

MOTIVATION POLICY AND MOTIVATION TO CREATIVITY OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS AND MANAGERS

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Abstract

The article deals with the motivation policy of higher education institutions, focused on creativity of scientific, pedagogical, administrative and managerial staff. It contains the analysis, synthesis and comparison of theoretical knowledge about motivation, motivation policy, creativity and ways of influencing it. In this view, it defines creativity motivation policy in higher education. The empirical part presents results of sociological research conducted on a sample of $n = 90$ university employees and managers concerning motivation to creativity. The results indicate that despite considerable efforts by Slovak university management to build a creative environment and reward creative solutions, the promotion of creativity shows some imperfections. For this reason, the conclusion of the article contains recommendations that could contribute to the development of appropriate creativity motivation policy.

Key words: motivation, motivation policy, creativity, university teachers, survey

JEL Code: I23, J24, M12

Introduction

Academic motivation, i.e. especially the motivation of higher education employees and managers, is interesting topic of current research effort; relatively lot of studies consider it (e.g. Li & Stone, 2018; Buberwa, 2015). While the motivation of public university staff influences the motivation of students and indirectly also results of the state and the overall society, it is appropriate to intentionally affect it. One of the ways to actively contribute to the motivation improvement, is working out unique motivation policies (Blašková & Blaško, 2010; Zhang, 2014), specific for concrete universities. “Staff development policies and strategies require review to suit the needs of individual employee” (Kuchava & Buchashvili, 2016, p. 99). Motivation policy consists of thorough rules that should be applied by university managers with regards to act positively on staff motivation. It includes “policy arrangements, principles, practices, structures and procedures that are designed and managed to deliver and maintain the types and adequate levels of benefits and other forms of reward” (Panait & Panait, 2018).

According to Sokoł (2015), creativity, which represents next phenomenon searched in the article, is a “status or ability to be an inventive; it is the ability to create” (p. 64). Academic

creativity represents the accumulated potential of academic staff to disclose, generate and develop new scientific, educational, personal and other knowledge and inimitable effects.

It can be stated that the pro-social importance of universities, as the hotspots of the scientific progress and invention of each state, depends precisely on the successful combination of motivation and creativity. This mixture is so important that it is necessary for university management, with the participation and assistance of the regional government, and especially the Ministry of Education, to devote it the desirable procedural and documentary attention. The reason is the Slovak academicians represent a significant group of population: 13,790 persons work at universities, as of June 30, 2019, (Ministry of Education, online). In other words, both the state creativity motivational policy for higher education and creative motivation policies for concrete universities needs to be developed.

It is necessary to combine creative efforts with motivational. However, despite considerable importance and permanent support from the Slovak Rectors' Conference and the Council of Higher Education Institutions, the current Slovak legislation does not contain any comprehensive and written motivation policy aimed at the development of academic creativity (Ministry of Education, online). The activities of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic focus only on supporting science and research through Scientific Grant Agency (so called VEGA) or providing scholarships to doctoral and postdoctoral candidates through the National Scholarship Program (Ministry of Education, online). In addition, in the literature, exploration of this terminological triangle (motivation, creativity, policy) in the Central European universities is also absent.

On the basis of above ideas, the *aim of the article* is to examine the theoretical foundations of motivation, creativity and motivational policies, and in particular to reveal their interrelationships in higher education. The empirical part will present the results of a questionnaire survey conducted on a sample of $n = 90$ academicians. The research will focus on the creativity, the methods used to foster creativity and the appreciating for creative results. The conclusion will include recommendations for developing the creativity motivation policies.

1 Motivation and motivation policy

Motivation can be defined in many ways. It can be perceived as a will, or readiness, or reasonability, or internal state, or cumulated energy, or set of intrapsychic processes, or managed process of experience success or avoid rejection. Because the raising amount of duties, tasks and challenges, the motivation of academicians has to be systematically strengthened.

According to Zlate & Cucui (2015), the motivation process consists in the correlation of the needs, aspirations and interests of the university personnel with the realization of the objectives and the exercise of the tasks, competencies and responsibilities attributed to them. It is important to meet and introduce new motivational tools to meet the needs of employees and managers, due to the many changes that have been observed as occurring within the university environment (Kuchava & Buchashvili, 2016).

This means that “university staff motivation is one of the policies of managers to increase effectual job management amongst employees” (Kuchava & Buchashvili, 2016, p. 93). Although organizations focus on incentives and reward policies for getting better performance of their employees (Shaheen, Sajid & Batool, 2013), especially in times of change, it is advisable for managers to develop more collegial and inspiring culture in the organizational context, which might better motivate academic staff (Zhang, 2014).

As aforementioned, the motivation policy is the system of precisely defined priorities, principles, rules, measures, etc. the intention of which is to contribute to the higher attractiveness of motivational atmosphere within the university. It represents unique form of general university policies. From the viewpoint of internal structure of motivation policy, this can be distinguished or structured on motivation policy for staff selection, motivation policy for performance improvement, motivation policy for creativity development, respectively. It means, if the university considers the motivation to creativity very important, such policy – *creativity motivation policy* – can be targeted to creativeness support and development.

2 Creativity and creativity motivation policy

Identically as in a case of the other motivation policies, also in the case of creativity motivation policy, it can be recommend to work out the motivation policy in writing and communicate it to all university staff (Blašková & Blaško, 2010). It is because creativity is very sensitive and complicated area of human personality profile, and in this field, this one is connected with further complicated area: motivation, and especially, motivation to creativity.

When motivate to creativity, “the creation of a motivational climate cannot happen suddenly – managers need to persevere in the application of the motivational factors” (Zlate & Cucui, 2015). The reason is the creativity can be understood as the ability to develop an absolutely new and useful solution (e.g. Runco & Jaeger, 2012), characterized by undeniable originality and author’s inventiveness. Currently, such solutions are considered creative too that combine known ideas or indications in a new, unique way (e.g. Gralewski, 2016). These

solutions could be characterized as quasi-creative. It is because the number of absolute originalities is generally low, and the undiscovered solution is usually the result of unique brain connections. The importance of motivation is growing mainly in higher education where the invention of absolutely new ideas or solutions with new design is the result of motivated efforts.

Importance and specificity of creativity can be viewed as the ability of the one individual, i.e. as his or her mental talent to think in unusual way on the one hand. On the other hand, collective creativity is the result of intellect abilities and potencies of several individuals while one member of this 'creative' group usually has significant influence on a depth of thinks and originality of ideas of each other. For support this premise, Freire's opinion can be mentioned: "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-inventions, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (1996, p. 53). This leads to the possibility to create a sharing academic community with a learning development ethos (Sinfield et al., 2011). In this way, the effort to work out creative and nontraditional motivation policy aimed at creativity improvement should be developed at the universities.

3 Methods

Because the promotion and maintaining of a positive climate in the university can be realized e.g. by promoting diversity and correctness regarding the policy for rewarding performances (Zlate & Cucui, 2015), the article's authors have decide to perform questionnaire survey regarding the motivation for academic creativity.

3.1 Survey sample and results

The overall focus of the survey conducted in 2019 was on *decision making in relation to the motivation and creativity* of employees and managers of Slovak universities. The survey was performed on a sample of $n = 90$ respondents of which $n = 81$ pedagogical, scientific and administrative staff (47 female, 34 male) and $n = 9$ managers (1 female, 8 male). There were 9 respondents with the secondary and 14 with the higher education, 39 respondents with PhD, 19 Associate Professors, and 9 Professors.

The first question chosen for this article examined the nature of the methods and procedures applied to the academic staff for building the creative environment (Table 1). The task of managers was to identify the methods group they apply to their employees (traditional; creative; combined). In contrast, the role of employees was to indicate which group of methods

their supervisor applied to them. More than half of the managers (55.56%) expressed they only used traditional methods while 44.44% use a combination of traditional and creative methods. This shows managers' commitment to foster the employee creativity, but at the same time, it indicates that many of them still adhere to traditional practices and are not in favor to a change. Although most employees consider their superiors' methods to support the creative environs as traditional (77.78%), only 17.28% opined that their superiors link traditional and creative procedures to work the university environment became creative and imaginative. This implies a contradiction between the views of employees and managers (difference is 27.16%).

Tab. 1: Application of creative abilities and modern procedures/methods

Character of applied methods	Managers		Employees	
	Frequency	[%]	Frequency	[%]
Traditional methods and procedures	5	55.56%	63	77.78%
Creative methods and procedures	0	0.00%	4	4.94%
Traditional and creative methods and procedures	4	44.44%	14	17.28%

Source: own study

The next question examined whether university managers motivate their employees to creative work activities. A positive feature in terms of promoting the creative atmosphere is the following (Table 2): each of the surveyed managers claims that in some way motivates the staff to creative work (77.78% = mostly yes; 22.22% = both yes and no).

Tab. 2: Motivating to creative work activity

Answer	Managers		Employees	
	Frequency	[%]	Frequency	[%]
Yes	0	0.00%	19	23.46%
Mostly yes	7	77.78%	28	34.57%
Yes and no	2	22.22%	21	25.93%
Mostly not	0	0.00%	13	16.05%
Not	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

Source: own study

However, employees' views are not so clear. It can be positively judged that 23.46% of them feel the motivational influence to creative work by their superiors. On the other hand, up to 16.05% of employees think that managers do not usually motivate them to creativity.

Next question (Table 3) explored the appreciation of university staff's creative ideas. Managers again expressed they appreciate the employee creativity. Because none of these respondents indicated any other option, their views can be considered reconciled and consistent.

Tab. 3: Appreciation of creative ideas and solutions

Answer	Managers		Employees	
	Frequency	[%]	Frequency	[%]
Yes	3	33.33%	26	32.10%
Mostly yes	6	66.67%	28	34.57%
Yes and no	0	0.00%	20	24.69%
Mostly not	0	0.00%	5	6.17%
Not	0	0.00%	2	2.47%

Source: own study

Again, employee statements are quite different from managers'. Since employees with a similar percentage to managers (32.10%) think their creativity is appreciated, others of them have different opinions. 8.64% of employees favored even mostly not or not.

3.2 Search of survey dependencies

Mentioned above responses were subsequently assessed from the perspective of dependence on the basic characteristics of respondents. Table 4 shows specific values of the chi-square test with a p-value and significance designation of the dependencies. From a global perspective, the answers to none of the questions were significantly dependent on the characteristics studied and thus the above results are valid regardless of respondents' sex, age or education.

Tab. 4: Dependence of searched areas on age, sex and education

Question on	Characteristics of respondents								
	Age			Sex			Education		
Methods for creative environs	6.622	0.578	no	0.856	0.652	no	5.145	0.076	no
Motivation to creative work	10.375	0.583	no	1.683	0.641	no	6.886	0.076	no
Appreciation of creative ideas	25.285	0.065	no	2.833	0.586	no	9.605	0.048	no

(Chi-Square Test [z ... p-value ... significance])

Source: own study

Dependency analysis was also applied to specific options in all questions. Responses on the combined application of traditional and creative methods to build a creative environment in Table 5 confirm a significant statistical dependence on respondents' education.

Tab. 5: Dependence of methods applied for creativity on age, sex and education

Character of applied methods	Age			Sex			Education		
Traditional methods and procedures	5.024	0.285	no	0.241	0.810	no	2.033	0.042	no
Creative methods and procedures	2.656	0.617	no	0.706	0.480	no	0.043	0.965	no
Traditional and creative methods and	3.604	0.462	no	0.669	0.504	no	2.26	0.024	yes

(Chi-Square Test [z ... p-value ... significance])

Source: own study

The question of motivation for creative activity did not prove a statistically significant dependence on the characteristics of respondents (Table 6).

Tab. 6: Dependence of responses on motivating to creativity on age, sex and education

Answer	Age			Sex			Education		
Yes	3.348	0.501	no	0.518	0.604	no	1.839	0.066	no
Mostly yes	3.001	0.558	no	1.064	0.287	no	0.928	0.353	no
Yes and no	3.463	0.484	no	0.932	0.351	no	1.414	0.157	no
Mostly not	3.911	0.418	no	0.333	0.739	no	1.637	0.102	no
Not	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

(Chi-Square Test [z ... p-value ... significance])

Source: own study

In relation to the last question examined, i.e. appreciation of creative solutions, the dependence was confirmed with the answer both yes and no. This answer was most often labeled by respondents aged 30–39 years (12.35%) who belong to the first group in terms of education (secondary education, Dr., Mgr.), namely by 23.46% (Table 7).

Tab. 7: Dependence of responses on appreciating creative ideas on age, sex and education

Answer	Age			Sex			Education		
Yes	3.927	0.416	no	1.405	0.160	no	1.77	0.077	no
Mostly yes	1.699	0.791	no	1.064	0.287	no	0.928	0.353	no
Yes and no	13.891	0.008	yes	0.206	0.837	no	2.461	0.014	yes
Mostly not	9.347	0.053	no	0.843	0.399	no	1.366	0.172	no
Not	2.333	0.675	no	0.233	0.816	no	0.787	0.431	no

(Chi-Square Test [z ... p-value ... significance])

Source: own study

3.3 Discussion

Motivation policy aimed at developing creativity should include a convincing explanation of the importance of creativity for the development of society and university. It is important to provide all teachers, scientists and managers with elements and rules motivating to the support

of their creativity. However, study of Zhang (2014) carried out at the China universities, has pointed out that “The bureaucracy exists in the operation of the institutional administrative mechanism. Staff feel that there is a lack of direct communication between policy makers and themselves, which may cause the staff to become demotivated” (p. 52). This corresponds to the results shown in Table 1 that more than 77% of university employees perceive the application of only traditional methods and procedures toward them.

Although it is needed to build creative atmosphere through the creativity motivation policy, Table 2 shows that only 58.03% of university staff chose a positive responses. The study of Shaheen et al., performed at 35 university teachers, has also confirmed that only 48.6% of them expressed their administration is best in communicating its policies and procedures. In addition, “Most of the university academicians are not satisfied with the administrative policies of their university which is responsible for their low level of motivation and most of them are not motivated and satisfied with their present salary” (Shaheen, Sajid & Batool, 2013).

Creative motivation policy should also include measures that appreciate creativity. It is because shaping and utilizing the creativity is not an easy task: „Changes in attitudes require an investment of time and enormous effort on the part of the teacher“ (Gregerson, Snyder & Kaufman, 2013, p. 25). However, as shown in Table 3, up to 100% of managers expressed that they appreciate the creativity of their staff while only 66.67% of staff confirmed this (responses *yes* and *almost yes*). This situation should be changed.

Conclusion

Connecting the academic motivation with the academic creativity is a possible way to achieve a more significant expansion in science, activities of the state and government, societal processes, and especially, the universities. All academicians should be willing – motivated – to use their creativity. The condition, however, is that managements of universities (rector, vice-rectors, deans, vice-deans, heads of departments, etc.) actually apply creativity motivation policy and support the creativity of their employees.

First of all, such a policy must be developed at government level. Unfortunately, if such a policy for the higher education sector does not exist, the managements of the universities must develop these policies on the basis of their own vision of the future pro-social development and vision of the university as the bearer of knowledge and progress.

Secondly, developing a creativity motivation policy should be the result of a broad academic debate. Motivation and creativity are probably the most sensitive elements of

academic behavior. The combination of these phenomena requires even more attention and should be supported by the views of as many university members as possible.

Thirdly, all university staff must be adequately informed about such a policy and any adjustments to it. Like all university policies, creativity motivation policy should be considered in terms of effectiveness (psychological, time, material, procedural, etc.). If necessary, all changes must be communicated again and agreed by the majority of academicians.

This means that the overall motivation system of the university (motivation goals, strategy, policy, programs, procedures, etc.) must be focused on the area of creativity and its sustainable development. If the university complements its motivation goals with goals motivating the development of creativity, if the motivation strategy complements the strategy motivating the creativity, etc., the creativity motivation policy has a chance to become a firm support for creativity motivation of the university, and simultaneously, can inspire the Ministry to develop a complex motivation policy for all education sector in the country.

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