

# EDUKACJA



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## **PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION OF FACULTY MEMBERS: THE CASE OF ONE STATE UNIVERSITY IN KAZAKHSTAN**

**KEYWORDS:** Kazakhstan, psychology, motivation, job satisfaction, faculty members, state university

**ABSTRACT:** Psychological aspects of motivation and job satisfaction are integral parts of the effective and productive operations of any organization. In the context of higher education, it is one of the spheres, where satisfaction of faculty members, as well as appropriate motivational environment, has the paramount value for the effectiveness of a higher education institution and the quality of educational services. This research aims to explore the psychological aspects of motivation and job satisfaction of faculty members of one state university in Kazakhstan. Questionnaires concerning the job satisfaction level and motivation were distributed among 232 faculty members of one state university in Kazakhstan. The research findings show that the vast majority of participants have a relatively high level of job satisfaction, despite the existence of factors that negatively influence on the job satisfaction level, such as inappropriate work schedule, salary issues, and dealings with administration. At the same time, it becomes evident that favorable social and psychological climate, as well as relationships with colleagues can be considered as the most important components of psychological aspects of faculty members' motivation. This study provides recommendations that can increase the job satisfaction level of faculty members and improve motivational environment in higher education institutions.

### **1. Introduction**

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a developing country located in the Central Asia, which gained its independence in 1991. As the successor of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan inherited its educational system. However, in the context of recent reforms, the higher education system of Kazakhstan has changed and nowadays seems to be European rather than post-Soviet (OECD 2007). Kazakhstan was the first country from Central Asia, which signed the Bologna declaration and became a 47th member of the Bologna process (Tomusk 2010). This crucial step illustrates the eagerness of Kazakhstan for further development, cooperation

and improvements in the sphere of higher education. At the current stage of development, there are 126 higher education institutions (HEI) in the Republic of Kazakhstan (Information-Analytic Center 2015). Among those, 9 national higher education institutions, 1 international university, 1 autonomous higher education institution, 31 state higher education institutions, 16 JSC higher education institutions, 55 private higher education institutions, and 13 non-civil higher education institutions. The vast majority of those education organizations are located in two cities of republican significance – Astana and Almaty. Astana, capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, has 12 higher education institutions. Almaty, which is the biggest and most developed city of the Republic, has 42 higher education institutions. The third place belongs to the South-Kazakhstan region, where 11 higher education institutions are placed (Information-Analytic Center 2015). National Universities are the basis of higher education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan and have special regulations. Moreover, National Universities are the first higher education institutions (except Nazarbayev University) which will get the autonomy from the Ministry of Education and Science (Alshanov 2014). The first National Universities were established during the Soviet period and can be seen as the flagman universities for the institutions, which were opened after the independence of Kazakhstan in 1991. Having the leading role in higher education reformation process, national universities should provide high-level educational services, as well as increase the research capacity of the country. In this context, it is vital to explore the current level of motivation and job satisfaction of faculty members who are the key stakeholders in the higher education system. Higher level of motivation and job satisfaction will lead for more efficient and productive performance of faculty members and consequently affect the quality of higher education services.

The personnel of any higher educational institution is one of the main parties interested in effective activity of the organization. In the modern, dynamically changing conditions the personnel is the key asset of the organization, which ensures its competitiveness and a sustainable development (Armstrong, 2002). The understanding of the current and future expectations and needs of employees, as well as constant assessment of their job satisfaction level and other aspects connected with the company can guarantee the long-term success and prosperity of the organization of any field of activity. The higher education is one of fields of activity for which satisfaction of the personnel has the paramount value (Adayeva 2012). The main objective of higher education institutions is preparation of the highly qualified personnel able to not only apply the methods and tools acquired at university but also be able to be adaptable for the constant changes. The personnel of higher education institutions has the greatest impact on formation of young specialists. Interest in education, self-development and receiving new knowledge in many respects can be defined by skill and motivation of faculty members

of higher education institutions that in turn depends on degree of their satisfaction with work at university.

One of the main groups, which have an impact on the activities of higher education institutions, is the faculty members. According to G. Mintzberg, universities have professional bureaucracy structural type. Key part of such structure is its operational kernel – the people performing basic work on products production and rendering of services (Mintzberg 2004). In the case of universities, it is group of faculty members and top administration. According to Mintzberg, considering the high expenses of work, it is expedient to provide faculty members with the most favorable conditions for performance (Mintzberg, 2004).

Therefore, each university should possess special goals concerning the faculty members and the level of their job satisfaction. Need of such assessment is caused by the requirements of top management of higher education institutions, as well as faculty members. In order to bring positive changes and improvements, it is vital to have a constructive dialogue between administration of higher education institution and faculty members. University authorities should have reliable information regarding the work conditions and attitudes of faculty members, as well as proclaim ideals of collegiality and be attentive to the opinions and ideas of all university staff members. Constructive dialogue can lead to more efficient and productive performance of faculty members and consequently on the quality of education services.

However, despite importance and priority of carrying out an assessment of satisfaction of the personnel in higher education institutions, specifics of such assessment and its difference from similar researches in the organizations of other fields of activity, theoretical justifications of a similar assessment for the current time are absent. Many researches concerned the job satisfaction level, mechanism of its formation, assessment techniques. At the same time, majority of them are concerned the general questions and do not mention specifics of activity of the concrete organization or are devoted to studying of satisfaction of the personnel of the industrial enterprises or organizations of other services sectors (the bank sphere, hotel business, etc.). However, it is vital to research the job satisfaction level, as well as motivation of faculty members in order to understand the existing tendencies in higher education institutions in Kazakhstan.

## **2. Methodology & Analysis**

Considering the importance of national universities for higher education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan, this research aims to identify the current level of job satisfaction and motivation of faculty members of one National University

in Kazakhstan. Research was conducted during 2013–2014 and involve 232 faculty members. National universities have specific status in Kazakhstani higher education system and this particular university is one of the oldest and prestigious universities that provides job placements for about 2000 faculty members. The research was conducted identification of current job satisfaction level and peculiarities of organizational culture will shed the light on the issues of internal social and psychological climate of university and its impact on the quality of higher education services provided by this particular university. In addition, the critical analysis will provide a better understanding of the faculty members' perception of job satisfaction level and existence or absence of organizational culture in National University in Kazakhstan.

Results of job satisfaction questionnaire were statistically processed by the quantitative data analyzing software SPSS 15 which revealed quantitative indices by each methodological technique and the average statistical data.

The total number of participants – 232 faculty members (N=232). The age range varies as following: 44.16% of respondents identified that they are in the 20–30 age group, 24.24% of participants belong to the 31–40 age group; 19.48% in the 41–50 age group; 10.82% in the 51–60 age group and 1.93% of faculty members are older than 60. The age statistic shows that the majority of participants (66.40%) are younger than 40 years old. It can reflect the positive tendency for young professional to choose career in higher education institutions. Surprisingly, that 1.93% of respondents within the retirement age still work in the university; this tendency can reflect faculty members' loyalty to their workplace and high level of job satisfaction, as well as the difficulties in their finance situation, which can force them to continue their work at university.

The average overall work experience among participants – 14 years, whereas the average work experience in this particular National University – about 10 years.

The job satisfaction analysis assumed to reveal the general satisfaction with job, satisfaction with basic work conditions (salary, sanitary norms, quality of organization, etc.) and substantial work conditions (importance of work, status of the work, principles of collegiality, etc). The vast majority of respondents identified that they are satisfied with the job (65.37%) and with the job position (72.29%) comparing with those who are unsatisfied with the job (34.65%) and the job position (27.71%) – see: Diagram 1. However, this ratio reflects the existing problems that can negatively affect the job satisfaction level, and consequently the quality and productivity of performance of faculty members.

According to the findings, the lowest satisfaction level is evident in the following spheres: salary (67%), work schedule (30%), sanitary conditions (30%), and career development (29%). Interestingly, the relationships with colleagues are identified as the least factor of job unsatisfaction (6%) – see: Diagram 2. Therefore, we can conclude that despite the existing issues in University's operations, faculty members

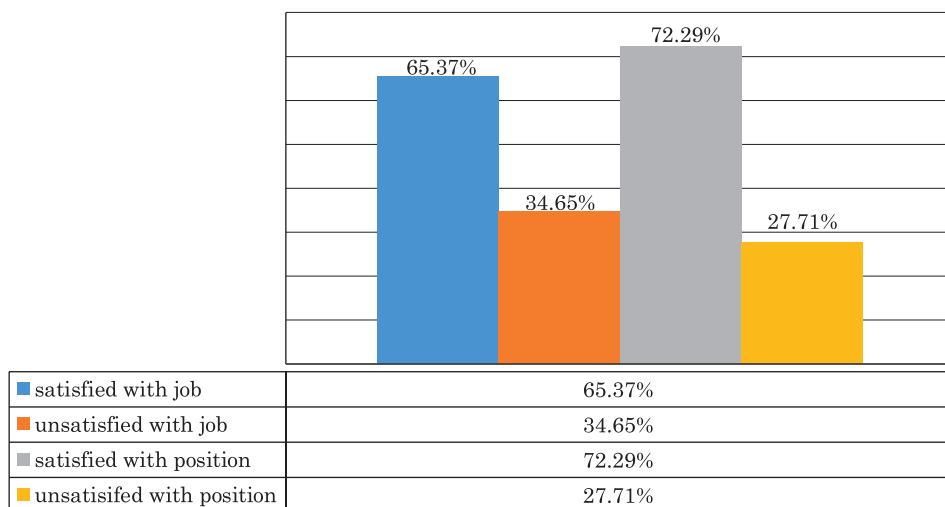


Diagram 1. Analysis of general level of satisfaction

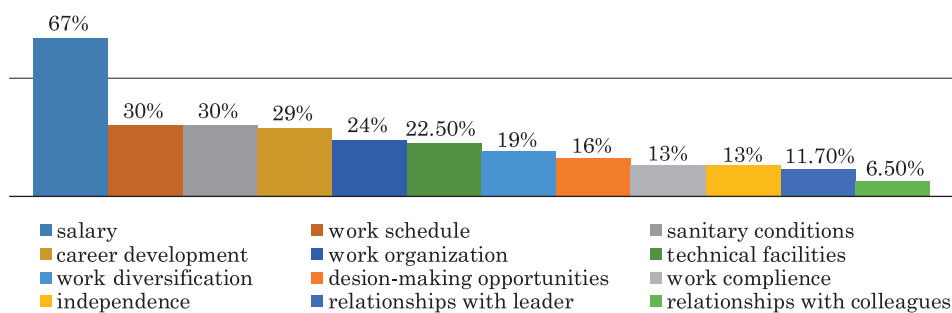


Diagram 2. Comparative analysis of factors influencing on dissatisfaction of faculty members

have appropriate friendly relationships among each other, which lead to the stable communication pattern and overall positive social-psychological climate in the University.

Factorial analysis identified that the main findings concerning of the job satisfaction were grouped in following factors: relationships with the leader, level of labor organizations, necessity to solve emerging problems, correspondence with significant position; career development opportunities; diversity of work; independence in decision-making process; work schedule satisfaction; relationships with colleagues and existing work facilities.

These elements reflected the high correlations, which means that relationships with colleagues and top management representatives are the basic elements that form the job satisfaction level of faculty members.

Detailed investigation of basic job characteristics reflected that the following three characteristics are important for the research participants (Table 1).

Table 1. Importance of job characteristics

Basic job characteristics	% (of participants)
Open access to facilities and resources	22.4%
High salary	23.5%
Appropriate work conditions	19.7%

According to the research participants, there are some specific features, which can characterize the relationships with University’s top management representatives. First, 25% of faculty members reported the lack of feedback. Secondly, 31% of participants accentuated the lack of necessary information. Thirdly, 39% mentioned the existing issue of non-used reserves of the organization, and finally 31% of respondents identified some issues in the relationships with the heads of departments.

Research findings reflected the existing situation when faculty members do not have a clear vision of the main goals and strategic developmental direction of the University. Only 13% of research participants were able to identify some (not more than 3) strategic goals of the University, whereas other were confused to provide an answer. Moreover, some participants reported on the miscommunication issues among administration and faculty members, as well as among structural divisions of the University. Consequently, these difficulties lead to the decrease of the job satisfaction level and overall productivity of faculty members.

The findings reflected the high level of loyalty to the University, the degree of trust and the willingness to continue the work at the University (see: Diagram 3). Correlational analysis showed that this indicator has relations to the age

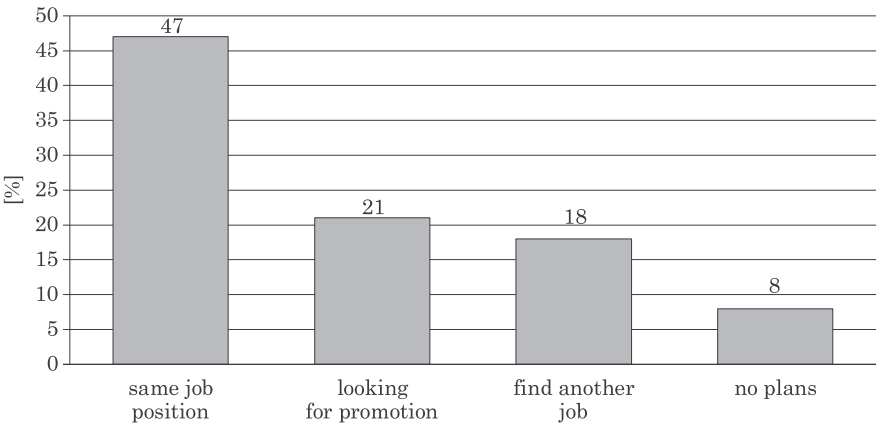


Diagram 3. Career plans of faculty members of a National University



of participant. Thus, more senior faculty members are more loyal to their current work place and plant to work on the “same job position”. From the perspective of those participants, the University is more than just a workplace but almost the “second home”.

Loyalty of staff is the characteristic that reflects their commitment to the organization. It is more likely that loyal staff has higher job satisfaction level and more effective in their work. It is also less likely that those people will provoke organized protests or cause impediments in the University’s operation process.

Formal indicators of the loyalty level is the work experience in this particular organization, staff turnover, and professional effectiveness of staff. Considering the average work experience in the University – about 10 years, and staff turnover percent less than 12%, we can draw a conclusion about the relatively high level of personnel loyalty.

Research findings concerning their job promotion ambitious reflected that about 70% of participants preferred not to answer, 10% of participants preferred to stay on the same job position, another 20% identified their career promotion ambitious as following: leading specialist, lecturer, the head of the department, vice-rector.

The satisfaction with the possible career development directions showed that 40% of participants satisfied with the opportunities in this particular University, whereas other participants found it difficult to answer (30%) or unsatisfied with the possibilities for career promotion (30%) – see: Diagram 4.

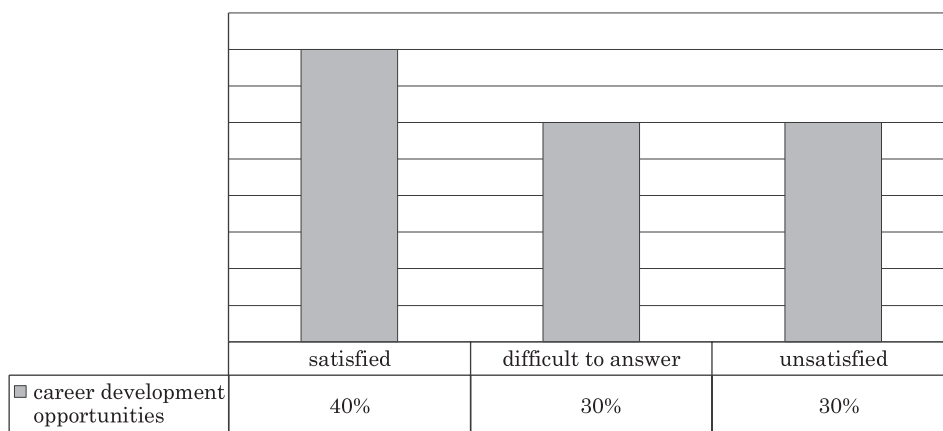


Diagram 4. Career development opportunities

Another aspect that can influence the psychological component of job satisfaction is the faculty members’ burden of workload. Diagram 5 shows that 43.72% of research participants think that they are overloaded with the work, whereas other 48.05% percent consider the appropriate workload that they carry out

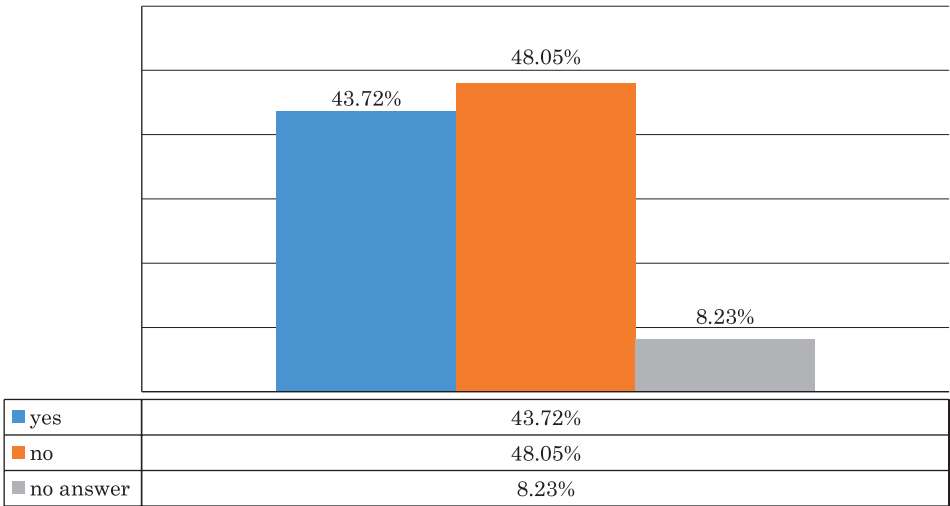


Diagram 5. Workload burden

on the daily basis. This kind of burden lead to the extra-hours work, unsatisfaction with the work schedule and overall have a negative effect on the psychological climate of the organization.

Job satisfaction level closely connects with the concept of labor values and stricture of work motivation. Labor values can be divided on basic factors (which decrease level of job unsatisfaction but do not motivate employees) and substantial factors (motivators) which can influence on faculty members’ productivity and efficiency and increase level of job satisfaction. These factors determined by the content

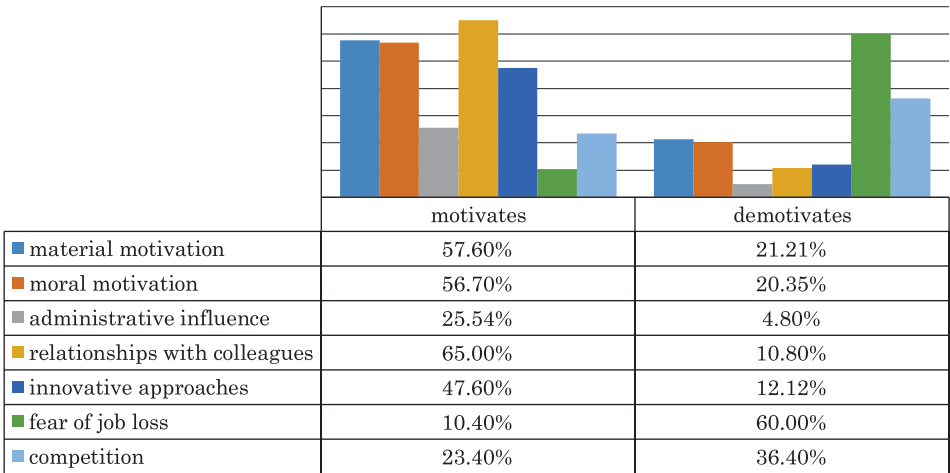


Diagram 6. Factors influencing on the motivation

of work, independence and responsibility, approval by colleagues, and work outcomes. Therefore, it is evident that there is an existing correlation of motivation and labor values, influence of values structure on the work motivation (see: Diagram 6).

Interestingly, it is evident that 65% of respondents identified “relationships with colleagues” as one of the main factors influencing on their motivation, which might mean that faculty members of National University have friendly internal environment, which motivates them to more productive and efficient performance. Meanwhile, fear of job loss is the strongest demotivating factor that influence on the 60% of participants.

In addition, it is evident that material motivation (57.60%), as well as moral motivation (56.70%) are among the top factors that positively influence on the motivation of faculty members. In this context, we can conclude that creating appropriate and friendly environment, as well as the adequate salary system one of the main components of high job satisfaction level.

### **3. Conclusion**

Considering the importance of national universities in the system of higher education of the Republic Kazakhstan, this research revealed the current job satisfaction level and psychological aspects of motivation of faculty members of one National University in Kazakhstan. The research shows the relatively positive situation with the job satisfaction level and psychological aspects of motivation among faculty members. However, the existing issues in the National University can lead to the negative consequences. The major issues concerning the job satisfaction level are low salaries, inappropriate work schedule and difficulties in career development. In order to increase the level of job satisfaction, it is vital to provide a better-developed payment scheme, which includes encouragement systems, such as holiday and special occasion bonuses, extra-hours payments, etc. In terms of work schedule, there is a need to provide the National University with necessary number of the workers who are able effectively carry out the demanded functions and consequently faculty members will have standardized work schedule, as the responsibilities will be distributed among all university staff. In the context of the National University's strategy of active development, based on the principles of innovation, independence and self-sufficiency, there is a need to pay precise attention to the effective human resource management. Concerning the career development opportunities within the National University, there is a need in clearly outlined plan for the professional growth of faculty members. Plan for the professional growth (PPG) will consist of certain indicators and achievements that can lead to the career promotion of faculty members. This transparent way of career development

can positively affect the job satisfaction level and motivation for better and more productive work. Additional advanced trainings and external educational opportunities should be also in the context of career development plan for the faculty members. At the present stage of development, faculty members have strong links with the university and highly value the non-material motivational factors, such as relationships with colleagues and favorable internal climate. For better functioning of the higher education institution, it is vital to acknowledge the loyalty of faculty members, through the building a constructive dialog and granting more freedom in decision making and independence in daily activities. The relationships based on the principles of collegiality can bring positive changes for the job satisfaction level and motivation of faculty members and can positively affect the productivity of activities and general effectiveness of higher education institution.

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