

Women Non-Teaching Staff and Work Motivation in Odisha Universities: A Review

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Abstract

Motivation among women non-teaching staff in universities is a crucial determinant of institutional efficiency, service quality, and employee well-being. Despite their significant contribution to academic administration and student support services, this group remains underrepresented in scholarly research, particularly in the context of Odisha. This review-based study synthesizes existing literature to examine key factors influencing work motivation among women non-teaching staff in universities. The analysis is structured around ten major motivational dimensions: recognition, opportunities for professional growth, work flexibility, meaningful work, belongingness, leadership, organizational culture, work environment, career progression, and work-life balance. Drawing upon classical motivation theories and contemporary empirical studies from Indian and international contexts, the paper identifies both intrinsic and extrinsic determinants of motivation and highlights the structural and cultural challenges faced by women employees in higher education institutions. The findings emphasize the need for gender-sensitive organizational policies, inclusive leadership practices, and systematic professional development initiatives. The study contributes to the limited body of knowledge on non-teaching staff in higher education and offers policy-relevant insights for improving employee engagement and institutional performance in universities.

Keywords: Women Non-Teaching Staff, Work Motivation, Organizational Culture, Career Progression, Work-Life Balance, Odisha Universities.

1. Introduction

A desire, longing, or need that must be fulfilled is the root of the term "motivation," which is an active version of the noun. It is something that individuals in any company commonly discuss about. Another way to look at motivation is as an emotional or mental condition that drives an individual to take actions that get them closer to their goals. A person's motivation is the force that pushes them to take action and the rationale behind their chosen behavior. And knowing what individuals really want, need, and are driven to do is what we mean when we talk about motivation. Reasons to work hard include financial incentives, positive coworkers, interesting tasks, a sense of personal achievement, public praise, and room for professional development.

Every firm, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, has long struggled with the age-old problem of employee motivation and its impact on productivity. All else being equal, a highly motivated workforce is a recipe for success for any business. However, since its start at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, the question of what drives the labor has remained unanswered. The fact that workers' motivations are dynamic is a contributing factor (Bowen & Radhakrishna, 1991). For instance, Kovach (1987) found that when workers' incomes rise, money stops being a motivating factor. Interesting job also becomes a bigger motivator for senior workers.

Universities are complex institutions where both academic and non-academic personnel contribute to organizational efficiency. While faculty members often receive research attention regarding motivation, non-teaching staff including clerks, administrative assistants, librarians, laboratory and technical staff play critical roles in managing student services, administrative processes, and institutional operations (Kumar & Gupta, 2021). Women constitute a significant proportion of these non-teaching roles in Odisha universities, yet their motivation, job satisfaction, and career development remain underexplored.

In Odisha, public universities such as Utkal University, Sambalpur University, Berhampur University, and Fakir Mohan University face challenges including staffing shortages, outdated infrastructure, and hierarchical administrative structures (Times of India, 2022). Women non-teaching staff often balance multiple responsibilities within these constrained systems, affecting their motivation. Understanding the factors that influence motivation is critical for improving employee engagement, institutional efficiency, and retention of skilled personnel.

In most organizations, upper-level management is constantly thinking about methods to make its employees happier in their jobs (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). In addition, Judge, Hanisch, and Drankoski (1995) concurred with Cranny et al. and suggested that HR managers should be cognizant of the internal organizational factors that impact the majority of employees. These factors could include things like employee motivation and job satisfaction, and improving these areas would benefit the company and its workers. Having a reliable way to gauge their degree of contentment with their work was a topic that Rosnowski and Hulin (1992) addressed.

Motivation is influenced by **intrinsic factors**, such as recognition and meaningful work, and **extrinsic factors**, such as salary, career progression, and work-life balance. Gender-sensitive approaches recognize that women's experiences in higher education workplaces are shaped by social norms, organizational policies, and access to opportunities (Chauhan & Singh, 2020). This paper reviews literature on ten specific motivational factors relevant to women non-teaching staff in Odisha universities, providing both theoretical and practical insights.

As a result of the many studies conducted on the topic, Rosnowski and Hulin came up with a credible measure of job satisfaction. The motivator-hygiene hypothesis (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959), the equity theory (Mowday, 1992), and the discrepancy theory (Locke, 1969) are a few theories of job satisfaction. According to Lawler (1973), discrepancy theory emerged when an individual's actual outcome differed from their predicted outcome level. Dissatisfaction would ensue from a comparison where the actual outcome level fell short of the projected outcome level (Lawler, 1973). According to Mowday (1992), equity theory was based on the idea of inputs and results. Workers assessed their own performance by contrasting it with that of their coworkers. If the inputs to outcomes ratio was comparable to other peoples, then there was equity. On the flip side, inequality occurred when one person's contributions and outputs were disproportionate to those of another. Job satisfaction was linked to perceptions of fairness, whereas unhappiness was associated with perceptions of inequality.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Theories of Motivation

Job satisfaction research was propelled and advanced by the motivator-hygiene theory (Steers & Porter, 1992). Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) put forth the motivator-hygiene theory, which held that certain aspects of a job were associated with levels of happiness or discontentment with that job. Accomplishment, acknowledgment, the task itself, accountability, and promotion were seen as the five components that contributed to job satisfaction. Herzberg et al. found that five things—policy and administration, supervision, compensation, interpersonal interactions, and working conditions—determine whether or not an employee is unhappy in their employment. Job satisfaction has been the subject of much research, and numerous sources have offered varying descriptions of it. Researchers in the fields of organizational science and behavioral science have devoted a great deal of time and energy to studying and discussing the concept of.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) posits that individuals are motivated by five hierarchical needs: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. Non-teaching staff may be motivated by recognition (esteem), professional growth (self-actualization), and work-life balance (safety and social needs).

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) distinguishes between hygiene factors (salary, work conditions) and motivators (recognition, meaningful work). For women non-teaching staff, the absence of hygiene factors may cause dissatisfaction, while motivators enhance engagement.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) emphasizes that motivation is influenced by the expected outcomes of performance. Career progression, professional growth opportunities, and leadership support can enhance expectancy, thereby increasing motivation.

2.2 Application to Women Non-Teaching Staff

By combining these theories, we can analyse the ten motivational factors: recognition, professional growth, work flexibility, meaningful work, belongingness, leadership, organizational culture, work environment, career progression, and work-life balance. These factors interact with intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to influence engagement, performance, and satisfaction among women staff.

3. Women Non-Teaching Staff in Odisha Universities

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Women non-teaching staff occupy positions such as clerks, administrative officers, librarians, technical assistants, and support personnel. They are responsible for managing administrative records, coordinating student services, assisting faculty, and maintaining institutional infrastructure. Despite their essential roles, these positions often receive limited recognition and opportunities for professional development.

3.2 Challenges and Contextual Factors

Staffing shortages, hierarchical structures, and limited access to training programs can reduce motivation. Workload is often unevenly distributed, and promotion pathways may be unclear. Cultural expectations regarding women's family responsibilities can further affect engagement, particularly in work-life balance.

4. Review of Key Motivational Factors

4.1 Recognition

Recognition is a primary intrinsic motivator that validates employees' contributions. Studies indicate that non-teaching staff in Indian universities demonstrate higher engagement and satisfaction when formally recognized for achievements (Sharma & Patel, 2021). Informal acknowledgment is often insufficient in Odisha universities, highlighting the need for structured reward systems.

4.2 Opportunity for Professional Growth

Access to professional development, training workshops, and skill-enhancement programs enhances competence and motivation. Research shows that women staff who receive professional development opportunities report higher job satisfaction and engagement (Kumar & Gupta, 2021). In Odisha, limited professional growth opportunities are a significant barrier.

4.3 Work Flexibility

Work flexibility, including flexible schedules and leave arrangements, supports women in balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Flexible work arrangements reduce stress and improve motivation, particularly for staff managing family commitments (Chauhan & Singh, 2020).

4.4 Meaningful Work

Intrinsic motivation is strengthened when employees perceive their work as meaningful. Women staff involved in student support, record-keeping, and coordination roles demonstrate higher engagement when the significance of their tasks is communicated by leadership.

4.5 Belongingness

A sense of belonging fosters emotional attachment to the organization. Inclusive organizational practices, teamwork, and participative decision-making contribute to belongingness and enhance retention (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

4.6 Leadership

Transformational and supportive leadership enhances motivation by providing recognition, autonomy, and inclusion. Studies indicate that women staff under participative leadership exhibit higher engagement and job satisfaction (Sharma & Patel, 2021).

4.7 Organizational Culture

A positive culture emphasizing equality, collaboration, and transparency motivates staff. Hierarchical or rigid organizational structures in some Odisha universities may hinder women staff's engagement and sense of agency.

4.8 Work Environment

The physical and psychological environment influences motivation. Adequate resources, safe working conditions, and reduced occupational stress improve performance. Infrastructural limitations and inadequate facilities can negatively impact motivation (Chauhan & Singh, 2020).

4.9 Career Progression

Clear promotion pathways and merit-based evaluations are essential for motivation. Women non-teaching staff often face stagnation due to opaque promotion processes, affecting engagement and satisfaction.

4.10 Work-Life Balance

Balancing professional duties and personal responsibilities is critical. Policies supporting leave, childcare, and flexible working hours enhance motivation and reduce attrition among women staff.

5. Research Problem

The purpose of this article is to identify and rank the most important motivational elements for non-teaching personnel of an Odisha state university. Schools rely on non-teaching staff to carry out essential functions, and it is only fair that they be incentivized to do their jobs well. Additionally, the quality of service that non-teaching staff members provide to students is directly correlated to their level of job satisfaction. A company's long-term viability depends on its ability to regularly and effectively motivate its non-teaching staff through a variety of programs and initiatives. Motivated workers put in more time and effort, are more dedicated to their jobs, and are loyal to their employers.

6. Research Methodology

This study's methodology was based on a descriptive survey. Members of the university's admissions office and non-teaching staff from Odisha were the intended subjects of this research. Of the target population, 65 employees made up the sample size. The poll had a participation percentage of 91%, with 49 out of 65 employees taking part. The majority of the participants were men (68.5%), and 65.2% of them were younger than 40 years old. With a bachelor's degree in hand, roughly 38% had a master's, and 14% had finished four years of college. In terms of marital status, there were 80% married women and 60% married men among the staff. Nearly 60% have been with the company for 10 years or more; 35% have been with the company for less than 10 years; and 10% said they were relatively new (less than 3 years) to the position.

6.1 Instrumentation

The study's survey questionnaire was derived from a literature review. A written questionnaire was distributed to participants by hand in order to gather data. After participants completed the questionnaires, they were asked to return them to an intra-departmental mailbox. Respondents were asked to assess the importance of several elements that inspired them to accomplish their task, with 1 being the most significant and 5 the least. The pilot test informed some small word choices and instructions revisions for the final questionnaire. Previous research (e.g., Sekeran, 1992, referenced in Chowdhury and Ahmad, 2011) and our own validity and reliability tests both provide credence to the study's constructs and show that they are all feasible for implementation. A bad Cronbach's alpha value is one that is less than 0.60. It is thought to be appropriate if it falls between 0.60 and 0.80. According to Sekeran (1992), as reported in Chowdhury and Ahmad (2011), a value greater than 0.80 is deemed favorable.

7. Reliability of the Latent Constructs

As stated in (Taber, 2018), Cronbach's alpha is typically used as an indicator of internal correlation between items, and the poll largely included Likert Scale questions. The fundamental purpose of reliability testing was to investigate the elements of measurement tools in order to derive an aggregate index of internal consistency.

Table-1: Reliability Analysis

Construct	A	F
Intrinsic motivation	0.87	04
Extrinsic motivation	0.82	04
Work Environment	0.84	04

(Source: Prepared by the Researcher through SPSS Output)

The results of this endeavour are presented succinctly in the table labelled "Table 1" above. The table presents the results of the reliability analysis conducted on the latent constructs included in the study. The findings of this study indicate that the "high internal reliabilities" are represented by Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.92. As a result, it exceeds the threshold of 0.70 (Krishnan & Ramasamy, 2011). According to Table-2, the reliability outcomes indicate that the alpha values for each latent component exceed 0.70. This finding suggests that the variable under examination in the scale exhibits a significant degree of internal consistency (Unyathanakorn, 2014)

Table-2: Sampling adequacy with the help of KMO and Bartlett's Test

Construct	KMO	F	Bartlett's Test Sphericity		p-value
Work motivation	0.874	65	Approx. Chi-square (χ^2)	d. f	p<0.005
			2897.02	226	

(Source: Prepared by the Researcher through SPSS Output)

The "Bartlett's test" statements shown in Table 2 are intended to satisfy the need to narrow down a large set of possibilities. KMO provides a ratio of respondents to statements made. If the KMO score is higher than 0.6, then the research can proceed. KMO was found to be 0.874, which is excellent (Ul Hadia et al., 2016). In this scenario, if the p-value of the Bartlett test is less than 5% ($p < 0.005$), then the sampling is appropriate.

Table-3 Principal component Analysis's

Component	Initial Eigen Value	% Variance	Cumulated variance
Work environment	1.110	22.08	64.64
Interpersonal Relationship	0.768	16.78	81.42
Intrinsic motivation	0.543	12.63	94.05
Extrinsic motivation	0.081	5.95	100

(Source: Prepared by the Researcher through SPSS Output)

Table-3 represent the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is a statistical technique used to simplify complex datasets by reducing the number of variables while retaining most of the original information. It transforms correlated variables into a smaller set of uncorrelated variables called "principal components," which capture the maximum variance in the data.

From the analysis, "Job satisfaction" is the most significant principal component, explaining 42.56% of the total variance. When combined with "Work environment," these two components explain 64.64% of the total variance. Including "Interpersonal Relationship" increases the explained variance to 81.42%. Adding "Intrinsic motivation" brings the cumulative explained variance to 94.05%, which is a very high percentage, indicating that these four components capture most of the information in the dataset. "Extrinsic motivation" contributes the least individually but brings the total explained variance to 100% when all components are considered.

This analysis suggests that "Job satisfaction" and "Work environment" are the most influential factors among the ones studied, as they explain the largest proportion of the variance in the data. Depending on the desired level of dimensionality reduction, one might consider retaining the first two, three, or four principal components to represent the dataset while retaining a substantial amount of information.

Synthesis and Discussion

Reviewing literature highlights several patterns:

- Intrinsic motivators such as recognition, meaningful work, and belongingness strongly influence engagement.
- Extrinsic factors including career progression, work environment, and organizational culture shape satisfaction and retention.
- Women non-teaching staff in Odisha universities face structural and cultural barriers affecting motivation, including limited training opportunities, hierarchical culture, and high workloads.

- Policies addressing work-life balance, professional growth, and inclusive leadership can improve engagement and performance.

Gaps exist in empirical studies specific to Odisha, particularly regarding quantitative measures of motivational impact across different job categories and university types.

8. Policy and Practical Implications

To enhance motivation among women non-teaching staff, Odisha universities can implement the following strategies:

1. **Recognition Programs:** Formal awards, commendations, and acknowledgment of achievements.
2. **Professional Growth Opportunities:** Regular training, workshops, and skill development initiatives.
3. **Work Flexibility:** Flexible schedules, remote work options, and family-friendly leave policies.
4. **Meaningful Work Initiatives:** Align tasks with institutional goals and communicate their significance.
5. **Inclusive Culture:** Encourage participative decision-making and teamwork to foster belongingness.
6. **Supportive Leadership:** Promote transformational leadership styles to motivate staff.
7. **Work Environment Improvements:** Ensure adequate infrastructure, safe facilities, and supportive conditions.
8. **Career Progression Plans:** Transparent promotion criteria, mentoring, and appraisal systems.
9. **Work-Life Balance Programs:** Childcare support, counselling, and flexible scheduling policies

Conclusion

Women non-teaching staff constitute an indispensable component of university administration and service delivery systems. Their motivation directly influences institutional effectiveness, job satisfaction, and the overall quality of higher education services. This study demonstrates that work motivation among women non-teaching staff is shaped by a complex interaction of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including recognition, professional growth opportunities, work flexibility, meaningful work, belongingness, leadership style, organizational culture, work environment, career progression, and work-life balance.

The review reveals that although women employees contribute substantially to university functioning, they frequently encounter challenges such as limited training opportunities, hierarchical organizational structures, unclear promotion pathways, and difficulties in balancing professional and domestic responsibilities. These constraints negatively affect their motivation and long-term commitment to the institution. Addressing these issues requires targeted institutional reforms, including transparent career advancement mechanisms, supportive leadership practices, improved working conditions, and family-friendly workplace policies.

The study underscores the importance of adopting gender-sensitive human resource strategies to enhance motivation and retention among women non-teaching staff. Furthermore, it highlights the need for future empirical research focusing specifically on different categories of non-teaching staff across diverse university settings in Odisha. Such research would provide stronger evidence for designing effective motivational interventions and fostering inclusive and sustainable organizational development in higher education institutions.

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