Impact of Innovative Approaches of University Leadership on Administrative and Academic Staff Motivation

Mariam Kuchava, International Black Sea University, Georgia
Irina Bakhtadze, International Black Sea University, Georgia

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Abstract
There is an increasing recognition that higher education institutions require highly motivated academic and administrative staff which is affected by efficient university leadership and, in its term, creates the basis for students' high performance and excellent outcomes. The most essential strategy in reaching the success of the university is motivating the staff and encouraging them to put more effort in teaching and scientific work in order to enhance individual and organizational performance. For this reason, the role of university leadership is crucially important to encourage the staff and support them to develop professionally. The problem of motivation is closely related to innovative approaches applied by leadership which ultimately determines university high performance. Considering some specificities of university personnel, and of academic staff in particular, the need for selecting different forms of motivation is essential and is a prerequisite for the university success in general. The present research which was conducted in Georgia and Poland, in state and private universities, applied quantitative and qualitative approaches, specifically survey and interview methods. The analysis of the study is based on the results of the responses obtained from two hundred eighty-eight research participants which helps to understand how changes in motivational model based on leadership style and innovative approach could enhance academic and administrative staff motivation in Georgian and Polish universities, as well as demonstrate the positive correlation between the highly motivated staff and university leadership.

Keywords: University Leadership, Innovative Approaches, Academic and Administrative Staff Motivation

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Introduction

The article studies the role of the university leadership in motivation and the effective performance of academic and administrative staff. The study has been inspired by some quick, informal preliminary surveys of university lecturers, both state and private, who admitted that they experience a lack of adequate support and encouragement for innovation, professional growth, and research development. This has been the main inspiration for studying innovative approaches to academic and administrative staff motivation in Georgian and Polish universities. Internalization of the Georgian higher education system has been promoted for the past two decades as an effort to align it with Western higher education. The Government of Georgia has applied to European Union for candidacy of EU membership, therefore the state institutions take all necessary steps to accelerate Georgia's accession to the Union.

Raising the quality of teaching and learning at higher education institutions is one of the goals among the others to be attained by our country to align with EU higher education standards. Besides, According to the 2018 Bologna Process Implementation Report, decisions on recognizing foreign qualifications for academic purposes are the responsibility of higher education institutions. In addition to the multiple benefits associated with student mobility, such as European integration and the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and intellectual capital, the free movement of students to study and work within Europe is a founding principle and long-term objective of the Georgian Higher Education Policy. The university leadership plays an instrumental role in this process.

Motivation and Its Importance, Innovative Approaches

Employees' motivation requires cooperation of leaders, managers and employees. Building organizational commitment and trust, providing good working conditions by considering employees' needs and promoting good social relations will generate effective leadership process. Motivated staff is more productive, happy and highly committed to their job which is essential for the university success and promotion. Therefore, adopting a suitable leadership style focused on motivating academic and administrative staff according to their needs is an attractive option. A number of experts, such as Vroom (1964); Kotter (1999), and Schein (2004) agree that developing a strong organizational culture is a key to success, which is related to performance and leadership. It also depends on leaders' ability, perception, behavior and collective values which are widely shared. Leadership competencies include the ability to motivate academic and administrative staff. Higher education leaders have to reveal academic and administrative staff needs and requirements and target innovative approaches. Academic and administrative staff need personal freedom, more involvement in decision making processes, the ways to introduce their opinions and approaches about any issue related to their responsibilities. The university leadership should have adequate awareness and information for preparing and developing appropriate atmosphere amongst academic and administrative staff and understand their work and needs. They should encourage the whole staff to do to work efficiently, give them a chance for promotion and advance individual approaches. When top management considers these recommendations and increases employees' motivation levels, it directly reflects on their productivity and, therefore, on success of HEI. Low levels of motivation and job satisfaction at higher education institutions lead to employees' demotivation among academic and administrative staff. The principal role of university is to distinguish the requirements of academic and administrative staff based on work condition and to meet them according to organization's policies.

The role of university leadership in motivation of administrative and academic staff has not been researched in the light of the 21st c. challenges in higher education on the examples of Georgia and Poland. Therefore, the problem of motivation is closely related with innovative approaches to leadership which ultimately determine university high performance. Furthermore, the research aims at studying the relationship between the highly motivated academic and administrative staff and efficiency of university leadership, referring to its effective strategies in order to meet their needs and expectations. The answers are likely to provide some insight into leadership styles involving human resource management that might work more successfully for Georgian and Polish universities to promote good morale, academic and administrative staff motivation and job satisfaction, which is essential for university success.

In order to explore the relationships between the university leadership and staff motivation, the following hypothesis was formulated: If university leadership incorporates innovative, well-organized approaches to motivate administrative and academic staff considering their necessities and aspirations, the overall performance and effectiveness of staff and lecturers will significantly increase. The article is based on a number of motivation theories which guide leaders to choose appropriate ways of refining workplace environment and increase the quality of service, constantly look for ways to refine the daily practice of the employee performance which is directly related to their motivation.

The leaders of the institution shall consider a range of incentives and design their own unique systems of incentives that will fit the needs of employees within the workplace; they can use two main types of incentives: financial and non-financial. Financial incentives are directly related to cash, including pay increases or bonuses, while non-financial or moral benefits are ways to save the budget, hence they mainly deal with recognition, advancement and basic psychological needs of the employees. Staff motivation is a major tool for keeping and enhancing academic and administrative staff professional knowledge, also teaching and research skills to achieve high performance.

Leadership Theories and Styles in Education

There are theoretical underpinnings for the field of educational leadership and management, assessing different leadership models, and discussing the evidence of their relative effectiveness in a HEI. Leadership as a concept includes various branches that in their turn represent numerous leadership theories. Both successful and unsuccessful leaders are characterized by certain forms of behavior. The most popular behavioral theory still remains the typology of individual leadership styles, developed in the thirties by a German psychologist Kurt Lewin (Billig, 2014)(Billig, 2014). It highlights three leadership styles: authoritarian; democratic; neutral. Many parameters distinguish these styles from each other: the nature of decision-making, the degree of delegation of authority, the method of control, the choice of sanctions, etc.The main difference between them are, however, their preferred management methods.

This section aims to determine the effectiveness of different leadership approaches and identify leadership behaviors which provoke certain kinds of actions and decision-making. A deep overview of the leadership theories provides a great chance to understand the nature of leader behavior in different situations.Theory of contingency focuses on particular variables which characterize environment and try to specify which leadership style should be applied in a given situation. The relationship between the situation and the leader who is in charge of

the condition predetermines how well the leader and the followers will manage the emerging task. The contingency theory is often called a leader-match theory. The leader can be effective provided that the gap between the skills and the particular environment requirements are close (Fiedler, 1976). The situational leadership is quite rigid for a leadership style as there has to be a match between the situation and the leader. As long as leaders realize the importance of the Contingency theory, they create positive ambience at the workplace. In terms of education, the Contingency theory occupies an important niche as it is often seen as a way for leaders, managers and various organizations to assimilate to ambiguity by designing a strategic plan with alternative scenarios. There is a belief that the leader copes with the changing circumstances only with the help of experience gained in similar situations. Situational leadership theory may sound as the most appropriate approach to use it in any working environment. It is not one-sided, neither it sticks to one and the same set of rules. On the contrary, it lets the leader choose upon the decision making in order to provide the best possible outcome. This leadership theory implies taking actions according to the situation in which there cannot be a single model for problem-solving. There are several approaches to Situational leadership, differing in the choice of criteria that determine the management situation. For example, Fiedler (1967) proposed an approach in which the most important situational factors are the relationships between the leader and the followers, the structure of the work clarity regarding what and how to do and the imperious position of the leader in the organization. The theory has become most popular in recent years with P. Hersey and C. Blachard as the authors, as their work, Situational Leadership II, is based on the belief that people can and want to develop, and that there is no single best management style to encourage this development. Leadership style must adapt to the specific situation.

On the other hand, Transformational leaders help their followers develop and grow into leaders themselves by responding to what the followers need and also empowering them as they achieve their own and the organization's goals and objectives. Leaders in higher education must assess the outcome of the shared vision and see if it has successfully met student and/or staff needs or whether challenges remain. Transformational leadership brings teams together to co-construct, learn and reflect on visions and goals. This kind of collaboration often supports positive change and broadens effectiveness of professional leadership practices. When working in education, teams of professionals bring personal commitment and passions toward planning and improving their collegiate community. Bleedorn (2003) explains that "transforming leadership creates a dynamic connection to the ideas of other enlightened, systematic thinkers and observers". University administrators act as transformational leaders by integrating a shared vision of change, empowering voices in a collaborative community and, reflecting on vision value (ibid).

In case university leaders who wish to motivate academic and administrative staff adopt some features of authentic leadership behavior and combine it with the characteristics of transformational leadership, their level of effectiveness will increase (Ilies et al., 2005). Subsequently, this creative approach of the leaders attitude toward their goals has a positive impact on employees' intrinsic motivation. Moreover, such leaders encourage the followers' self-determination.

To summarize leadership is a type of managerial interaction that is based on a combination of various sources of power that is more effective for a given situation and is aimed at encouraging people to achieve common goals. Leaders also know how to balance the individual aspirations of team members with a focus on creating synergies, which is a common result that far exceeds the sum of team members' individual contributions.

Employee effectiveness as can be seen fully depends of successful leadership and management and therefore, leadership motivation. Higher education leaders have to examine how they can lead their organizations better and figure out what effective leadership approaches would best fit their institution (Black, 2015), so, that it is possible to achieve organizational goal productivity and the overall quality of work life (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). As the university is an academic institution, professionals such as university employees need a different form of leadership (Bryman, 2007; Eacott, 2011; Lumby, 2012).Therefore, not just one particular type of leadership could be considered appropriate but a combination of a few approaches for example, transformational and authentic leadership, which, according to a situation and circumstances could be found most effective to motivate university staff in a given place, time and situation.

Research Methodology and Methods

The design of the present study is based on the mixed-methods approach. This is intentional, as both quantitative and qualitative approaches provide the data which permit to make an in-depth analysis and reveal the effect of university leadership on administrative and academic staff motivation in a wider perspective. Using mixed methods in the research gives credibility to the study and strengthens its results (Alghazo & Anazi, 2016).

Observing secondary data (publications, scholarly articles, dissertations or any other sources relevant to the particular issue) provided the researcher with general understanding of the problem selected to be investigated. The research intends to explore the phenomena which have not been investigated in the Georgian or Polish contexts and set correlation between university leadership approaches and academic and administrative staff motivation at universities.

The study aimed to identify university leadership approach and styles at Georgian and Polish HEIs, customizing reality where this leadership occurs and how it makes an influence on administrative and academic staff motivation. In this case, the researcher used inductive reasoning in order to test the reality provided by the university leadership and 'crosscheck' the provided data by administrative and academic staff. The goal of the quantitative research methodology was to identify whether the university top managers' current strategy and leadership styles were appropriate to motivate administrative and academic staff, or not.

The surveys and interviews are one of the primary data or first-hand collected information gathering instruments for this study. The target audience was the administrative, academic, invited staff and university top managers from Georgian and Polish Universities. The primary data were collected through an online questionnaire and interviews to achieve the specific objectives from various universities in Georgia and Poland. The qualitative data, was gathered for deeper explanations. This allows the researcher to analyze data using different statistical methods.

Following the research questions, two different sets of survey questions as a primary quantitative research tool have been developed. One for the leadership, and the other for the administrative and academic staff of the HEIs. A survey, sent to the administrative and academic staff in order to understand how they are motivated and how they evaluate the effectiveness of cooperation between the university leadership and employees, collected the data reflecting the level of satisfaction in regards to the methods of motivation. Almost the same questions (with some modifications) were sent to university top managers to learn

their position as well as the measures taken by them to achieve meaningful motivation of the employees. Ultimately the responses obtained from the two sets of survey questions have been used for the comparison of responses and allowed the researcher to analyze data using different statistical methods. The online questionnaire was distributed via email among the university administrative and academic staff in Georgia and Poland. The questionnaire was first piloted with education experts and several employees within the university.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the top managers of the HEIs in Georgia and Poland in order to gain a clear understanding of their attitude toward administrative and academic staff motivation. The semi-structured interview consisted of non-standardized questions, though the researcher had a set of topics and questions to be asked. It allowed the researcher to maintain the focus and the structure of the interview while asking for further details and clarifications where necessary.

The representatives from Georgian and Polish HEIs were categorized into two groups: 1. University top managers; 2. Academic and administrative staff. The total number of the respondents was two hundred and eighty-eight. (n= 288) two hundred twenty-four (n=224) among academic and administrative staff members and sixty-four (n=64) top managers of the targeted HEIs). Two types of questionnaires were sent to the respondents. One for administrative and academic staff (20 Questions: 15 close-ended and 5 open-ended), and another for university top managers (11 close-ended, 1 open-ended and 5 interview questions). Quantitative questionnaire data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. (SPSS Version 23).

As the researcher intended to interview university top managers, the selection of institutions depended on the researcher's possibility to reach out the respondents. The researcher used self-designed, open-ended questions, giving respondents the opportunity to reply freely in their own words. Five interview questions (n=5) were applied for the university leadership.

The open-ended questions were determined as the best chance to identify valuable and unexpected responses from the respondents. Participation was voluntary and anonymity and confidentiality were taken into account. Open-ended questions and interviews were analyzed through comparative content analysis using NVivo 12 and emerging themes and patterns were collected according to the frequency of words and phrases. The top managers answers were 'cross checked' with the academic andadministrative staff. The interviews were conducted in Georgian and English. According to their permission, all the interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The recordings were deleted as soon as the data were analyzed.

Research Results

The study aimed at demonstrating the significance of a broadly constructivist view on enhancing motivation among university employees. The psychological aspects of the motivation among teachers and lecturers have been identified as well, which is largely connected with the respect and recognition of achievements. This research argues that it is both possible and desirable to combine these two insights. Despite the fact that the survey was mainly focused on collecting quantitative data, there is considerable value, perhaps, in the personal verbal evaluation to be gained from exploring 'everyday' understandings of rather multifaceted and complicated problem of motivation. Epistemologically, qualitative

data of this sort poses potential to significantly broaden our knowledge of the role of motivation.

So far, too little effort has been spent on listening to the stories that university academic and administrative staff have to tell about how university motivational policy and strategy is understood and experienced in the context of everyday life. This gap has been partially addressed in the present study focusing on the everyday understanding of motivation among university staff.

The university top managers and leaders outlined the following important factors in the process of staff motivation, among which the priority was given to "respect and recognition, together with just and fair attitude including equal reimbursement". This view on motivation is explicitly relational, inasmuch as interaction with others constitutes a prerequisite for the achievement of the desired result. It is also understandable that expression of *respect and recognition from management* is based on high demand of the university staff, of those who undertake the most important function in the country – raising and educating the youth. The next category constructed based on the majority's view is personal support which embraces: "advancement, guaranteed salary and good working condition, and support in solving academic and administration problems*"*. Personal support and understanding may emerge in many ways, and it plays an important role in good operational working of the organization. Consequently, it has always been fully appreciated by employees.

The following also demands a particular interest because it is closely connected with the proper functioning of the higher education institution, which includes: meaningful communication with the staff, involving persons working in academic and administrative positions in decision making, and support in solving academic and administrative problems which motivate a person raising their self-esteem and maintaining loyalty to the university.

Recognition of achievements and financial support has been at one of the leading positions in both: close-ended and open-ended questions. Almost all respondents verbally expressed the need for "acknowledgement and appreciation" of the administrative and academic staff members, while the latter are the assets of the university, the intellectuals creating an image and setting up much needed relations with the public, due recognition of their role and the tasks fulfilled – all serving one of the most important directions in the range of motivation.

But the ways of recognition also vary, it involves verbal praise on the one hand, and praise plus financial support, on the other. At the same time, it suggests personal promotion and a set of responsibilities allowing freedom in making decisions individually. Mutual respect, trust and loyalty aggregating between the management and employees is the result of such attitudes on the part of administration.

As it was expected, incentives*,* as one of the most powerful means of motivation have been mentioned by top managers, but, as it is associated with additional financial expenses, this aspect has been less accentuated than the other ones, e.g. showing respect. However, it has been mentioned that academic staff's scientific activities, such as publications, participation in international conferences and seminars, which also sustains their professional development, should be financed by university. This is an issue of mutual interest and creates an organization culture based on morality, shared understanding about university advancement, and as the researcher argues, it is one of the findings of the present research.

Conclusion

The research achieved all the posed goals and objectives, answered all research questions, proved the hypothesis which is reflected in the corresponding results. This alignment is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Alignment of goals, objectives, RQ, Hypotheses, & Results

Alignment of goals, objectives, RQ, Hypotheses, & Results				
Goals	**Objectives**	**Research Questions**	**Hypotheses**	**Results**
The goal of the research is to investigate the role of the university leadership in motivating academic and administrative staff in Georgia and Poland.	To identify the factors influencing academic and administrative staff motivation which are based on university top management's current strategy and leadership styles.	**RQ 1**: What is the role of university leadership in raising employees' motivation in the case of Georgian and Polish universities? **RQ 2**: What are the factors affecting staff motivation?	**H1:** If university leadership incorporates well-organized approaches to motivate administrative and academic staff considering their necessities and aspirations, the overall performance and contribution of employees and lecturers will significantly increase.	87% Georgian top managers positively assess (mean 5.56 out of 7), 90.6% Polish top managers positively assess (mean 5.62 out of 7)
The research aims at studying the correlation between the highly motivated academic and administrative staff and efficiency of university leadership, referring to its effective strategies in order to meet their needs and expectations.	To study the particular needs and expectations of the recipients in Georgia and Poland based on quantitative and qualitative approaches. In addition, the focus is made on the effectiveness of staff motivation resulting in university high performance.	**RQ3**: What are the expectations of academic and administrative staff from university leadership in terms of motivation? **RQ4:** What strategies can be developed by the university leadership to improve staff motivation and job satisfaction?		Salary (67% Polish and 64% Georgian top managers)

Source: Developed by the researcher.

Critical review of motivation theories and comparison of those to the results of primary data, give an interesting picture. Based on our observation, due to the fact that modern universities are induced to meet lower level motivational factors which should be confirmed during university authorization and accreditation stages carried out by state institutions, only about 30% of administrative staff chose "improvement of working conditions" in a multiple-choice question.

If the employees at the university feel that there is a lack of appreciation and incentive awards for work done, inequity may exist. For instance, employees who feel their work is not being appreciated, may work less, or undervalue the work of other employees.

The two highest motivational factors in Herzberg's Two-factor Theory has been proved by the research data, e.g. the highest ranked motivator, recognition, proved to be a major motivation factor among academic staff. The third ranked motivator, salary increase, which is a hygiene factor, also appeared to be one of the strongest motivations, but not a decisive one. Paying Georgian and Polish university academic and administrative staff lower wages 'hygiene factor', rather than what they believe to be unfair may lead to job dissatisfaction. Conversely, employees will be motivated when their work is recognized, but will not necessarily be motivated only by high payment.

The collected data showed that the majority of employees working at the private universities are more satisfied than at the state universities with the salary they draw.

As the study results showed, involvement in decision making for Georgian and Polish university staff is equally crucial; the employees of the universities of both countries are involved in decision making processes which is the source of satisfaction, though private university employees are more involved than of those state ones.

Job enrichment can be used to make work more interesting and increase payment by adding higher-level responsibilities to a job and providing monetary compensation to employees for accepting this responsibility. Based on the data collected from the survey, job enrichment should be an effective way to motivate employees of Georgian and Polish universities, as they expressed the readiness and willingness towards taking additional responsibility, additional power and freedom of decision making.

The highest percentage (of respondents in Georgian Private universities) recommended the expression of more recognition and appreciation towards academic and administrative staff. The quality of staff involvement in decision making should be improved. 45% of the respondents recommended that the level of equality should be balanced at the universities and the quality of improving staff motivation strategy should be improved at Georgian universities. The other recommendations stated by the employees were: increase of salaries, more clear definitions of job responsibilities and mission/goal of organization, employee development policies, encouragement of social/cultural activities, professional trainings and so on.

The level of trust, respect and high expectation from management and colleagues has been one of the most commonly identified motivating factors by academic staff.

Career advancement and promotion at the universities was very positive and encouraging, as over the years consistent and hardworking employees have risen through the ranks to their current positions. Interpersonal relationship among management and staff was considered excellent.

As the quantitative and qualitative research showed, most of the participants are interested in professional development and constantly try to have academic freedom, incentives, recognition, appreciation, more involvement in decision-making process and material or intangible support. It seems that top managers have a good theoretical knowledge concerning which motivational factors are more important. However, as it is evident from the employees' responses, those means of motivation mentioned by the university leaders are not fully utilized by them.

Georgian and Polish private and state university employees must be willing to let managers know what motivates them, and managers must be willing to design reward systems that motivate employees.

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