

The Impact Of Incentive Methods, Leadership Styles, And Organizational Culture On The Work Motivation Of Administrative Staff In Private Universities In Xiamen

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Abstract—This study examines the impact of incentive methods, leadership styles, and organizational culture on the work motivation of administrative staff in private universities in Xiamen. The research framework is based on Self-Determination Theory, Two-Factor Theory, Leadership Theories, and Competing Values Framework Theory. The study adopts a quantitative approach, collecting data from 400 administrative staff across various private universities in Xiamen. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean, SD, independent sample t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and multiple linear regression, were used to analyze data. The findings demonstrate that age, marital status, professional title, position level, and work experience have a significant effect on work motivation. The incentive methods, leadership styles, and organizational culture all influence the work motivation of administrative staff. Material rewards, transactional leadership, and innovation demonstrate the strongest influence on work motivation among administrative staff. The research recommends integrating incentive measures, enhancing leadership effectiveness through appropriate styles, and optimizing organizational culture. Additionally, the analysis highlights that administrative staff in the 30-39 age group, with 11-20 years of experience, and those holding intermediate professional titles show higher work motivation than the other groups. Married staff and middle-line administrative staff exhibit stronger work motivation in loyalty and security.

Keywords— *Incentive methods, leadership styles, organizational culture, work motivation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The China Education Power Construction Plan (2024-2035) is a strategic priority that explicitly incorporates private education, a vital catalyst for educational development and

reform, within its governance modernization agenda. This highlights the strategic role of private education in advancing Chinese-style modernization. According to the 2023 National Education Development Statistical Bulletin, China had 789 private regular higher education institutions in 2023, reflecting a net increase of 25 institutions from 2021, representing a 3.2% cumulative growth over the two years. Enrollment at these institutions reached 9.943 million students, marking an increase of 1.486 million with a compound annual growth rate of 8.8%. These figures demonstrate the consolidation of private higher education as an indispensable component of China's higher education ecosystem, providing sustained momentum for sectoral development.

As societal demands evolve, private universities shoulder increasingly critical missions. Xiamen, a pilot zone for higher education reform, exemplifies this trend, hosting 16 universities, including 10 private universities with approximately 90,000 students and 4,500 faculty/administrative staff. Within such institutions, administrative personnel serve as operational linchpins, making modern management systems imperative. The competence and efficacy of administrative teams directly determine the capacity of private universities for institutional reform and development.

Nevertheless, inherent and acquired constraints hinder the management systems of private universities. Challenges include late establishment timelines, insufficient funding, limited scale, and non-competitive positioning. Consequently, significant disparities persist between private and public institutions in terms of compensation, career advancement,

working conditions, and social recognition (Ye, 2021). These systemic gaps undermine administrative staff retention and motivation, necessitating the development of scientifically designed incentive methods to activate workforce potential.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do demographic variables: gender, age, marital status, educational level, professional title, position level, and work experience influence the work motivation of administrative staff?
2. How do incentive methods affect the work motivation of administrative staff?
3. How do leadership styles modulate the work motivation of administrative staff?
4. What is the impact of organizational culture on the work motivation of administrative staff?

Research Objectives

1. To identify the differential effects of demographic factors on the administrative staff's work motivation.
2. To examine the specific action mechanisms through which incentive methods influence work motivation.
3. To assess the causal relationships between leadership styles and work motivation.
4. To evaluate the organizational culture's predictive power over work motivation variations.

Research Hypotheses

1. Demographic heterogeneity will exert significant differential effects on the administrative staff's work motivation.
2. Incentive methods positively predict work motivation levels among administrative staff.
3. Leadership styles demonstrate statistically significant moderation effects on work motivation.
4. Organizational culture serves as a key antecedent variable determining work motivation intensity.

Research Hypotheses

The framework, as shown in Figure 1.1, is structured around the research objectives and the relationships that will be investigated. Self-Determination Theory, proposed by Deci & Ryan, can be applied to study the work motivation of university administrative staff, specifically reflected in its evaluation of Engagement, Security, and Loyalty. For incentive methods, leadership styles, and organizational culture, the models proposed by Maslow (1954), Herzberg (1959), Burns (1978), and Quinn and Cameron (1983) are adopted, respectively.

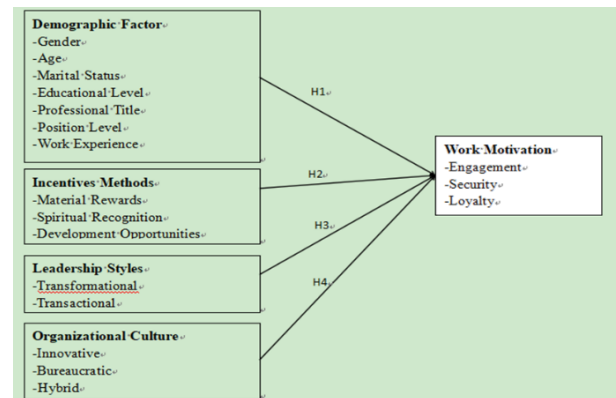


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Private Higher-Education Institutions

Private higher-education institutions refer to schools or other educational institutions established by social organizations or individuals (excluding state agencies) using non-state financial funds. These institutions are mainly classified into independently established private higher-education institutions, independent colleges, and private secondary-level colleges affiliated with other regular higher-education institutions.

B. Administrative Staff in Higher-Education Institutions

Administrative staff in higher education institutions are individuals representing the administrative entities of universities who regularly interact with internal and external stakeholders, typically undertaking a wide range of responsibilities such as administrative operations, campus management, faculty support, and student services; to perform these roles effectively, they are expected to demonstrate strong interpersonal communication, execution, management and coordination, as well as planning and organizational skills (Zheng, 2013). Based on the nature of their roles, administrative staff can generally be categorized into teaching and research support staff, party and government administrative staff, teaching-assistance personnel, logistics management staff, financial management staff, and student affairs staff. At the same time, in terms of position levels, they are commonly classified into three tiers: senior-level, middle-level, and first-line administrative staff.

C. Incentive Methods

Incentive methods, as means to stimulate the motivational behaviors of organizations or individuals toward their goals, can be divided into material incentives (such as salary and welfare) and non-material incentives (such as honorary promotion, training support, and environmental optimization) based on their explicit characteristics. Studies have shown that the needs for both types of incentives coexist in individuals, and the effect of non-material incentives becomes more significant and lasting after material

incentives are satisfied. Currently, there are multiple issues in the incentive mechanisms for administrative staff in colleges and universities: at the material level, the overall salary level and relative returns are low (Yuan, 2017); the salary systems of private colleges and universities lack external competitiveness, and the asymmetry between salary and workload easily leads to job burnout and turnover (Lin, 2019). At the non-material level, there is a shortage of professional training and promotion resources (Shen, 2018); the institutional bias of "emphasizing teaching and research while neglecting administration" results in unfairness in professional title promotion and resource allocation (Liu, 2019); meanwhile, grassroots administrative staff face problems such as the lack of spiritual incentives, imperfect assessment systems, absence of competition mechanisms, and egalitarianism (Cheng, 2023). Deci & Ryan (2000) further pointed out that non-material incentives such as training and promotion can enhance value identification by satisfying "autonomy and a sense of competence", which is particularly sensitive to young and highly educated groups. However, it needs to be supported by clear career development paths. Therefore, constructing a synergistic system of material and non-material incentives, coupled with institutionalized support, is crucial for enhancing work motivation.

D. Leadership Styles

Leadership style refers to the consistent behavioral patterns that leaders exhibit in practice. Among them, transformational leadership motivates employees to transcend personal interests and pursue organizational goals through vision-building, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration; transactional leadership manages performance relying on clear task contracts and reward-punishment mechanisms. Studies have shown that transformational leadership significantly improves employees' willingness to innovate, work engagement (Bass & Riggio, 2006), and sense of belonging, and has a powerful promoting effect on the retention intention of young groups (Uusi-Kakkuri et al., 2016), but it is necessary to avoid "vision fatigue" caused by vague visions. In an institutionalized environment, transactional leadership can temporarily reduce procrastination (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). However, due to an overemphasis on instrumental rationality and short-term goals, it can easily lead to burnout, weaken the sense of belonging, and increase the turnover rate (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004). The two styles have their applicable scenarios. Transformational leadership has a significant impact on enhancing intrinsic motivation through empowerment and emotional connection. In contrast, transactional leadership must strike a balance between its instrumentality and employees' needs for autonomous development to achieve long-term incentives.

E. Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to a system of shared assumptions, values, and behavioral norms formed through long-term interactions among organizational members (colleges and universities show the institutionalized integration of academic spirit and social responsibility, while private colleges and universities reflect the adaptive symbiosis of productization of educational services and survival competition). Studies have shown that organizations with a hybrid culture, due to their advantages in both efficiency and adaptability (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004), can provide better development resources for administrative staff and significantly enhance their work motivation; innovative culture exerts a positive driving force on work engagement by strengthening the dimensions of dedication and focus (He & Ling, 2008), and supportive culture does so by enhancing the dimension of vitality; Denison et al. (2014) further confirmed that there is a significant correlation between hybrid culture and organizational resilience, enabling administrative staff to better cope with challenges in complex environments and improve work stability. However, although a closed bureaucratic culture is related to continuous commitment, it inhibits emotional commitment (Kwon & Banks, 2019), which may weaken employees' emotional attachment and job satisfaction. Therefore, constructing a hybrid culture that combines innovative support with structural resilience is a key path to optimizing administrative motivation in colleges and universities.

F. Work Motivation

Work motivation is the total of internal and external factors that drive individuals to work (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation stems from an interest in work and the need for self-actualization, whereas extrinsic motivation relies on external rewards, such as salary and promotion. It is manifested explicitly as behavioral states of emotional investment and cognitive focus (engagement), the perception of career stability and psychological safety (sense of security), and organizational attachment, characterized by continuous retention and emotional identification (loyalty). Empirical studies have shown that the impact of intrinsic motivation on long-term career engagement significantly surpasses that of external incentives (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and the core lies in satisfying the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness—empowering management can enhance autonomy to drive work engagement, improved sense of competence promotes career security, and satisfaction of the need for relatedness strengthens organizational loyalty, thereby building a stable and efficient team; democratic leadership improves the willingness to innovate through open communication, while authoritarian style efficiently induces burnout (Michailova et al., 2012); redundant administrative processes and promotion pressure significantly weaken motivation (Li, 2019), while scientific

research resources, training support, and mental health mechanisms can effectively improve the level of motivation (Gong, 2024). Therefore, optimizing management systems to ensure the satisfaction of core psychological needs and reducing external stressors through resource support are key paths to enhancing administrative motivation in colleges and universities.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study examines the effects of demographic factors on the work motivation of administrative staff in private universities in Xiamen. It analyzes how incentive methods, leadership styles, and organizational culture influence their work motivation. The research framework was developed using Self-Determination Theory, Two-Factor Theory, Leadership Theories, and Competing Values Framework Theory, integrating engagement, security, and loyalty as key dimensions of work motivation. The target population comprises 400 respondents across various private universities in Xiamen, covering administrative staff of different genders, ages, marital statuses, educational levels, professional titles, position levels, and work experience. The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula, which is widely employed to calculate the sample size for a known population. Data were collected via the WJX online platform using a stratified random sampling method. The content validity was ensured through Item-Object Consistency (IOC) with input from three experts in the related field, with IOC values of 0.67 or higher to determine valid questions. Reliability, measured with Cronbach's alpha, was greater than 0.85 for all variables used in this study. The statistics used to analyze the data included the independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, LSD, and multiple linear regression, all of which were statistically significant at a level of 0.05..

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The sample of 400 administrative staff was predominantly married at 78.50%, with the largest age group being 30-39 years old at 35.00%; over 85% held a bachelor's degree or higher, 60.25% occupied first-line positions, 42.00% had 11-20 years of experience, and intermediate professional titles were most common at 40.25%.

The respondents' opinions on incentive methods, leadership styles, organizational culture, and work motivation were analyzed using frequency and percentage, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE I. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL RESULTS

Incentive methods	Level of Opinion (Frequency and Percent)								
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	Meaning	Rank

Material Rewards	117	112	147	52	3.38	1.026	Neutral	3	
Spiritual Recognition	6	81	127	115	67	3.40	1.036	Neutral	2
Development Opportunities	9	76	115	135	61	3.42	1.032	Neutral	1
Leadership Styles	Level of Opinion (Frequency and Percent)								
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	Meaning	Rank
Transformational	4	78	98	134	86	3.55	1.063	Agree	1
Transactional	5	81	97	140	77	3.51	1.057	Agree	2
Organizational Culture	Level of Opinion (Frequency and Percent)								
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	Meaning	Rank
Innovative	9	63	109	130	89	3.57	1.069	Agree	1
Bureaucratic	8	77	98	124	93	3.54	1.105	Agree	2
Hybrid	8	76	109	148	59	3.44	1.021	Neutral	3
Work Motivation	Level of Opinion (Frequency and Percent)								
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	Meaning	Rank
Engagement	12	71	116	123	78	3.46	1.085	Neutral	2
Security	18	72	113	119	78	3.42	1.125	Neutral	3
Loyalty	8	74	119	119	80	3.47	1.069	Neutral	1

Respondents perceived all incentive methods neutrally, with development opportunities rated highest at a mean of 3.42. Both leadership styles received agreement, with transformational leadership scoring highest at 3.55. Organizational culture perceptions showed agreement for innovative and bureaucratic cultures, with means of 3.57 and 3.54, respectively, but neutrality for the hybrid culture at 3.44. Work motivation dimensions were rated neutrally overall, with loyalty showing the highest mean score of 3.47, followed by engagement at 3.46 and security at 3.42. Security exhibited the most significant variability, with a standard deviation of 1.

TABLE II. ANALYSIS RESULTS ON THE EFFECTS OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS.

Independent Sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA were conducted to test Hypothesis 1. The testing results, as shown in Table 2, indicate that differences in gender and educational level have no significant impact on the work motivation of administrative staff. However, the differences in age, marital status, professional title, position level, and work experience have a statistically significant effect on the work motivation of administrative staff in this study at the 0.05 level of

significance. For the results that demonstrate statistically significant differences, LSD was used to analyze the pairwise comparisons among groups. The results indicate that administrative staff in the 30-39 age group, with 11-20 years of experience, and those holding intermediate professional titles show higher work motivation than the other groups. Married staff and middle-line administrative staff exhibit stronger work motivation in loyalty and security

Demographic factors	Work motivation	Analysis Results
Gender	×	$t(398) = .279, p = 0.282$
Age	✓	$F(3, 396) = 7.838, p = <.000^*$
Marital Status	✓	$F(3, 396) = 2.878, p = .036^*$
Educational Level	×	$F(2, 397) = 1.660, p = .191$
Professional Title	✓	$F(4, 395) = 10.445, p = <.000^*$
Position Level	✓	$F(2, 397) = 5.725, p = .004^*$
Work Experience	✓	$F(2, 397) = 12.054, p = <.000^*$

× No different effects at the statistically significant level of 0.05

✓ Having different effects at the statistically significant level of 0.05

H2: Incentive methods influence the work motivation of administrative staff.

Multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data and develop the forecasting equation at a 95% confidence level. The analysis results in Table 3 indicate that material rewards, spiritual recognition, and development opportunities have a significant positive predictive influence on the work motivation of administrative staff. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) is 0.585, and the determination coefficient (R^2) is 0.343. The adjusted R^2 is 0.338, indicating that the model can explain 33.8% of the variation in work motivation of administrative staff. The tolerance values for all predictors were above 0.6, suggesting no multicollinearity among the independent variables.

TABLE III. MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS FOR INCENTIVE METHODS INFLUENCE THE WORK MOTIVATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.196	.163		7.336	.000		
Material Rewards(X1)	.256	.047	.275	5.453	.000	.653	1.531

Spiritual Recognition (X2)	.163	.045	.176	3.614	.000	.697	1.435
Development Opportunities (X3)	.246	.046	.266	5.396	.000	.686	1.459
R = 0.585, $R^2 = .343$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.338$, Standard Error = 0.779							

Dependent Variable: Work motivation of administrative staff

The prediction equation for the work motivation of administrative staff was developed as follows:

$$YT = 1.196 + .256X1 + .163X2 + .246X3$$

(.000) (.000) (.000) (.000)

The analysis results indicate that material rewards, spiritual recognition, and development opportunities have a significant and positive impact on the work motivation of administrative staff, with values of 0.000, 0.000, and 0.000, respectively, in the context of this study. Among the three predictors, material rewards were the most influential variable, followed by development opportunities and spiritual recognition.

H3: Leadership styles influence the work motivation of administrative staff.

Multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data and develop the forecasting equation at a 95% confidence level. The analysis results in Table 4 indicate that transformational leadership and transactional leadership have a significant positive predictive influence on the work motivation of administrative staff. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) is 0.463, and the determination coefficient (R^2) is 0.214. The adjusted R^2 is 0.210, indicating that the model can explain 21.0% of the variation in work motivation of administrative staff. The tolerance values for all predictors were above 0.6, suggesting no multicollinearity among the independent variables

TABLE IV. MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS FOR LEADERSHIP STYLES INFLUENCE THE WORK MOTIVATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.781	.168		10.626	.000		1.781
Transformational (X1)	.191	.047	.212	4.049	.000	.722	.191
Transactional (X2)	.285	.047	.315	6.013	.000	.722	.285
R = 0.463, $R^2 = .214$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.210$, Standard Error = 0.850							

Dependent Variable: Work motivation of administrative staff

The prediction equation for the work motivation of administrative staff was developed as follows:

$$YT = 1.781 + .191X1 + .285X2$$

(.000) (.000) (.000)

The analysis results indicate that transformational leadership and transactional leadership have a significant and positive influence on the work motivation of administrative staff, with values of 0.000, 0.000, and 0.000, respectively, in the context of this study. Among the two predictors, transactional leadership was the most influential variable, followed by transformational leadership.

H4: Organizational culture influences the work motivation of administrative staff.

Multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data and develop the forecasting equation at a 95% confidence level. The analysis results in Table 5 indicate that innovative, bureaucratic, and hybrid organizational cultures have a significant positive predictive influence on work motivation of administrative staff. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) is 0.534, and the determination coefficient (R²) is 0.285. The adjusted R² is 0.280, indicating that the model can explain 28.0% of the variation in work motivation of administrative staff. The tolerance values for all predictors were above 0.6, suggesting no multicollinearity among the independent variables.

TABLE V. MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE INFLUENCE THE WORK MOTIVATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.387	.170		8.159	.000		1.387
Innovative (X1)	.216	.046	.241	4.721	.000	.694	.216
Bureaucracy (X2)	.171	.047	.197	3.636	.000	.615	.171
Hybrid (X3)	.203	.048	.217	4.190	.000	.675	.203
R = 0.534, R ² = .285 Adjusted R ² = 0.280, Standard Error = 0.812							

Dependent Variable: Work motivation of administrative staff

The prediction equation for the work motivation of administrative staff was developed as follows:

$$YT = 1.387 + .216X1 + .171X2 + .203X3$$

(.000) (.000) (.000) (.000)

The analysis results show that innovative, bureaucratic, and hybrid organizational cultures have a meaningful and positive influence on work motivation of administrative staff, with the significant values of 0.000, 0.000, and 0.000, respectively, in the context of this study. Among the three predictors, innovative organizational culture was the most influential

variable, followed by bureaucratic and hybrid organizational cultures.

DISCUSSION

The study reveals that age, marital status, work experience, and professional title have a significant impact on work motivation, while gender and education have negligible effects. Staff aged 30-39 exhibit peak motivation, aligning with an inverted U-shaped career trajectory where mid-career professionals balance ambition and stability (Kooij et al., 2008). Married staff demonstrate stronger loyalty, likely because familial responsibilities heighten their need for job security. Notably, intermediate title holders and those with 11-20 years of experience report the highest engagement, underscoring the critical role of career progression pathways and organizational embeddedness. The absence of gender/education effects may reflect Xiamen's high educational homogeneity and evolving gender-neutral workplace norms.

The findings of the regression analysis indicate that material rewards, spiritual recognition, and development opportunities have statistically significant positive influences on work motivation. The beta values have confirmed that the three independent variables support the model. Material rewards emerge as the strongest motivational driver, surpassing development opportunities and spiritual recognition. The prioritization of financial incentives leads to resource constraints in private universities, where competitive salaries remain foundational for retention (Yuan, 2017).

Development opportunities are secondary influences on work motivation supported by SDT theory, which emphasizes individuals with needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Later, Deci & Ryan (2000) pointed out that non-material incentives such as training and promotion can enhance value identity by satisfying "autonomy and a sense of competence." Therefore, emphasizing competence satisfaction explains why training programs resonate with mid-career staff seeking growth in their career paths.

Spiritual recognition is the third influence on work motivation, suggesting that symbolic gestures, such as awards, may lack sustainability without tangible support, echoing Lin's (2019) critique of incentive imbalances in academia.

Regarding leadership style, this study considers transformational and transactional as the independent variables. The analysis results contradict theoretical expectations; transactional leadership outperforms transformational approaches in terms of work motivation among administrative staff in a private university. This reflects the task-driven nature of university administration, where clear targets, accountability, and immediate rewards optimize efficiency in hierarchical systems (Judge & Piccolo,

2004). The section influence of transformational leadership on work motivation indicates its strength in fostering long-term belonging but limited utility in routine operations. The findings caution against overreliance on either style: excessive transactional leadership may erode intrinsic motivation, while visionary rhetoric without operational clarity risks "vision fatigue" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004).

The findings on the influence of organizational culture, including innovative, bureaucratic, and hybrid types, indicate that an innovative culture has the strongest influence on work motivation, enabling autonomy and adaptability in Xiamen's competitive education reform landscape. Hybrid culture's paradoxical neutrality, despite its theoretical appeal, suggests that blending innovation with bureaucracy may create ambiguity in practice, thereby diluting its motivational impact. Bureaucratic culture is positive yet has a weaker effect, confirming its role in ensuring stability but also revealing its innovation-suppressing limitations (Merton, 1938). This underscores the need for culture-optimization strategies that amplify innovation while mitigating bureaucratic rigidity.

CONCLUSION

This study empirically validates a comprehensive motivation framework for administrative staff in Xiamen's private universities, revealing that demographic factors (age, marital status, professional title, work experience) significantly modulate motivation levels, with peak performance observed among 30-39-year-old, married, intermediate-title staff possessing 11-20 years of experience. Critically, incentive methods exert the most substantial overall impact, where material rewards dominate over development opportunities and spiritual recognition; leadership styles demonstrate transactional approaches' unexpected efficacy in structured administrative environments, marginally outperforming transformational leadership; and organizational culture confirms innovation's primacy as a motivational catalyst, while hybrid culture's theoretical promise remains unrealized in practice. These findings advance theoretical integration by reconciling SDT's psychological needs with institutional realities, including material security as a foundational need, transactional clarity as an operational enabler, and innovative autonomy as a growth accelerator, thereby offering a context-specific model for higher education management in emerging economies undergoing rapid educational reform.

1. Strategic Integration of Incentive Systems

Given the dominance of material rewards as a motivational driver, universities should prioritize competitive salary structures while integrating them with development opportunities—particularly for mid-career staff (aged 30–39, representing 42% of the sample). This requires reallocating resources to establish transparent promotion pathways for intermediate-title holders (the highest-motivation cohort) and

embedding non-material incentives (e.g., skill-certification training) within performance contracts. Such integration addresses Lin's (2019) observation of incentive fragmentation by satisfying both foundational security needs (per Self-Determination Theory, SDT) and growth aspirations, thereby reducing turnover intent among high-experience administrative staff.

2. Contextually Adaptive Leadership Development

The unexpected efficacy of transactional leadership in administrative operations necessitates leadership programs that train deans and department heads in precise goal setting, consistent reward and punishment, and real-time feedback delivery. Simultaneously, transformational techniques should be cultivated for long-term cultural initiatives, specifically targeting younger staff, among whom vision-building initiatives have a higher impact (Uusi-Kakkuri et al., 2016). This dual-path approach mitigates "vision fatigue" risks while leveraging transactional strengths for routine task efficiency, creating a leadership portfolio adaptable to hierarchical academic structures.

3. Culture Optimization through Innovation Scaffolding

Given the innovative culture's primary motivational influence, institutions must institutionalize innovation through practical mechanisms, such as prototyping funds for staff-proposed process improvements, cross-departmental hackathons addressing bureaucratic pain points (e.g., student services), and innovation KPIs integrated into departmental evaluations. To address the neutral perception of hybrid culture, these initiatives should be framed within clear governance boundaries—preserving bureaucratic stability in compliance-critical domains while enabling experimentation in service delivery. This embodies Denison's (2014) ambidexterity principle, converting cultural tension into motivational energy.

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