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Kucher M. M., PhD in Economics, Associate Professor
at the Department of International Tourism and Hotel and Restaurant
Business University of Customs and Finance
ORCID: 0000-0002-3868-5311

Korneyev M. V., Doctor of Economics, Professor,
Dean of the Faculty of Innovative Technologies
University of Customs and Finance
ORCID: 0000-0002-4005-5335

Shcholakova H. V., PhD in Political Sciences, Associate Professor
at the Department of International Tourism and Hotel and Restaurant
Business
University of Customs and Finance
ORCID: 0000-0001-9396-9184

Zakharenko O. O., University of Customs and Finance
ORCID: 0009-0006-0284-2748

CURRENT ASPECTS OF PERSONNEL MOTIVATION IN THE HOTEL AND RESTAURANT SECTOR OF UKRAINE

The article explores the current aspects of employee motivation in Ukraine's hotel and restaurant sector under conditions of social, economic, and technological uncertainty caused by martial law, large-scale population migration, a shortage of qualified personnel, and rapid digitalisation. Employee motivation in the hospitality industry serves as a key factor in ensuring productivity, service quality, workforce stability, and the competitiveness of enterprises. The features of modern approaches to staff motivation in the hotel and restaurant sector of Ukraine were studied, effective methods of stimulation were identified, and innovative solutions adapted to today's challenges were substantiated.

Within the framework of the research, motivational methods have been classified into five categories: financial incentives, non-financial incentives, indirect methods, elimination of demotivating factors, and disciplinary measures. Their effectiveness has been analysed taking into account corporate culture, the age structure of personnel, and the specific features of labour processes. The study applies classical motivational theories (A. Maslow, V. Vroom, F. Herzberg, J. Adams, M. Seligman) as well as generational theory (X, Y, Z), which makes it possible to consider the social and value-based differences among employees.

Particular attention is paid to innovative approaches to motivation, including flexible work models, digital gamification, personalised development programs, mental health support, transparent bonus systems, and employee participation in decision-making. The SWOT assessment of motivation strategies within hospitality enterprises highlighted key tendencies, including the enhanced significance of non-financial motivators, the prioritisation of emotional stability, intensified attention to professional development and career progression, the institutionalisation of KPI-linked compensation mechanisms, the integration of new social groups, and the increasing utilisation of digital human resource tools.

The study substantiates that wages remain a fundamental motivator, especially under inflationary conditions; however, an effective motivational system should combine both financial and non-financial stimuli, be flexible, transparent, and socially sensitive. Effective management of employee motivation in the hotel and restaurant business represents a strategic resource that ensures resilience, operational efficiency, and sustainable development of hospitality enterprises.

Key words: employee motivation, HR analytics, management under martial law, non-financial incentives, hotel and restaurant sector of Ukraine.

Кучер М. М., Корнеев М. В., Щолокова Г. В., Захаренко О. О. Актуальні аспекти мотивації персоналу в готельно-ресторанній сфері України

Розглянуто питання мотивації персоналу в готельно-ресторанній сфері України в умовах соціальної, економічної та технологічної невизначеності, спричиненої воєнним станом, масштабною міграцією населення, нестачею кваліфікованих кадрів та діджиталізацією. Мотивація працівників у сфері гостинності є ключовим чинником забезпечення продуктивності, якості обслуговування, стабільності трудового колективу та конкурентоспроможності підприємств.

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Досліджено особливості сучасних підходів до мотивації персоналу в готельно-ресторанній сфері України, визначено ефективні методи стимулювання та обґрунтування інноваційних рішень, адаптованих до викликів сьогодення.

У межах дослідження класифіковано мотиваційні методи за п'ятьма напрямками: матеріальні стимули, нематеріальні стимули, непрямі підходи, усунення демотивуючих чинників та дисциплінарні заходи. Проведено аналіз їх ефективності з урахуванням корпоративної культури, вікової структури персоналу та специфіки трудових процесів. Застосовано теоретичні моделі мотивації (А. Маслоу, В. Врум, Ф. Герцберг, Дж. Адамс, М. Селігман), а також теорію поколінь (X, Y, Z), що дозволяє врахувати соціальні та ціннісні відмінності між працівниками.

Особливу увагу приділено інноваційним підходам до мотивації: гнучким моделям роботи, цифровій гейміфікації, персоналізованим програмам розвитку, підтримці ментального здоров'я, прозорій системі бонусів та залученню працівників до прийняття рішень. На основі SWOT-аналізу мотиваційної політики підприємств готельно-ресторанного бізнесу виявлено ключові тренди: зростання ролі нематеріальних стимулів, потреба в емоційній стабільності, орієнтація на навчання та кар'єрне зростання, впровадження KPI-орієнтованих систем преміювання, інтеграція нових соціальних груп, активне використання цифрових HR-рішень.

У статті обґрунтовано, що заробітна плата залишається базовим мотиватором, особливо в умовах інфляції, проте ефективна мотиваційна система повинна поєднувати матеріальні та нематеріальні стимули, бути гнучкою, прозорою та соціально чутливою. Ефективне управління мотивацією персоналу в готельно-ресторанному бізнесі є стратегічним ресурсом, що забезпечує стійкість, ефективність та розвиток підприємств у сфері гостинності.

Ключові слова: мотивація персоналу, HR-аналітика, управління в умовах воєнного стану, нематеріальні стимули, готельно-ресторанна сфера України.

Problem statement. The hotel and restaurant sector represents one of the most dynamic and socially responsive segments of Ukraine's economy. Its overall productivity, quality of services, employee engagement, and consequently, the financial sustainability of enterprises, are largely determined by the effectiveness of personnel motivation. In the context of martial law and ongoing socio-economic turbulence, hospitality enterprises face deep structural transformations caused by massive internal migration, a shortage of skilled professionals, and accelerated digital integration. These factors redefine employees' motivational orientations, reshape employers' management priorities, and necessitate a revision of classical motivation models traditionally applied in the hospitality industry.

Under such extraordinary conditions, the human resource system must balance between financial stability, psychological well-being, and adaptive forms of professional engagement. Therefore, the rethinking of motivation in the hospitality sector should not only respond to present challenges but also form a resilient basis for workforce sustainability and long-term competitiveness.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The problem of personnel motivation continues to attract significant scholarly attention in management and hospitality studies. Researchers, including M. Hakova [1], I. Kantsur, A. Pastukh [2], L. Kovalenko [3], A. Kotlyk, D. Tereshchenko [4], V. Nepochatenko [5], L. Chepurda, I. Herman [6] and others, have examined various aspects of this topic, ranging from material incentive systems and monitoring of motivational needs to behavioural factors influencing employee engagement. Their findings emphasise the multidimensional character of motivation and its impact on enterprise efficiency.

However, despite the substantial academic groundwork, certain questions remain open. Contemporary studies rarely consider the motivational behaviour of hospitality personnel under martial law, nor do they adequately reflect the psychological and social effects of wartime migration on human capital. In addition, the increasing average age of the workforce and the integration of new demographic groups require differentiated incentive mechanisms and flexible management solutions. Consequently, the need for scientifically justified, context-specific motivation strategies for hotel and restaurant enterprises in Ukraine remains pressing and of practical relevance.

The goal of the article is to analyse and systematise the current directions of personnel motivation in hotel and restaurant enterprises in Ukraine and to identify effective approaches to employee stimulation.

Presentation of the main material. A fundamental managerial function in the hospitality industry is to establish a motivational environment that encourages creativity, initiative, and professional commitment among employees. Effective motivation connects organisational objectives with the personal aspirations of staff, ensuring higher productivity, service quality, and team cohesion. Understanding how motivation operates as both a psychological and managerial mechanism is crucial for constructing systems that transform external incentives into sustained internal engagement.

The need-driven nature of motivation defines it as a multidimensional behavioural process. Individual differences in needs, values, and priorities lead to significant variation in motivational responses; therefore, a single universal model cannot guarantee lasting effectiveness. Successful hospitality enterprises tend to integrate economic, professional, and socio-psychological components, combining individual and collective incentive strategies to maintain a balance between tangible and intangible rewards.

Based on this approach, motivation methods in the hotel and restaurant business can be systematised into several key categories. These categories encompass both direct and indirect influences on employee behaviour, ranging from monetary incentives to the creation of a favourable psychological climate. The classification summarised below (table 1) outlines the principal types of motivation, their mechanisms, and associated benefits and limitations within the hospitality context.

Table 1

Methods of motivating personnel

Motivation category	Specific methods	Advantages	Risks / limitations
Material	Salary, bonuses, profit share, extra payments	Direct stimulation, simple evaluation of results	Limited long-term effect, saturation effect
Non-material	Praise, recognition, respect, sense of belonging	Increases emotional engagement, no financial costs	Requires an individual approach, subjectivity
Indirect efforts	Training, development, career advancement	Long-term effect, improved qualification	Requires investment, delayed results
Elimination of negative factors	Removing injustice, conflicts, toxic atmosphere	Improved microclimate, reduced staff turnover	Requires changes in corporate culture
Disciplinary methods	Warnings, fines, dismissal	Control, discipline maintenance	Demotivation, fear, loss of initiative

Source: compiled by the authors

The empirical analysis carried out across hotel enterprises was based on the following motivational theories: V. Vroom's Expectancy Theory, B. Skinner's Reinforcement Theory, A. Maslow's Self-Actualisation Theory, F. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, M. Seligman's Well-Being Theory, J. Adams's Equity Theory, and the Participation Theory (table 2).

Table 2

Possibilities of applying motivational theories in the hotel and restaurant sector

Theory	Author	Application in the hotel and restaurant sector
Expectancy theory	V. Vroom	Identification of individual employee expectations regarding rewards
Reinforcement theory	B. Skinner	Use of bonuses, incentives, and gamification
Self-actualization theory	A. Maslow	Creating conditions for professional development
Two-factor theory	F. Herzberg	Differentiation between hygiene and motivational factors
Well-being theory	M. Seligman	Support for mental health and maintenance of a positive workplace climate
Equity theory	J. Adams	Transparent system of rewards and recognition
Participation theory	Modern HR approaches	Involvement of employees in decision-making processes

Source: compiled based on [7–8]

Employee motivation in the hotel and restaurant industry has undergone a profound conceptual evolution – from the rigid, authoritarian management paradigms of the nineteenth century to the contemporary philosophy of service-oriented leadership. During the latter half of the twentieth century, material remuneration mechanisms dominated as the central motivational driver. However, beginning in the 1990s, attention progressively shifted toward the cultivation of corporate culture, continuous professional development, and the enhancement of emotional intelligence as critical determinants of workforce engagement. In the post-COVID-19 era, motivation within the hospitality sector has further evolved toward flexibility, personalisation, and a holistic focus on employees' psychological well-being and life satisfaction, reflecting a transition to human-centred management models.

Classical motivational models based on A. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, V. Vroom's expectancy theory, and F. Herzberg's two-factor model establish a linear relationship between employee needs and productivity. However, under the conditions of high market turbulence, labour market instability, generational shifts, and changing social orientations, these theories, while remaining conceptually valid, have demonstrated a decline in practical effectiveness.

The generational theory (X, Y, Z) provides an analytical framework that enables the consideration of social, technological, and value-based differences among various groups of employees [9]. It is important to emphasise that in the hotel and restaurant business, where representatives of all three generations work simultaneously, the motivational system must be multi-level and adaptive (table 3). For instance, Generation X tends to prioritise stability and mentorship; Generation Y is motivated by opportunities for professional development and workplace flexibility; whereas Generation Z responds best to digital platforms, rapid feedback, and active social engagement.

The results of the conducted research demonstrate that an efficient motivation system within the hospitality industry must balance tangible and intangible incentives, taking into consideration the distinctive characteristics of hospitality labour – such as emotional demands, extensive client communication, seasonal fluctuations, and shift-based employment structures.

Table 3

Differences in the age structure of enterprise personnel

Generation	Characteristics	Effective motivators
X (1965–1980)	Stability, experience, loyalty	Years of service recognition, participation in decision-making, mentorship
Y (1981–1996)	Flexibility, development, balance	Career growth, flexible schedule, professional training
Z (1997–2012)	Technological orientation, speed, self-expression	Recognition, digital tools, teamwork

Source: compiled by the authors

Material incentives (such as salaries, bonuses, and additional payments) remain a fundamental component of motivation; however, their stimulating power tends to diminish over time due to the so-called “saturation effect.” Non-material incentives (such as recognition, belonging, and self-realisation) have a longer-lasting impact on employees’ emotional engagement and overall job satisfaction.

Employee development is the cornerstone of long-term motivation. Indirect motivation methods, including training programs, workshops, and the development of creative potential, are viewed as investments in human capital that enhance an enterprise’s competitiveness. Employees who are provided with opportunities for professional growth tend to demonstrate higher levels of loyalty and productivity. Encouraging learning fosters a culture of development, which constitutes a strategic advantage for hotels and restaurants.

The elimination of demotivating factors is an essential element of motivational policy. The presence of injustice, conflicts, favouritism, or toxic interpersonal relationships reduces the effectiveness of any motivational initiatives. Therefore, the creation of a healthy psychological climate is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of a motivation strategy.

Disciplinary methods should be applied in a balanced manner. Although disciplinary measures are necessary to maintain order, their excessive use can lead to loss of initiative and overall demotivation. It is recommended to combine control mechanisms with positive reinforcement techniques [3, 10, 11, 12].

The examination of contemporary motivational practices in the hotel and restaurant industry reveals a distinct shift toward a comprehensive, personalised, and analytically substantiated approach that integrates material, non-material, and developmental incentives. Central to this system is an individualised strategy that recognises each employee as a unique contributor, taking into account their personal values, needs, and professional aspirations.

Figure 1 illustrates a conceptual model of motivational methods tailored to the personnel structure of enterprises within the hospitality sector, reflecting the interrelation between managerial tools and the psychological characteristics of staff engagement.

The existence of a variety of approaches and numerous methods that implement them complicates the managers’ task of selecting the one that best corresponds to the goals of a particular enterprise and current conditions. Therefore, the choice of methods and the evaluation of motivational policies should be based on HR analytics. As key indicators for assessing the effectiveness of motivational measures, which can be used to adjust and improve motivational programs, both quantitative and qualitative parameters are commonly applied: staff turnover – changes in personnel numbers expressed as a percentage before and after the implementation of a motivational program; employee satisfaction index – derived from surveys or interviews; labor productivity – quantitative performance indicators; economic effect – profit growth, reduction in recruitment costs, and minimization of downtime.

Personnel motivation in the hotel and restaurant business is evolving from a simple incentive mechanism into a complex, dynamic, and personalised process that integrates psychological, managerial, and economic aspects. Effective motivation management is not limited to salary; it is about creating an environment where employees are willing to work, develop, and remain within the organisation.

An analysis of practical case studies presented on the websites of leading companies in the hotel and restaurant industry [10–11] has revealed innovative directions in motivation that contribute to improving business efficiency and resilience (table 4).

Among the effective innovative approaches to personnel motivation in the hotel and restaurant business under conditions of social, economic, and technological uncertainty are the following:

- flexible work models – the introduction of variable schedules, part-time employment, and opportunities for self-scheduling contributes to reducing burnout and staff turnover. Expected results: staff turnover decrease by 15–25%;
- digital gamification – the use of mobile applications to reward achievements, encourage participation in team competitions, and distribute bonuses. Expected results: efficiency increase by 10–20%;
- continuous learning and development – the implementation of online courses, mentorship programs, and internal academies promotes professional growth. Expected results: improvement in service quality by 15–25%;

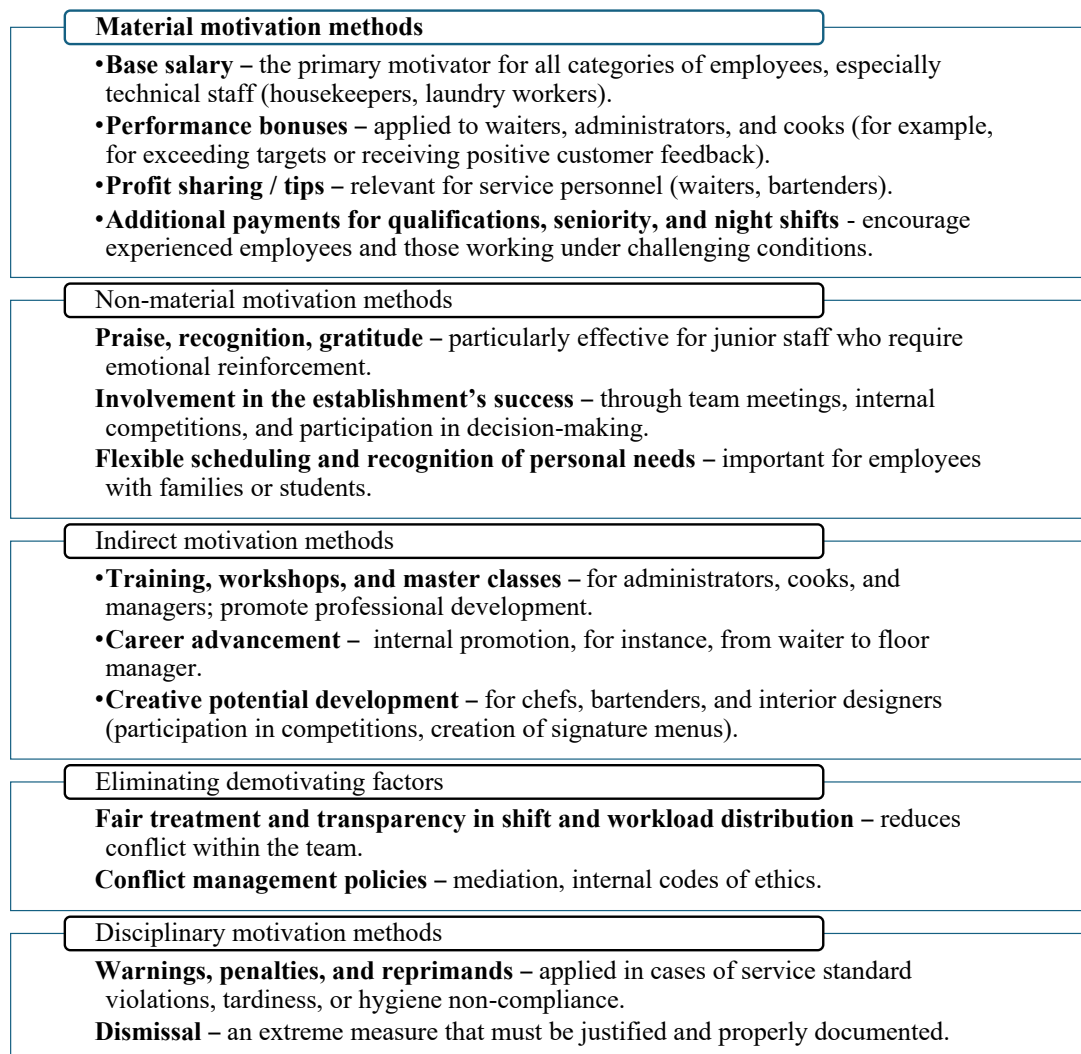


Fig. 1. Methods of employee motivation considering the specific structure of personnel in the hotel and restaurant sector
Source: compiled by the authors

Table 4

Motivational programs in the global hospitality industry

Company	Practice of using motivational programs
Marriott International	<i>Spirit to Serve</i> program: training, recognition, and employee involvement
Reikartz	Emotional support programs for staff
McDonald's Ukraine	Gamification through mobile applications
Premier Hotels	Flexible shift planning and self-managed scheduling

Source: compiled by the authors

- personalised motivation programs – individual development plans, regular meetings with HR managers, and consideration of employees' personal goals. Expected results: loyalty increase by 25–40%;
- mental health support – emotional well-being programs, access to psychologists, and anti-stress initiatives. Expected results: stress reduction by 30–50%;
- recognition and transparent bonus systems – public recognition of achievements, regular bonuses, and quality-based reward programs. Expected results: productivity increase by 15–30%;
- employee involvement in decision-making – surveys, brainstorming sessions, and participation in the development of new services. Expected results: increase in employee initiative by 50–70%.

Innovative trajectories in personnel motivation within the hotel and restaurant sector provide enterprises with greater institutional adaptability, enabling them to address contemporary socio-economic challenges while maintaining organisational resilience. The integration of flexible work arrangements, digital transformation tools, and

comprehensive well-being programs constitutes a decisive foundation for sustaining competitiveness in the hospitality domain.

Building upon prior scholarly contributions [2, 6, 12] and incorporating the outcomes of motivational monitoring alongside a SWOT assessment of incentive strategies implemented by hospitality enterprises in Dnipro (table 5), this study identifies the principal trends shaping personnel motivation in Ukraine's hotel and restaurant industry amid the conditions of martial law. These trends reveal an evolving paradigm of human capital engagement that emphasises both psychological sustainability and data-driven human resource management.

Table 5

SWOT-analysis of motivational policy in hotel and restaurant enterprises in Ukraine under martial law

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Flexibility of motivational policy – Increase in average wages – Growth of team cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lack of psychological support – Shortage of qualified personnel – Imperfect performance evaluation system
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Involvement of internally displaced persons and veterans – Expansion of training programs – Implementation of HRIS (Human Resource Information Systems) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prolonged instability – Emotional burnout – Competition with foreign employers

Source: developed by the authors

The main trends in personnel motivation in Ukraine under martial law include:

- the growing role of non-material incentives such as recognition, involvement, and flexibility;
- the increasing need for emotional stability and psychological support;
- a focus on professional development, including training, mentorship, and career advancement;
- the transition toward KPI-based reward systems;
- the inclusion of new social groups;
- the implementation of digital HR solutions, including HRIS and motivation analytics.

In the Ukrainian hotel and restaurant sector, wages remain the fundamental motivator, especially in conditions of inflation and economic instability. Considering inflationary pressures, enterprises must ensure not only competitive pay levels but also dynamic wage indexation. Motivational programs should include an annual salary review based on the results of employee certification, competency assessments, and the achievement of key performance indicators (KPIs).

Under current conditions of instability, particularly during martial law, the incentive system must be adaptive, transparent, and socially sensitive.

Conclusions from this study and prospects for further research in this area. Under the current operating conditions of Ukraine's hotel and restaurant industry – marked by martial law, instability in the labour market, rapid digital transformation, and pronounced generational change – personnel motivation emerges as a decisive determinant of organisational efficiency, resilience, and competitiveness. The findings of this research affirm that the motivational architecture within the hospitality sector must be multidimensional, strategically integrated, and responsive to the individual needs and behavioural patterns of employees.

The structured systematisation of motivational approaches has made it possible to delineate five principal categories: material and non-material incentives, indirect stimulation methods, the removal of demotivating factors, and disciplinary interventions. The overall effectiveness of these mechanisms is contingent upon contextual variables such as corporate culture, demographic composition of the workforce, and the specific characteristics of labour processes within hospitality enterprises.

The analysis of motivational theories (by V. Vroom, A. Maslow, F. Herzberg, J. Adams, M. Seligman, and others) demonstrated the need to combine classical approaches with modern concepts of service leadership, well-being, and participatory management. Particular attention should be paid to Generation Z (Zoomers), which forms new expectations regarding motivation – digital platforms, quick feedback, and social engagement.

An effective motivational policy must be based on HR analytics, which allows evaluating the efficiency of motivational measures using both quantitative and qualitative indicators such as staff turnover, satisfaction index, labour productivity, and economic impact.

Thus, personnel motivation in the hotel and restaurant sector is evolving from a basic system of incentives into a strategic component of management, necessitating a flexible, individualised, and evidence-based approach. Future research should concentrate on developing adaptive motivation models that reflect contemporary socio-economic challenges and ensure the sustainable engagement of human capital.

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