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## **MOTIVATION OF LECTURERS AT STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA**

### **A CASE STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYAWARDENEPURA, SRI LANKA**

W.N. Sellahewa<sup>1</sup> and T.D. Samarasinghe<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Uva Wellassa University, Sri Lanka*, <sup>2</sup>*Sabaragamuwa University, Sri Lanka*

Emails: <sup>1</sup>[researchassistwns@gmail.com](mailto:researchassistwns@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[researchassisttds@gmail.com](mailto:researchassisttds@gmail.com)

#### **ABSTRACT**

*There are number of researches have been conducted related to motivation in different countries with reference to various professions. Here, the researcher was interested to conduct this study with reference to the motivation of lecturers at state universities in Sri Lanka. By conducting this research, it will be able to identify the factors affecting to motivation of the academics and it will be beneficial for increasing the motivation on career of academics. In this study both male and female academics has considered. Motivated staff will contribute more to the university. Then it is expected that, with the recommendations that are expected to be provided based on the findings of this study, would be more beneficial for improving their performance and productivity. The current study has been conducted as a case study with reference to the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJP) Sri Lanka. Study population of this study is all the academics in USJP. The size of the sample was 20 and the sample has been selected randomly. The sample represented four focus groups. Each focus group consists five academic members. By using In-depth focus group discussions, primary data were collected. Duration of each discussion was 30 minutes to 45 minutes for each focus group. The questions asked at the focus group discussions followed a semi-structured questionnaire. Secondary data were collected using journals, documents and records of internet and previous researches. Gathered data has been analyzed qualitatively using content analysis technique. According to this study, the factors drive academic members at University of Sri Jayewardenepura towards the motivation were identified as remuneration, freedom, advancements and recognition.*

**Key Words:** academics, advancement, motivation, performance, productivity

## **1. Introduction**

“Motivation refers to the process by which a person’s efforts energized, directed and sustained toward attaining a goal” (Robbins and Coulter, 2012) Paris and Turner, 1994; Hartnett, 2016 has recognized motivation as the engine of learning. Alkis and Thamisel (2018) emphasized that academic motivation as one of the most important predictors in academic success and has a huge influence on student learning and behavior. It is widely believed that a worker who is well motivated with his or her job is likely to perform his or her duties very efficiently. The duties of academic staff are quite enormous. Attitude of academic staff is affected by workforce conditions such as a positive and safe work environment, promotion, career progression, salary, team work, and the job itself. Also, when university authorities make decisions and behave as if academic staff opinions are not needed the academic staff would feel slighted and demoralized. It may lead to negative consequences such as low productivity, intentional absenteeism, brain drain, apathy and low job performance. It is sad to note that because they lack job satisfaction, academic staffs leave the universities for the industrial and oil sectors of the economy. For these reasons, academic staff should be made to experience high levels of motivation. Therefore, the problem of this study is: What are the factors affecting motivation of academic staff of state universities in Sri Lanka. According to the literature review, the researcher identified that motivation as a very common theme for researches. There are number of researches have been conducted related to motivation in different countries. Here, the researcher was interested to conduct this study with reference to the motivation of academics at universities in Sri Lanka. By conducting this research, it will be able to identify the factors affecting to motivation of the academics and it will be beneficial for increasing the motivation on career of academics. Motivated staff will contribute more to the university. Then it is expected that, with the recommendations that are expected to provided based on the findings of this study, would be more beneficial for improving their performance and productivity of academics of selected faculties at University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Definition of Motivation**

“Motivation refers to the process by which a person’s efforts energized, directed and sustained toward attaining a goal” (Robbins and Coulter, 2012) Paris and Turner, 1994; Hartnett, 2016 has recognized motivation as the engine of learning. According to Schunk and Usher (2012) motivation can influence what students learn, the way they learn and the time they select to learn. Alkis and Thamisel (2018) emphasized that academic motivation as one of the most important predictors in academic success and has a huge influence on student learning and behavior.

### **2.2. Determinants of Motivation**

Many theories have recognized various factors affecting on motivation level of students in the learning process. Among those factors Extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors, Self-efficacy, personality factors, nature of interactions, goal orientation can be recognized as critical factors that determine the motivation. (Bandura, 1986; Kaplan and Mehr, 2006; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Offir, Bezalel & Barth, 2007).

### **2.3. Theories related to Motivation**

#### **Social cognitive theory**

Bandura (1986), highlighted that there is a reciprocal interactive relationship among personal factors, behaviour and environmental influence. In this study self-efficacy, the belief of a person that he or she is capable enough to reach expected goal has recognized as one of the most important factors which makes a person motivated. Studies shows self-efficacy as strong determinant of student motivation in engaging task choices, effort, persistence and achievement (Shunk et al, 2014; Hartnett, 2016). Further, literature reveals that in some cases self-efficacy might change based on the challenging nature of learning environment (Moos and Maroquin, 2010).

#### **Goal orientation theory**

Goal orientation theory has recognized as an emerging theory of measuring student motivation in educational field by many researchers (Kaplan, Maehr, 2006). The theory highlights the learner's reasons for become motivated to achievement of a certain task. Most widely studied two orientations of the theory would be the 'mastery' and 'performance' goals (Schunk, et al., 2014). Studies revealed that students who are performance oriented are more likely to contribute to assessed activities in online context. (Bures, Abrami, & Amundsen, 2000).

#### **Self-Determination Theory**

Explains that people are motivated based on intrinsic motivational factors and extrinsic motivational factors. And extrinsic motivation can have harmful effects on beneficial nature of intrinsic motivation. Further, it emphasizes that extrinsic rewards might reduce intrinsic interest towards a task.

Intrinsic motivation refers to people engage in something because it is inherently interesting and extrinsic motivation recognizes as motivating to attain separable outcomes in terms of external regulation, introjection, identification and integration and it goes beyond the goals inherent to the activity itself (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Studies found that students who are performing well in online context are motivated intrinsically than offline learning format (Hartnett, 2016). However, the exact reasons for extrinsic motivation and its effect on learning online is not much observed in studies.

### **2.4. Empirical findings on the factors affecting to motivate the academics**

Motivational factors are those aspects of the job that make academic staff want to perform the duties. They help to propel, stimulate, channel, direct, energize, arouse, sustain and influence the teachers' behavior towards striving for excellence. They also encourage academic staff and increase their persistence level in the teaching-learning process for the achievement of university educational goals and objectives. For academic staff to be committed to their job, university authorities, and the government should find ways to keep them in the profession by motivating them. Finally, we note that although a positive relationship exists between job satisfaction and job performance, it is moderated by the use of motivational factors and the nature of employees' attitude toward their job. This study therefore is poised to investigate the factors affecting job satisfaction and motivation of academic staff in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

A motivated academic staff is one who not only feels satisfied with his or her job but is empowered to strive for excellence and growth in instructional practice. When academic staffs are motivated, they become satisfied and more committed to their teaching job. It eventually leads to or contributes positively to the attainment of educational goals and objectives. The more satisfied academic staff are with their job the more productive they will be, and the healthier they will be physically, emotionally, socially and academically. This is only possible if the necessary motivational factors that enhance job performance and satisfaction are in place.

### **3. Methodology**

This research has been conducted as a descriptive type study. Study population of this study is all the academics at USJP. The size of the sample was 20 and the sample has been selected randomly. The randomly selected sample represented academic members of Faculty of Management studies and commerce (FMSC), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS), Faculty of Medicine (FM). The sample represented four focus groups. Each focus group consist five academic members. By using In-depth focus group discussions, primary data were collected. Duration of each focus group was 30 minutes to 45 minutes for each focus group. The questions asked at the focus group discussions followed a semi-structured questionnaire. 15 open-ended questions were there in the questionnaire developed through the literature survey. Secondary data were collected using journals, documents and records of internet and previous researches for supporting the idea generated through the current study. Gathered data has been analyzed qualitatively following the content analysis method.

### **4. Analysis and Discussion**

#### **4.1. Payments**

Here payments include basic salary, other financial benefits such as allowances and incentives. According to the data assembled, almost all of them discovered that they are received an adequate payment.

#### **4.2. Freedom**

In this study, freedom is the ability to accomplish the job without stress. According to the academics, teaching is a pleasurable thing. Specially, they are pleasure to work with young crowd. Further, arrival and departure also flexible. Academics are not like to close supervision at all the time. They think that they are educated enough to handle their works. According to the ideas they expressed, it was able to identified that, they have talents, capabilities and strength to do tasks though most of the senior academics have not yet recognized them.

#### **4.3. Advancements**

In this study, the term indicates academic progression open for academics. That means ability to conduct researches and their higher studies. Although the main things they should do in this career are teaching and researching, sometimes they have been neglected the researching part because of the other additional actions they are allocated to do. There is a tendency; the students who are obtaining best results find other corporate sector jobs rather than remaining at the university as a tutor. Therefore, there is a compulsion to observe the reasons why they tend to shift for corporate sector jobs. If

it creates more worth to the job, the academics will be much motivated and the excellent students who record the best academic performances will be remain at the university. According to the academics' view, there is not enough time for them to crease additional awareness with the substantial assignments. If they are provided enough room for conduct researches and read more, they will motivation more. This has to be done through assigning manageable workload for female academics.

#### **4.4. Recognition**

Recognition means the appreciation get for doing a better job. There were some respondents in the sample who have been selected this job because of the recognition with this job. The respondents in the sample were satisfied in the direction of the recognition they are received. Rewarding hard works will be satisfied academics and motivate them to expense more to do work. According to their ideas, the recompenses should not necessarily be in monitory terms. It can be done even from a word and it is not experienced any cost. Almost all the respondents in the sample were looking for recognition for the heavy work load they are undertaking. There is a lack of induction in this job when it compares to the other jobs. Specially, many organizations tend to give a proper induction when it recruits a new arrival, with the perseverance of enhancing the future performances. As such induction is not available in this job there is a possibility to happen faults from instructors. Further it affects damagingly to the perception of senior academics towards junior academics and it may also create relationship problems. According to the thoughts of the respondents in this study it was revealed that providing a proper induction will be decreased the above declared problems.

#### **5. Conclusion and Implications**

According to this study, the factors drive academic members at University of Sri Jayewardenepura towards the motivation were identified as payments, freedom, advancements and recognition. Future researches can be extended by increasing the sample size and testing the same research question with different organizational settings using different methodologies will be help to enhance the reliability of the current study as well. Further, the responsible authorities should take necessary actions for the purpose of initiatives to enhance the academic motivation in university system. Moreover, the same study can be conduct within private universities to investigate whether there is any difference among the factors caused to the motivation of private sector academics. There is a limitation of this study that as this study has been conducted as a case study there is a question of generalizing the findings. The researchers are welcome to examine the identified factors in this study in longitudinal study setting as well to add more value to the existing knowledge on the motivation of academics in university system.

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