The Social and Psychological Determinants of Faculty Members' Work Motivation

Tuiaara Sidorova* 

*North-Eastern Federal University, Belinsky st. 58, Yakutsk 677000, Russian Federation

Abstract

Employment motivation is the driving factor of professional growth of the personality and it is determined by a complex system of internal and external reasons. There is an increase of workers qualification as the complexity of the content of work, which has not only positive aspects, but also connected with management problems with employees. Teacher’s activity implies a high autonomy, coupled to a constant intellectual activity and the need for self-development that realized in scientific and educational context. Impact on the motivational sphere of such workers becomes possible only indirectly, where the more important information (feedback) based on the self-assessment of performance than the external evaluation and recognition of merit.

Keywords: Motivation type, work activity motivation, professional activity of university workers, types of achievement motivation, type of avoidance motivation.

1. Introduction

Professional activity motivation is the driving force of personal professional growth and is determined by a complex system of internal and external impulses. As the work gets harder, workers improve their qualification. It has positive influence and connected with personnel management issues. Teaching profession implies independence together with regular intellectual work and self-development requirement, which realizes in scientific and educational context. The influence on motivation of such workers can be only indirect. Here information (feedback) is more important than external evaluation and recognition of personal achievements, because self-estimation of work results is made on the basis of this information.

* Tuiaara Sidorova. +7-4112-496-933; fax: +7-4112-496-753.
E-mail address: tn.sidorova@s-vfu.ru
According to Heckhausen (1986), the opposition of extrinsic (cause by external motives) and intrinsic (internal motives connected with personal needs, attitude and values) motivations is discussed throughout the existence of experimental psychology of motivation. The first approach was shared by R. Woodworth with his behavior-primacy theory, (Woodworth, 1918; Allport, 1961), the second one was connected with development of behavior psychology (Skinner, 1978).

Social psychology considers motivation as a system of factors, which incites people to take specific actions (Platonov, 2004). According to the theory of Leontiev (Gippenreyter & Falikman, 2002), motivational sphere is the core of a person and is determined by the activity, and also depends on objective social laws of activity system development.

The aim of this study is to identify the determinants of work motivation. It has been suggested that faculty members’ work motivation is determined by a number of social and psychological factors: personal characteristics, working condition, possibility of needs redaction in professional activity.

1.1. Methodology

In our research, aimed to find social and psychological peculiarities of motivation of teachers professional activity, we have used the modified methodology of Gerchikov (2008). According to it, there are four types of achievement motivation (instrumental, professional, patriotic and host) and one type of avoidance motivation (lumpen).

Each type is based on meaning-making motive and means of its satisfaction. So, instrumental type is oriented to material side of reward, professional type is connected with self-realization through professional activity, displaying of creative initiative, patriotic type reflects affiliative orientation, host type realizes man’s need for independence while performing employment duties, lumpen means aiming at minimization of efforts, health care, avoidance of responsibility.

Besides, methodology measures not only current type of motivation, but also integral constructs, reflecting established attitude to labor.

In order to study correlation between types of motivation and social and psychological characteristics of test persons we used Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient.

2. Discussion

Such base characteristics as sex, age and work experience influence on motivation structure of workers. We have found a correlation between work experience of 20-30 years and dominant professional type of motivation (PR1 $rs=0,094$, $p\leq0,05$) (fig 1).
People, who have worked 5-10 years in university, are less patriotic: work experience of 5-10 years correlates with patriotic type of motivation the last (PA5 rs=0,106, p≤0,05). In general there is a tendency of strengthening of “patriot” motivation type according to work experience.

The dependence of motivation type on age is weak. People of working age from 36 to 60 take responsibilities and initiative unwillingly. They do not aim at independence in work as evidenced by host motivation on second last place (HO4 rs=0,116, p≤0,05).

It was found out that professional type of motivation was more typical for deans (18%), professors (18%) and assistants (18%). Perhaps, it is explained by professional achievements of professors and deans and achievement motivation and focus on professional growth of assistants.

Instrumental type of motivation is more characteristic of head teachers (22%), less of assistants (21%) and least of professors (12%). Such distribution is regular, because assistants and head teachers earn lower salary than others. The substantial share of head teachers’ representation in comparison to assistants is explained by their work experience in university and inconformity of salary level to their expectations.

Patriotic type of motivation is peculiar to deans (23%), professors and heads of departments.

Patriotic type of motivation is realized in pursuit of being useful for the organization. That is why such distribution among deans, head of departments and professors is rather typical. Heads of subdivisions and departments are the leaders, transmitting the mission and values of the university to other workers. Associate professors are less presented (10%). Maybe, being the most competitive group, they show less devotion to organization.

Lumpen type is more characteristic of assistants (22%) and less of professors (11%). As a rule, assistants have limited work experience that is why lumpen showings may be the signs of adaptation or can be caused by search of professional calling. Professors, in opposite, are well-experienced and have strong ties with university, that is why they are more devoted to organization. Accordingly indifference and lumpen type of motivation are not characteristic of them.

Host type of motivation is more represented among deans (directors) – 29 % and heads of departments – 16 %, which is explained by their leading role. It is less represented among professors. Perhaps they are more focused on scientific work.

Teachers are more likely to fulfill themselves in career, constantly develop and improve their skills. Their dominant motivation is execution of complex and interesting work.

The higher is position, the lower is the level of instrumental type of motivation (rs =-0,92, p≤0,05). So, heads of departments show negative correlation between their position and dominant instrumental motive (IN1 rs= -0,111, p≤0,05), instrumental type more frequently takes the second last place (IN4 rs=0,011, p≤0,05). Instrumental motivation is less significant for professors, who put this type of motivation in the last place (IN5 rs=0,197, p≤0,05). Patriotic type correlates with senior positions of dean or director (PA1 rs=0,149, p≤0,05). The dominant type of motivation for leaders is patriotic type. The devotion to organization grows according to career growth. Besides, the heads of subdivisions transmit the mission and values of university.

3. Conclusion

The domination of one or another type of motivation shows positive trends as well as defined risks. For example, workers with professional motivation are prone to divide job in favorite and least favorite. Lack of control may lead to situation when professionals will do only the work they are interested in, ignoring routine but necessary work. Delegation of routine, meaningless (in their opinion) work to “professionals” demotivates them. If there are too many workers of professional type, it entails troubles of incompliance in organization work.

As can be seen from above, the dominant professional type of motivation is determined mostly by the content of teaching profession, which reflects intrinsic motivation including personal disposition as well as objective social conditions of their activity. In other words, labor motivation structure of university workers is determined by social, demographic, role and status factors.
References

Allport G. W. (1961). Pattern and Growth in Personality. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Gerchikov V.I. (2008). Human resources management: employee is the most efficient company’s resource. Moscow.

Heckhausen H. (1986). Motivation and activity. Moscow, 1986.

Leontiev A.N. (2002). Needs, motives, emotions (p. 57-65). Psychology of motivation and emotion, ed. by Yu.B. Gippenreyter, M.V. Falikman, Moscow.

Platonov Yu.P. (2004). The Fundamentals of Social Psychology. St. Petersburg.

Scinner B.F. (1978). Reflections on Behaviorism and Society. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Woodworth R.S. (1918). Dynamic Psychology. New York: Columbia University Press.