process. The aim of motivation is not simply to make a person work, but to encourage them to work better, more effectively, and with stronger commitment. Achieving this goal requires a systematic approach in which stimulation mechanisms are carefully selected and applied. Modern motivational approaches are generally based on ideas developed within economic science, which studies the mechanisms of purposeful behavior. From this viewpoint, motivation is often defined as the driving force of behavior formed through the relationship between needs, motives, and goals.

The motivation process is usually explained through these concepts:

- **Needs** represent a state of lack or requirement for something essential for existence and functioning.

- **Motives** are internal drivers that push a person toward action aimed at results.
- **Goals** are desired outcomes or states that an individual strives to achieve.

Although models describing this process provide a useful general framework, real motivational behavior is often more complicated. Motives may change over time and are shaped by a wide range of factors such as personal abilities, education, social status, financial situation, and public opinion.

As a management function, motivation is realized through an incentive system, meaning that any action of an employee may produce positive or negative consequences related to need satisfaction and goal achievement. Team learning and development can help leaders build a more effective motivational structure by guiding the workforce in the desired direction and strengthening shared organizational values (Amrahov et al., 2022).

Finally, if an enterprise aims to function effectively, it must professionally study and analyze employee motivation. Without such analysis, management cannot understand the motivational level of each employee or the team as a whole. For this reason, the concepts of “motivation” and “stimulation” are used not only to describe the formation of motives at individual and group levels, but also to describe the process through which external stimuli influence internal motives in order to achieve the required level of motivation.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The significance of motivation as a management issue corresponds to the attention it receives in scientific management theory. In contemporary research, motivation theories are commonly divided into content and process approaches. Content theories focus on identifying human needs and personal motives that encourage individuals to act in particular ways. Process theories do not deny that behavior is driven by needs and motives; rather, they emphasize how people choose specific behaviors, taking into account cognition, expectations, and perception (Bulatova, 2010).

In general, many motivational models distinguish between two broad groups of needs: primary needs, which are linked to physiological factors, and secondary needs, which are psychological in nature. Physiological needs are basic and usually require satisfaction first. Once these needs are met, the need for security becomes more relevant as individuals seek stability and protection from unfavorable conditions or threatening behaviors. After this, social needs emerge—often described as the need for belonging and spiritual closeness—because individuals aim to establish friendly relationships and define their place within a group. As satisfaction grows, factors supporting respect and self-esteem become increasingly important. At this stage, people need to feel significant and to receive recognition from others. The hierarchy is typically completed by self-actualization needs, which reflect an individual’s desire to realize personal potential, mobilize abilities, and fulfill life goals. Since needs at one level are only partially satisfied, higher-level needs may become dominant; therefore, only incentives that correspond to the dominant need tend to function as truly motivating.

Alongside these models, a widely discussed perspective is the two-factor model of job satisfaction, which distinguishes two sets of influences. The first group relates to self-expression, internal needs, and the environment in which work is performed. The second group is connected to the content of work itself, including responsibility, achievement, and meaningful tasks. In practice, this implies that a manager must not only provide proper conditions but also enrich the content of work so that employees can experience professional growth and engagement.

One of the modern trends in motivation research is the concept of management based on satisfaction. Work commitment becomes stronger when an employee is interested in participating in organizational life and feels involved in decision-making. Such involvement develops the ability to make independent decisions about how work is carried out, regulate quality and quantity of labor, participate in optimization activities, and propose improvements that increase the effectiveness of both employees and the organization as a whole.

From a systemic view of human activity, decision-making can be described at the levels of regulation, adaptation, and self-organization. Consequently, motivation should be supported across these levels simultaneously. In this framework, motives influencing behavior in the work collective can be grouped into: acquisition motives, security motives, energy-saving motives, subordination motives, and satisfaction motives. Acquisition motives are linked to obtaining rewards for performance. Security motives relate to the desire for stability and protection of one's position and outcomes. Energy-saving motives appear when individuals choose forms of activity that demand less effort and stress. Subordination motives reflect dependence on group norms, rules, and instructions. Satisfaction motives are connected with receiving positive emotions from work processes and achieved results. The strength of these motives varies depending on conditions and time, and when motives are equally strong, the one that can be realized faster tends to dominate. The leading group of motives shaping employee behavior forms a motivational base, which depends on real working conditions. If a stimulus requires unacceptable or unrealistic actions, it may fail to become a motive; therefore, incentive mechanisms must correspond to employees' real motivational structure.

After summarizing the main ideas of motivational theories, it is necessary to emphasize the role of stimulation. Incentives are external factors that influence employees' or teams' actions and attitudes toward work. In essence, motivation for action can be viewed as the core outcome of stimulation. Labor stimulation represents external motivation—an element of the work situation that affects behavior and serves as a practical indicator of personnel motivation.

Incentives that play an important role in satisfying human needs generally appear in four main forms: coercion, material incentives, moral incentives, and self-affirmation. Administrative coercion may include reprimands, transfer to another position, postponement of vacations, or dismissal. Material incentives include wages, performance bonuses, awards, compensation payments, and housing-related loans. Moral incentives aim to satisfy ethical and social needs and may take the form of gratitude, honorary certificates, or public recognition (Vodyasov, 2016).

In addition, incentives may be divided into two groups according to their relation to the stimulated action. The first group includes incentives (material or moral) applied after certain actions or results—rewarding outcomes or demonstrated attitudes. The second group is used to create conditions that lead to desired actions or attitudes in advance. In other words, the first group follows behavior, while the second group is intended to cause and shape behavior (Ariabod et al., 2019).

Thus, the primary purpose of establishing and maintaining a personnel motivation and incentive system is to attract and retain employees and, above all, to ensure the achievement of organizational goals through effective, strong, and sustainable motivation built on a comprehensive and systematic basis.

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