

DYNAMICS OF MANAGERIAL DECISIONS IN MOTIVATE THE HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF

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Abstract

Based on researches concerned with the motivation, there are some imperfections in decision making in the process of motivate employees. This fact was confirmed in both of our surveys too. The first survey (repeated over time) was conducted at the University of Žilina in two time periods: 2013 (82 respondents) and 2016 (93 respondents). The second one was comprehensive (extensive) survey and was performed on a sample of 2,626 respondents – employees and managers of Slovak organizations. Compared to a comprehensive survey conducted on both production and non-production organizations, a survey performed at the University confirmed the relatively lower managerial erudition of senior staff and, in particular, a different view of managers and employees on motivate employees. Managers at University in many respects have higher expectations of the outcome of their decisions in motivate than their actual effectiveness really is. Our survey shows that, despite the difficult situation in higher education, executives and staff are still keen to increase their motivation to achieve better performance and thus improve the University results. For this reason, the final part provides recommendations for the implementation of better decision making on motivate.

Key words: decision making, motivation, higher education, surveys, teachers, managers

JEL Code: E24, J24, M12

Introduction

Many of authors argue that lasting improvement of the organization itself is the basis not only of its continuous advancement, but also the key to motivate employees. In this regard organizations tend to adopt and subsequently implement a number of important management decisions, and of them stemming strategies, tactics and immediate actions. This means that many elements and factors that need to be taken into account enter in the decision making process of influencing the motivation. Decisions concerning the people and their motivation are very sensitive because any decision taken can affect their future. Based on mentioned ideas, it can be pointed out that key rules and assumptions for correct decision making are of the utmost

importance especially in the *decision making in motivate human potential*. In this area, two important processes meet and connect in the organization: decision making and motivating. These processes are very similar, but also different by their nature. Therefore, the *aim of the paper* is to explore motivation, motivating, decision making, and motivational decision making, both from the theoretical and empirical viewpoints, through the methods of analysis, synthesis, generalization, deduction, sociological inquiry, and appropriate statistical methods.

1 Motivation and affecting the motivation: motivating

Motivation is the basis for the management of human potential and affects the majority of staff development tasks that are drawn to the achievement and implementation of organizational goals while respecting the interests of employees (Saiyadain, 2009). Reconciling these interests is precisely the role of motivational strategy of manager. Many authors agree the motivation is a will to make considerable efforts to achieve the goals of organization, conditioned by the fact the individual meets his/her needs simultaneously (e.g. Mathis et al., 2016).

When disputing on the motivation of employees, it is under consideration their *own, internal and voluntarily taken decisions* on what grounds, for what reasons and with what approach they will fulfill their tasks and objectives. Every individual has own personal reasons and goals for why s/he works in the organization, and these goals can be changed and developed with the gradual evolution of the personality and time. Therefore, when *motivate*, it is important, even necessary, to identify and subsequently ensure results that are of interest to the employees and have a high value for them (Lauby, 2005; Herzberg, 2017). Because the highly motivated and creative work requires the creative human potential which is characterized by active efforts for creative behavior (van Woerkum et al., 2007; Klijn & Tomic, 2010), it is necessary to build a creative environment in which the individuals motivate themselves and in which they are simultaneously motivated by other individuals and groups.

2 Decision making in motivating

One of the important perspectives that needs to be considered in managerial decision making in the motivational process, is a *behavioral decision making*. Behavioral decision making stems from a behavioral economics and “seeks to understand the real influences of decision makers,” (Mullaly, 2014). A study of behavioral decision making gains the dynamics in recent years and allows an exploration of the up-to-date managerial decisions (Cicmil et al., 2006), e.g.

reevaluation of forecasts (Flyvbjerg, 2013), escalation (Van Oorschot et al., 2013), or inefficient risk management (Kutsch & Hall, 2010).

The literature is based on various general theoretical foundations of organizational theory and cognitive and behavioral sciences, including the group thinking (Hällgren, 2010), the theory of self-confidence (Jani, 2008), the risk inclination and the avoidance of uncertainty (Keil et al., 2000), or the error planning (Flyvbjerg, 2013). These issues also include studies on charisma, altruism, trust, and fairness. All these approaches and theories are the factors that *influence* the managerial decision making in the process of motivate and should be respected.

Decision making in motivating can be defined as a complex process of implementing a series of progressive steps by which the senior employees seek, compare, and select appropriate solutions that will make the organization's motivational system truly interesting and beneficial for all the employees and managers. These are the decisions about their own behavior and influence on others, decisions on how to lead employees, and what motivational tools to use for influence employees in order to their motivation is harmonized with the growth tendency and beneficial to meet the needs of all participants and increase the success of the organization. It is important to emphasize that all the motivational decisions must be carefully considered in view of the unique personality and individuality of each employee or manager.

We consider the *deciding on motivate as a crucial function* of all senior employees: the motivation, hard work and results of their employees are derived and built just by ways, methods, and tools selected properly for motivate by them. In other words, the motivation and its results are the decisive factors and indicators for the organization's prosperity. It is the motivation that can activate behavior and deliver the energy for action. This is precisely why it *helps to make important decisions*.

Motivation can also be understood as a *component* of decision making because it is on the basis of motivation that choice is made. In general, motivation is almost not the real cause of the decision but it gives the direction to each decision and also determines the purpose of the entire decision making process. However, as far as managerial decision making itself in motivate employees, motivation is both the basis of this decisional process and, simultaneously, it is its cause and its intention. That is why it is necessary to consider motivation in this process as a *multi-characteristics and multi-value element*. This means the motivation enters this process in a number of forms and for each interested party in this process, each motivation at the same time has different value and strength. Decision making in motivate thus represents a very important as well complex process of analyzing and revealing the root of the problems and weaknesses in the performance and motivation of people, exploring their personalities,

designing, comparing and choosing the most appropriate option (methods, techniques, motivation tools). This has to be done with respect to the uniqueness of people, performing the selected variant and evaluating subsequently the efficiency of the process carried out on the basis of feedback from the people concerned, and feedback from the surrounding environment.

3 Methods

Organization must behave against employees motivationally, while in each process it has to respect the human potential aspect (Olejniczak & Majchrzak-Lepczyk, 2014). Being agreed with this idea, we have decided to support and verify our premises through the sociological survey. We conducted a survey of motivational decision making using the Structured Questionnaire on Motivation, which we have been systematically testing and improving since 2001. In total, more than 10,000 respondents (employees and managers of all types of organizations) have been surveyed through this tool, always with a desired degree of reliability.

3.1 Repeated survey at higher education institution

We focused the partial survey on a public university – University of Žilina. In order to search the dynamics of decision making in motivate, we conducted a survey over time. Respondents were personally addressed already in 2013, and then we repeated the survey on almost identical sample in 2016. The key investigated areas were mainly an awareness, appraisal fairness, openness of communication, atmosphere of trust and obligingness, level of motivation, and self-motivation. In 2013, the survey involved 82 university teachers and managers (error estimation 6.32%), and in 2016, 93 university teachers and managers (error estimate of 5.1%).

The results in Table 1 suggest that in 2013 employees felt they were more *informed* than they were later. A comparison of the results about the *fairness of performance appraisal* shows that in 2016, 20% more employees expressed a positive, it means that the decisions taken during this period positively acted on motivational appraisal. It can be seen that the *communication* also is improved moderately (by 6.58%) in 2016, which could be assumed due to the confirmed correlation between the awareness and the communication process. This process, however, did not show too big improvement than just the awareness, as it is influenced by many other factors. When comparing results on the *atmosphere of trust*, it can be argued that there was neither a decline nor an increase. The positive finding is that more than 80% of employees are satisfied with this factor – the faculty should continue in improving the atmosphere.

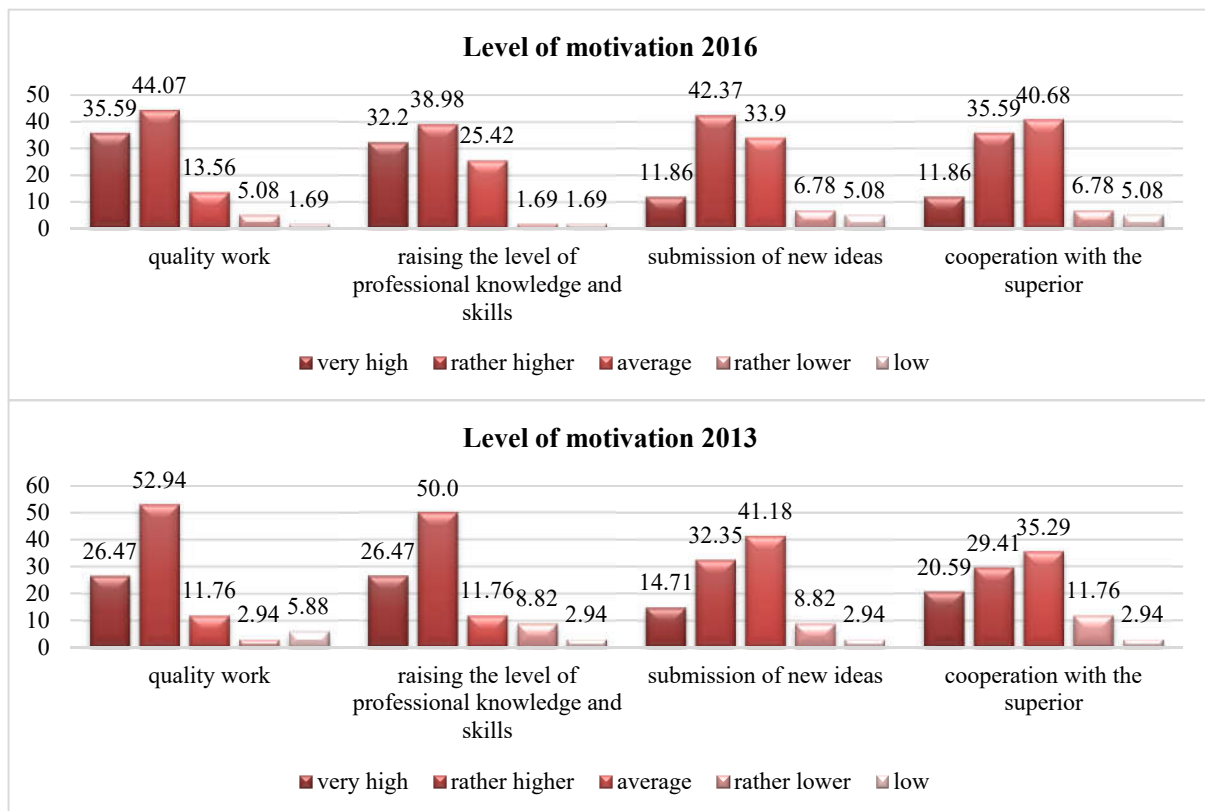
Tab. 1: Characteristics shaping the motivation in 2013 and 2016 – university (in %)

Characteristics	2013 (N = 82)					2016 (N = 93)				
	Yes	Mostly yes	Average	Mostly no	No	Yes	Mostly yes	Average	Mostly no	No
Awareness	23.53	47.06	14.71	8.82	5.88	10.17	32.20	42.37	10.17	5.08
Fair appraisal	35.29	29.41	20.59	11.76	2.94	45.76	38.98	11.86	1.69	1.69
Open communication	41.18	35.29	20.59	2.94	0	50.85	32.20	15.25	0	1.69
Atmosphere of trust	47.06	35.29	11.76	5.88	0	45.76	35.59	15.25	1.69	1.69

Source: own study

We then compared the current and previous *level of motivation* of academicians to the following motivation orientations: to quality work, to continuously improve the level of professional knowledge and skills, to submit the new ideas and increase the efficiency of processes done, and to cooperate with the superiors. Figure 1 shows that there has been an increase in the level of motivation for quality work and for the increase of professional skills and knowledge. The motivation has dropped in the interest of cooperation with the senior staff.

Fig. 1: Level of motivation to searched orientations – university (in %)



Source: own study

The last important fact that emerged from a comparison of current and past replies of the faculty staff is that their willingness to increase their performance, while improving the motivational approach from the side of senior staff, fell by 8.77%. This negative result strongly indicates that it is necessary to intentionally deal with and concentrate on the decision making in motivate academicians, as such further decline could cause major threats, especially in terms of the staff turnover.

By overall evaluation of the three-year timeframe survey, it has been found that there is a barrier in relation between the superiors and the employees, which is supported by the fact that employees are interested in fairness on the part of senior staff. Employees also showed interest in self-sufficiency and ability to self-educate and develop their potential. In the faculty processes, there is no monitoring of the trend of change in employee behavior, which represents a potential opportunity to streamline the decision making process in motivate academicians. On the basis of the above, it can be pointed out that there is a *problem in the preparatory phase of the motivational decision making process* which needs to be eliminated.

3.2 Verification of defined hypothesis – connection of both surveys

We have determined a research hypothesis to investigate a decision making in motivate which we verified by mentioned above repeated survey at the University. In addition, the hypothesis verification was co-based on correlations from our much larger one, i.e. nationwide survey, performed at the end of 2016. The defined hypothesis is as follows: *The change of the manager's decisions affects the employee motivation.*

Despite using the same tool – Structured Questionnaire on Motivation – survey in 2016 was performed on a larger sample, i.e. 2,626 employees and managers of all types of Slovak organizations. Of this number, there were 1,084 males (41.28%) and 1,542 females (58.72%). From the viewpoint of work category, there were 559 managers and 2,067 employees. Table 2 presents the results of level of respondents' motivation to crucial work/motivational orientations. As obviously, the highest motivation is felt to quality work done (when considering all respondents together).

Based on results of the *correlation between the manager decisions and the employee motivation*, using the chi-square test (Table 3), it can be argued that this interference exists and these two factors are mutually dependent (table value of chi-square is 5.991). Decision making was searched by the question whether the managers take the right decisions in motivating employees and create motivation programs for them, especially with their participation.

Tab. 2: Level of motivation to key motivational orientations – nationwide survey (in %)

Motivational orientations/ Motivation to	High	Rather high	Average	Rather low	Low
Quality work done	42	39	14	3	1
Permanent improving own knowledge and skills	32	42	20	4	2
Submit new ideas and increasing the effectiveness	18	40	20	7	3
Cooperation with superiors (<i>employees</i>)	19	39	31	7	3
Creative leading and motivating employees (<i>managers</i>)	40	44	13	2	1

Source: own study

Tab. 3: Chi-square for managers' decisions and employee motivation – nationwide survey

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-side)
Pearson chi-square	8.228 ^a	2	0.016
Likelihood Ratio	7.863	2	0.020
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.044	1	0.307
<i>N of Valid Cases</i>	2,626		

Source: own study

Employee motivation was searched by a question focused on their motivation and willingness to increase their work performance in the case of improved superior's motivational approach (Table 4). The answers point to the motivation of employees to develop their potential for the organization if the organization helps them by building a motivational climate. Up to 81% of Slovak employees have withdrawn this fact and agreed to this claim.

Tab. 4: Willingness of employees to increase work performance – nationwide survey

Willingness to increase performance	All respondents (N = 2,626)		Employees (N = 2,067)	
Yes	2,138	81.42%	1,695	82.00%
No	488	18.58%	372	18.00%

Source: own study

Connecting these result with the results of repeated survey at the University which showed that the willingness to increase the work performance decreased (mentioned in the previous text), we can point out that the research *hypothesis has been confirmed*.

Conclusion

Public higher education institutions, i.e. universities, have a considerable hierarchical segmentation, in terms of both the number of levels of organizational structure and width of each level. Therefore, it is not possible to implement uniform solutions of managerial decision

making for the whole university, but instead an individual approach of implementation options is needed for each segment. Segmentation for implementation can be understood as dividing the approach and use of recommendations to conditions that are (currently) valid throughout the whole university, whole faculty, department (team) and individually.

University should support the creation of educational programs for each category of senior staff, including the creation of personal reserves (succession) for specified managerial positions. Furthermore we recommend universities to organize the performance appraisal of all organization and its management once a year, while the university ought to support anonymity and criticality of employees in order to gain relevant and useful information for its progress. Expressions of academicians must be honest and inspiring, in order to help the university improve. It is necessary for such appraisal that the university culture has a great degree of transparency and ethics incorporated within it.

For the growth and development of the *faculty*, it is necessary to ensure that employees communicate politely and to the maximum extent with each other and share their skills, experience, and knowledge. This means that it is necessary to create an environment for the employees; environment that will naturally direct them to such a behavior and involve them in the growth of the faculty. The faculty management should monitor where clusters of activity are being created (long-term as well as temporary work/project teams), and then ensure the sharing and spread of information for more open and transparent communication and cooperation of all employees across all the departments. On one hand, it is possible to make use of these clusters of activity as a positive example for other employees and, on the other hand, it is possible to support collaboration of professionals from different areas towards common goals, in order to create heterogeneous teams at the faculty. It is these teams that appear to be the most creative and successful.

Since the *department* is a working team in which individual members collaborate with each other, it is essential that a friendly atmosphere with confidence and transparency is created in this collective. The manager of such a workplace must use all ‘soft skills’ to a large extent, to be able to support the feeling in his or her employees that they are members of the ‘family’ of this team, that they are welcomed, free, etc. It must be clearly defined for whom this team is and for whom it is not. Furthermore, it is necessary to encourage each member of the team to feel not only that s/he uses his or her full potential for the department development, but that he himself (she herself) also benefits from being a member of this community. It is highly desirable for a manager in such a narrow group to support the success of each individual and to ensure that his/her contribution to the department is visible and appreciated.

Every *individual* (employee or manager) must be interested in the goals and strategy of the university/faculty/department in order to know by himself or herself how s/he can use its potential for the needs of the organization. S/he also has to be voluntarily interested in culture of the university, faculty, and department, in order to know how to behave and make decisions in various situations s/he is experiencing in his or her working life. Individuals should set the work goals that are innovative but not diametrically different from the goals of their colleagues (or department), since it is needed for each member of the organization to maintain the ‘identical desires and work dreams’ as his or her coworkers who (through their potential) can positively contribute to the goal achievement of this individual.

Generally, only when improving the decision making in motivating academicians, the academic motivation will be stronger and will result in a higher scientific contribution and overall pro-societal and economic benefit.

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