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Motivation and performance in higher education

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Abstract

Starting from the premise that performance is closely connected to motivation, this paper is intended to present the motivation process within universities as a complex process, which leads to personnel's performance only if motivational mechanisms are known and properly applied by university managers. The managers' role within the universities is to fulfill the organization's targets/objectives through its members. Therefore, motivation is a top priority for the universities managers. Developing organizational strategies for motivating the university employees becomes the main goal of organizational management nowadays in order to improve the organizational performances.

Keywords: motivation; organizational performances; universities; employees; coach

1. Introduction

In the modern societies, most people work in different types of organizations. Hard work supposes, however, a great consumption of physical and intellectual effort, and sometimes even sacrifices. Yet, what makes people do it? Or what makes them want it so bad when they do not have access to it (as it happens with the unemployed people)? The motivation of the individuals working in universities has been a topic of great interest for the managers and the researchers for a long while. The purpose of this paper is to show what motivates specialists from higher education in daily activities, as professional motivation is an important and complex process to obtain performance both at individual level and within organization. *Motivation* is a premise of *performance* in university organizations.

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Performance motivates us to move forward, to settle clear targets that we follow closely. What is important is to be motivated in reaching the objectives proposed. Therefore, performance and quality can be obtained, first of all, by motivation in relation to work.

Experienced proved the fact that managers who can motivate the employees so that the letter reach performance above the minimum level succeeded in pleasing the personnel, to solve certain problems. The idea is that the people are motivated, but motivation depends on individual features which are the most important in determining the degree of adaptability.

Performance management is a unitary process with implications in people management policies and is not a mean to settle and analyze the objectives. It is an instrument for managers, which assures them that they accomplished the managerial responsibilities.

2. Theoretical Framework and Analysis of the Literature

In general, by motivation one understands an inner state determining an individual to behave in such a way as to attain a certain goal.

Regarding motivation in relation to work, it can be defined as the availability of an individual to work intensely and consistently in order to realize the organizational objectives, with the hope that the effort made will lead to the realization of some individual objectives. These individual objectives, generated, finally, by the needs that the individual feels, are veritable reasons determining him to act and work in organizations.

Motivation in universities constitutes a particularly complex notion, whose content cannot be rigorously dissected and highlighted, since the employees' action motives cannot be directly observed and measured, but are deduced from people's behavior. This complexity actually explains the existence of numerous theories that try to clarify the essence and shaping of motivation.

Many of the following motivation theories are developed from a managerial perspective, stressing the idea that a better knowledge of people and a better communication could allow the development of some organizational strategies to motivate employees in order to increase organizational performances. Such a perspective, considering motivation as strategy where one person influences the other(s) (organization management) implies a perspective of motivation as a subtle mechanism of control and manipulation of employees' behavior in universities.

Synthesizing in a table the theories on the content of motivation found in the literature, they appear as follows:

Table 1. Theories on the content of motivation.

Theory	Author	Content
A. Classical approach		
A1. Theories on the content of motivation		
Need hierarchy theory	A. Maslow	Man's existence relies on five categories of fundamental needs: physiological needs, security needs, social needs, respect, and personal accomplishment. The intensity and the degree of satisfaction of these needs determine their evolution.
Bifactorial motivation theory	Herzberg F.	Satisfaction and insatisfaction are not opposed; they are not situated along the same continuum but along separate and distinct continuums. The opposite of insatisfaction is not satisfaction but the lack of insatisfaction. Thus, there are two categories of factors: - motivational factors (realizations, achievements, recognition, responsibility, actual work, personal development, promotion at work); - hygiene factors (work conditions, relations with others, status, job security, personal life, salary, control)
The X and Y theory	D. McGregor	The policy and the practice of management determine two opposite sets and beliefs: - the conception of the man unwilling to work, yet accepting the manager's control (a realistic, conservative and pessimistic theory); - the man willing to work, taking on responsibility in the accomplishment of his tasks (idealistic, avant-garde and optimistic theory)

Theory	Author	Content
The Z theory	W. Ouchi	The cultural differences exert a substantial influence on human resources management: equity, group savings, and an enlargement of the family relations, strict discipline and motivation, protocol, rank, status, non-acceptance of conflicts.
The ERG theory	C.P. Alderfer	Motivation in work relies on three categories of needs: existence, relations, growth.
Manifest need theory	H.A. Murray	Need profiles are drafted, specific to each individual, and which evolve in time, regarding the manifest needs, namely for achievement, affiliation, autonomy, power.
Role motivation theory	J.B. Miner	The professional activity allows one to meet certain categories of needs. Limitations of the theory: it concerns only the managers.
Work values theory	S. Ronen	Analysis of the aspects of the work environment susceptible of values. The needs are grouped into two axes considered basic dimensions: The axis individualism-collectivism The axis materialist - non-materialist
The mathematical model of motivation	J.W. Atkinson D. McClelland	$Ts=Ms \times Ps \times Vs$ where: Ts-tendency to approach an achievement situation; Ms –motive to succeed; Ps-probability of success; Vs- incentive value of success; $Taf=Maf \times Pf \times Vf$ where: Taf-tendency to avoid failure; Maf-motive to avoid failure Pf-probability of failure; Ve- incentive value of failure; $Tres=(Ms-Maf)[Ps(1/Pf)]$ where: Tres- resulting motive to realize an achievement situation;
Acquired needs theory	D. McClelland	Motivation relies on three categories: - achievement, realizations; - affiliation, personal relations; - power, dominance. Achievement, affiliation and power are elements on which the human need focuses.
A2 Theories on the motivation process		
Expectancy theory	V. Vroom	The expectancy theory relies on three elements: value (of the stimulant or reward), instrumentality (relation of casualty between performance and results), expectancy (triggering a result of a certain quality). According to this theory there are two conditions motivating the employee: - existence of an active need in the motivation of the individual to achieve a goal; - hope that a certain behavior will lead to the meeting of the respective need.
Expectations model	L.W. Porter E.E. Lawer	This model is a combination of the expectancy and the equity theory. Motivation is a continually renewed process. The way the individual gets informed and interprets the information available to him, the past reasons of achievement or failure will influence the individual.
Equity theory	J.S. Adams	In a community, people feel the need for justice, adding value to the equity they are looking for. This is realized by identifying the equity and inequity moments in the organization by comparison with others.
Goal setting theory	E.A. Locke G.P. Latham	The behavior of each individual is set according to the goals everyone has set for himself, and some actions occur only because of them.
Task and time effects theory	J.O. Raynor	It is a cognitive model of motivation holding that the motivation for an immediate task is partially determined by the way the individual perceives the importance of the respective task for the attaining of some remote goals.
Attribution theory	B.C. Weiner	The will/lack of will to initiate future actions is determined by the explanations that the individual finds for success or failure.

Theory	Author	Content
		The lack of capacity in case of failure causes a more significant block for future actions than the lack of effort.
Theory of behavior reinforcement	B.F. Skinner	It relies on the analysis of the mutual connections between the employees' behaviors and the organization and of their consequences, the change or modification of people's behavior in the work process in relation to the adequate use of the rewards and sanctions. Any behavioral change requires - one way or the other - a reward. Reinforcement is a behavioral situation amplifying the frequency of the specific behavior of each employee.
Self-efficacy theory	A. Bandura	The fundamental concept the self-efficacy theory relies on is the feeling of efficacy that determines the choice of the activities, the effort quality at work and a sustained effort in the long run.
Self-evaluation theory	M.V. Convington	The need for self-esteem lies at the basis of this theory and constitutes a very strong motivating factor. When self-esteem is threatened, protection strategies will develop.
Common sense theory	E. Schein	Common sense represents the use of the individual knowledge on the human incentives and needs relying on five professional anchors that delimit the motivational behavior of each individual: - technical or fundamental; - competencies in management; - competencies in activity; The need for autonomy, independence and job security.
The theory of the maturity-immaturity spectrum	C. Argyris	The fundamental idea is the development of the individual's potential in the organization. Each individual has a certain potential developable in the organization and motivating him, and avoids the basic conflict between organization and employee.
B. Situational approach		
B.1 Theories based on corporate culture		
Theory of excellence concerning motivation	T. Peters R. Waterman	7S model (structure, strategy, systems, skills, staff, style, shared value). MBWA model (Management by Wandering Around)
Third type / excellent enterprise theory	G. Archier H. Serieyx	It relies on the important role played by corporate culture regarding motivation.
Self-concept theory	B. Shamir	Motivation relies on self-esteem related not so much to individual actions but rather to general behavior models
B2. Interaction theories		
Life field theory	K. Lewin	It relies on the analysis of motivation as an interaction between the individual and his environment called life field, which generates attractions and repulsions that affect the individual behavior
The relational model of motivation	J. Nuttin	Motivation is generated by each person's manner of perceiving the effect of his own action on the environment where the employee is carrying out his activity. The premises of this theory are: - self-development and self-affirmation; - individual motivation and collective action; - need to understand the sense of life.
Self-determination theory (cognitive evaluation theory)	E. Deci R. Ryan R.J. Vallerand	It relies on the extrinsic motivation corresponding to the desire to have a behavior or an action that is a means of obtaining something good and the intrinsic motivation which supposes a behavior bringing pleasure, joy, satisfaction.
Social motivational theory	B.C. Weiner	Motivation springs from the socio-cultural environment each individual lives in and from his characteristics.
Expectancy-value theory	J. Brophy I.S. Eccles A. Wigfield	Motivation is the result of the interaction of the two factors generating it: probability of achievement of a task and value attributed to the achievement
B3. Personal development theories		
Transactional analysis	E. Berne	It relies on the relation of each of us with our fellows. This relation is called transaction and generates motivational behaviors along man's life. As a motivation tool, the *stroke* is used - one attention unit addressed to a person. The pillars of motivation are: position (status, salary, equity), recognition (stroke), perspectives (initiatives, professional perspectives, interest in work)

Theory	Author	Content
		and ideas (reasons of action, what is well done)
NLP (Neurolinguistic programming) meta-programs	R. Bandler J. Grindler G. Bateson	The resources of motivation can be found in the structure of each individual, the manager's role being that of determining these resources to surface. The NLP model relies on the idea of the unlimited and unexploited character of the human being. NLP meta-programs propose a minute classification of what can motivate people when they engage in an action.
Theory of motivation through values	R. Dilts G. Bateson	It relies on the relation that exists between identity, values, beliefs, capacity, behavior and environment. It allows the managers to understand the specific features of each collaborator and to anticipate their behaviors and attitudes.

Sources: adapted after Vagu P. & Stegăroiu I., 1997, 2005; Aubert N., 2008; Cobut E., Bomal G., 2009; Pastor P., Breard R., 2005;

Looking at the table above, we have identified the common element present in all the theories presented: the *need* that generates a motive of action in the sense of its satisfaction. Thus, a double perspective can be discussed: that of the employee, whose interests are different but may converge to those of the organization where he works; that of the employer, who needs to attain the managerial goals being directly interested in achieving them.

In conclusion, we can state that *motivation is a long road covered toward the satisfaction of a need. The same synthesis allows us to conclude that there are many motivation theories, which finally determine us to affirm that one cannot talk about a single universally valid theory for all the situations*.

3. The motivation of the teaching staff from universities

The need to motivate the personnel from universities

Motivation can be defined as an internal, individual, introspective process, which energizes, directs and supports a certain behavior. It is a personal "force" determining a certain behavior.

Motivation is the key problem that the universities have to solve today. Motivation process and obtaining performance requires the correlation between necessities, aspirations and personnel's interests within the universities and achieving the objects and assignments completion, competences and responsibilities.

The managers' role within the universities is to fulfill the organization's targets/objectives through its members. In order to obtain performance, the university managers have to motivate their employees. Motivation is a top priority for the universities' climate.

The first theories considered that if you pay the people adequately, they will be motivated. Yet, the contemporary theories state that people do not work only for money, but also to be content with what they are doing. Motivation is a vital part of the general management process and the integrating component of the performance management.

Types of motivation

The type of motivation designates the set of motivations, delimited according to certain criteria, used repeatedly by the managers according to a specific optics, which relies – consciously or not – on certain hypotheses regarding the influence of motivation on the employees' performances. In an organization in general, especially in universities the following types of motivation can be applied:

- According to the sense of the motivation process:

a)   positive – they have beneficial effects on the activity or the inter-human relations: salary growths, primes or bonuses, encouragements, titles, promotions, merit degrees, etc;

b)   negative – they represent a primitive type of motivation, which needs to be used only with certain precautions from the motivational toolkit: salary penalizations, retrogradations, reprimands, warnings, other administrative sanctions.

- According to the factors that are the source of the satisfaction or lack of it:

a)   extrinsic factors – they determine the reduction or even the elimination of the insatisfaction; these factors have to do with the organizational climate: personnel policy, interpersonal relations, work conditions, salary;

b)   intrinsic factors – they determine the increase of the satisfaction referring to the personal realization, promotion and development.

- According to the needs they address:

a)   economic factors – they include all that is connected to the salary package (they contribute to the meeting

of the physiological and security needs);

b)   affective – they have in view the organizational climate: the employee needs appreciation and consideration (this contributes to the meeting of his social needs);

c)   cognitive – they concern the cerebral dimension of the employee, relying on the meeting of the individual needs of being informed, of knowing, of keeping under control the environment where he carries out his activity;

d)   moral-spiritual – giving trust, praises, warnings, reprimands, honorary titles (which contributes to satisfying the needs of self-realization).

e)   these types of motivation can be used on their own or by the combination of several of them.

The employees within the universities may be motivated by two categories of factors, classified as follows:

- factors of satisfaction – insatisfaction;

- motivating factors.

•   The factors of satisfaction – insatisfaction are also called maintenance factors, as they maintain performance at a certain level, without increasing it:

a)   Basic salary;

-benefits associated to the basic salary: primes, bonuses (a share of the sales);

b)   other financial benefits:

-    table tickets, gift tickets or kindergarten tickets (table tickets are tax deductible)

-    private health insurance (the employees, natural or juridical persons, may conclude private health insurance contracts for their employees, individually or as a group, offered as additional benefits to their salary rights, in order to attract, select and stabilize the personnel. The private health insurance expenses are tax deductible for the employer);

-    facultative pensions;

c)   work conditions:

-    assuring the variety of the tasks involved by the job;

-    work climate;

-    type of supervision from the managers;

-    interpersonal relations.

In the motivation of the personnel within universities, beside the financial rewards, there are also certain types of non-financial tools that have the same effect. People tend to be more motivated if they are interested in the respective work, if they feel respected, if they like the people they work with, if they have a certain status and the possibility of a personal development through promotion, coaching and professional training programs. If these ways of motivation do not exist, people tend to feel neglected, and the tonus of the organization will be low.

The synthesis of these maintenance factors is:

Table 2. Salary methods for motivation

SALARY METHODS MOTIVATING UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL	
Direct methods	**Indirect methods**
- salaries	- unemployment benefits
- bonuses for difficult work conditions, ancientness	- pensions for age limit and invalidity
- financial prizes	- social benefits
	- payment of the holidays and medical leave
	- free meals
	- payment of training taxes
	- right to buy or sell under privileged conditions

Source: adapted after D.B. Abrudan, M. Serratore, 2002

Next, we enumerate the ways by which a motivation of the personnel in universities can be realized, without making use of financial rewards.

•   *job enlargement*. By this way of motivation, the variety of the responsibilities of the respective job will be

increased. At the same time, the job will be redesigned.

- *job enrichment*. This is a process of growth of the employees' responsibility degree, and of the recognition of their merit in the performances. *Job enrichment can give the employees more control over*: the way they organize their work; the quality of their work; the distribution of the attributions within a group

• *participative management.* When people actively participate when a decision is made, they feel obliged to put it into practice. There are numerous pieces of evidence supporting the theory according to which the workers' participation to decision making is one of the most efficient ways of motivating people.

• *quality control circles*.   Small groups of employees get together to regularly discuss the issues they are faced with in their work. They offer to find solutions to these problems. The managers assure the necessary resources to their subordinates to put into practice the solutions they have found. These groups are constituted based on the idea according to which the experience of the executants with a longer ancientness on the job is more relevant than the manager's theoretical knowledge.

• *Creation of a positive work climate.* If the employees feel appreciated and involved in the attainment of the organizational objectives, they will work better and harder.

The more recognized the employees' contributions to the organizational performances within universities are, the more motivated and involved the university employees become. This dual cycle of consolidation of the involvement and of the motivation will lead to the obtaining of high performances.

From our point of view, the promotion and maintaining of a positive climate in the university can be realized in several ways:

a)   focusing on the university employees by: meetings face to face with the employees in order to evaluate the previous performances and to find out the employees' needs; the sincere communication of what can be done to meet the employees' needs; giving a special attention to each employee to make him feel important;

b) opening communication canals. The efficient managers encourage their subordinates to communicate opening canals needed for feedback;

c) building a team spirit to be able to obtain better performances than in the case of individual work;

d) promoting diversity and correctness both regarding the recruiting and selection policy and regarding the policy for rewarding performances.

• *The university managers' role in motivation*: an important role in motivation goes to the managers from all the organizational hierarchic levels. In order to be efficient in the motivation process, the manager needs to have three features:

a)   patience – the creation of a motivational climate cannot happen suddenly. Managers need to persevere in the stimulation of the motivational factors;

b)   dedication – the manager always needs to make more effort than his employees, because the work climate can easily deteriorate;

c)   preoccupation – the employees respect the managers that, in their turn, respect them. The moment when the subordinates perceive a preoccupation from the managers regarding their problems, they will make more efforts to increase the organizational performances.

• *The motivating factors* do not just maintain performance at a certain level; they also increase it. In order to motivate his subordinates, a manager needs to act on the motivating factors that stimulate them to work harder to realize the tasks.

Each university employee has his set of factors of satisfaction, insatisfaction and motivation. The individuals, the teams and the managers have their viewpoint concerning the factors motivating them and motivating others.

People are not led by plans and analyses. They are led by this triad of other things, and the truly efficient leader concentrates almost all the actions on their creation – using different aptitudes for each element of the triad.

Table 3. Styles of leadership based on emotional intelligence

	Visionary	Trainer	Partner	Democrat	Winner	Commander
Model of construction of the resonance	Mobilizes his collaborators around a shared vision	Reconnects a collaborator's aspirations to the	Creates harmony and takes care of the quality of the relations	Imposes a consensus stimulating everyone's	Sets very demanding performance standards	Imposes immediate and total conformity

		organizational objectives		participation		
Style in one sentence	Follow me!	Try this!	People are my priority!	What do you think about this?	Do like I do, this is how I do it!	Do it because I tell you so!
When this style is used	When change imposes a new vision or when a clear orientation is needed	To help a collaborator improve his performances developing long-term capabilities	To reconcile, to motivate during a tense period or to reinforce the inter-personal connections	To favor adhesions or consensus or obtain everyone's contribution	To obtain fast the results of a motivated and competent team	In case of crisis to rapidly initiate a radical change or in the case of a complicated collaborator
Impact on the client	Extremely positive	Very positive	Positive	Positive	Often very negative	Very negative

Source: D. Goleman, R. Boyatzis, A. McKee, 2003, p. 49.

The vision is a positive image of what the university organization could become and of the way to reach the destination. In order to create a shared vision, the university leader needs to always be looking for new ideas, matching the organizational strategy, and has to be sufficiently intelligent to seize the good ideas.

For the individuals that are part of the organization, the motivation is what pushes them to action. The leader uses his interpersonal aptitudes to kindle people's energy and help them see how they could profit both of the "voyage" to the objective and of reaching the objective.

The necessary impetus for the organizational projects and initiatives is the element helping the organization to reach its destination. By using its energy and problem-solving capabilities, the leader makes sure that the firm is on the right way towards the accomplishment of its mission.

The leader must function efficiently in all these three dimensions. The visionary is not a leader unless he can motivate. The person supporting the impetus is not a leader unless he can create a vision shared by everybody.

The first two styles stimulate the collaborators' motivation and performance, while the last two can be used more prudently.

In synthesis, we can draw conclusions to be used in the managerial practice within universities:

-*Coaching can be considered a managerial style that uses the emotional intelligence of the people in charge;*

-*Coaching identifies and releases the collaborator's potential to let him optimize the resources available to him.*

Conclusions

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.

Our point of view envisions the following perspective: the managers' role in a university is to accomplish its objectives through the organization's members. In order to have performances, the university managers need to be able to motivate their subordinates.

Our conclusions are meant to emphasize that: on the one hand, motivation is the top priority issue the universities have to deal with nowadays. On the other hand, the more recognized the university's employees' contributions to the organizational performances are, the more motivated and involved the employees become. As for the managerial practice and styles, performance can be obtained starting from *coaching*, considered as a managerial style that uses the emotional intelligence of the university employees and identifies their potential to optimize the resources available to them.

Just like organizational culture, motivation cannot be seen as such but it is practiced and perceived in the results of the organization. Satisfying the necessities and interests and obtaining performance create the satisfaction mood of the university employee.

A rewarding system (salaries, trainings, emotional support) - an official mechanism for defining, evaluating and rewarding performance - will motivate employees to work efficiently, in order to benefit from positive effects within

the university.

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