

## MOTIVATIONAL TRAITS OF FACULTY MEMBERS IN CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT: CASE OF KAZAKHSTAN

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**Abstract:** The study aims to explore the motivational traits of local (Kazakhstani) faculty and foreign faculty members of 5 national universities in Kazakhstan. Considering polyethnicity and increased level of foreigners, Kazakhstan seems to be the perfect site to investigate the motivational drivers of representatives of different cultural groups who teach and undertake research in Kazakhstan. The research findings reveal the existing similarities and differences in main drivers which motivate and demotivate local and foreign faculty members. At the same time the vast majority of participants have a relatively high level of job satisfaction and motivation, despite the existence of factors that negatively influence on the job satisfaction level, such as inappropriate work schedule, salary issues, and relationships with administration.

**Keywords:** Kazakhstan, psychology, motivation, job satisfaction, faculty members, national university, cross-cultural psychology.

### INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a developing country located in the Central Asia can be characterized as polytechnic state. During the Soviet period, Kazakhstan was the destination for relocation of more than 30 ethnical groups, majority of them still live here and nowadays Kazakhstan accommodates more than 132 ethnicities, representing different cultural groups. Moreover, in accordance with the policy of internalization of higher education, universities attract solid amount of foreign faculty to teach and undertake research in Kazakhstan. In 2016 about 22 foreign representatives were appointed on top-management positions in 11 universities of Kazakhstan, till the end of 2017, there is a plan to invite 40 more faculty and administrative members from abroad to serve in national universities. 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

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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.

The motivation represents difficult process of stimulation of the person to a certain behavior and activity under the influence of intra personal and external factors. The motivation – result of multistage interaction of interior – first of all his requirements and incentives capable to satisfy these requirements and also a situation in which perception of an incentive is carried out and appears the activity directed to his receiving.

According to M. Meskon, M. Albert and F. motivation can be characterized as the process of stimulation for the activity or achievement. In their understanding the motivation represents the conscious choice by the person of this or that type of the behavior determined by complex influence external (incentives) and internal (motives) factors. In the course of production activity the motivation allows workers to satisfy the basic needs by performance of the labor duties.

Some domestic scientists understand the aspiration of the worker to satisfy requirements (to receive certain benefits) as motivation of work by means of labor activities. Others define motivation as the internal state of the person connected with his requirements which makes active, stimulates and directs his actions to achievement of a goal. Motives of work are in fact the reasons defining behavior of the person in work process. The motivation of the employee can be as the internal, depending on contents his requirements or roles, and external which is subdivided on administrative, economic and social. It turns out that the external motivation isn't connected with the content of a certain activity, but is caused by

circumstances, external in relation to object of management. The internal motivation is the motivation connected not with external circumstances, and with the content of activity.

Motivation is a process of impact on the person for the purpose of his motivation to certain actions, by awakening in him certain motives. Respectively, manifestation of motivation of the worker is direct need to perform work definitely.

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.

In this sense, in the conditions of cultural diversity in higher education institutions, the research of motivational traits and their differences or similarities might add the value to the greater research of cross-cultural specificities of motivation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

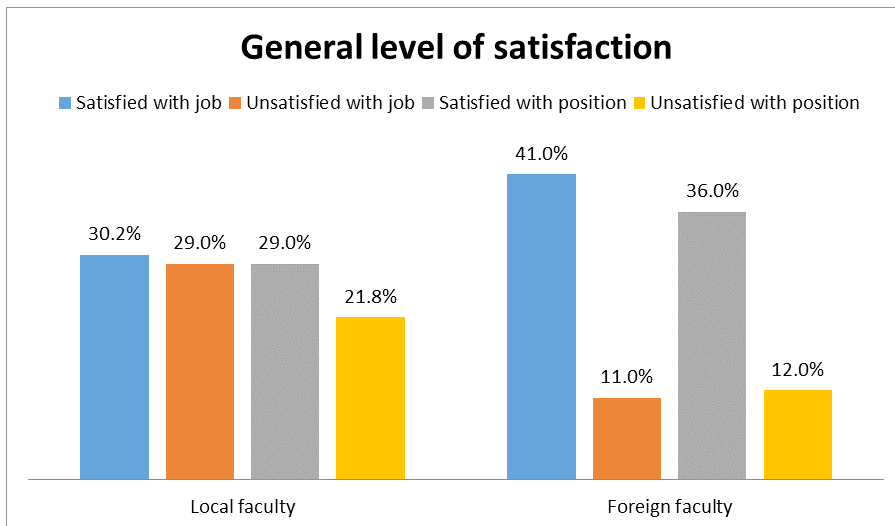
The data was collected from February till November 2016 within 5 national universities in Kazakhstan. The total number of participants equals to 232 faculty members, both local and foreign. The research applies structured survey as the main instrument of data collection. Survey was conducted on paper basis and consisted of 150 questions, most of them open-ended and rating scales. The survey was constructed in the way that every respondent might understand the questions and provide honest and detailed answer (Dillman, 2000). In addition, observations within the higher education institutions were used, in order to ensure comprehensive overview of the situation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to explore the peculiarities of motivational traits in cross-cultural context. The research evolves 232 faculty members from 5 national universities in Kazakhstan. 62% of them are local faculty members (N = 143) and 38% of them are foreign faculty teaching in Kazakhstan from 2 to 10 years (N = 89). The average age is 32, whereas the youngest participant was 25 years old and the oldest one – 65. 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.

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 and job position among local and foreign faculty. The analysis shows that foreign faculty seem to be more satisfied with current job (41% versus 30.2%) and show the low level of dissatisfaction with job (11%) and position (12%). On the other hand, results of local faculty seem to be evenly distributed, which means that almost half of local faculty members are not satisfied with their job and 1/3 of them unhappy with their current position. This imbalance reflects the existing problem of lack of satisfaction among local faculty and consequently risk of lack of motivation. At the same time, foreign faculty show positive results, however there is a risk of dissatisfaction increase in the future.



**Figure 1: Analysis of general level of satisfaction of local and expact faculty**

At the same time it is important to identify factors that influence on the low level of satisfaction of faculty members. According to the findings, there are five main factors that can influence on the satisfaction: payment (including salary, bonuses, etc), work organization (work schedule, workload), career development (promotions, trainings, placements), relationship with management (head of organization, dean, vice-president), relationship with colleagues (fellow faculty, administrative staff). The percentage split shows that the most influencing factor is payment (67%) and the least one is relationship with management (5.5%). These factors are combined results for two groups of local and foreign faculty, as the participants show the similar attitude in terms of this matter.



**Figure 2: Factors influencing on satisfaction of faculty members**

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, Соответствие значимой должности; 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: IMPORTANCE OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS

<i>Basic job characteristics</i>	<i>% (of participants)</i>
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.

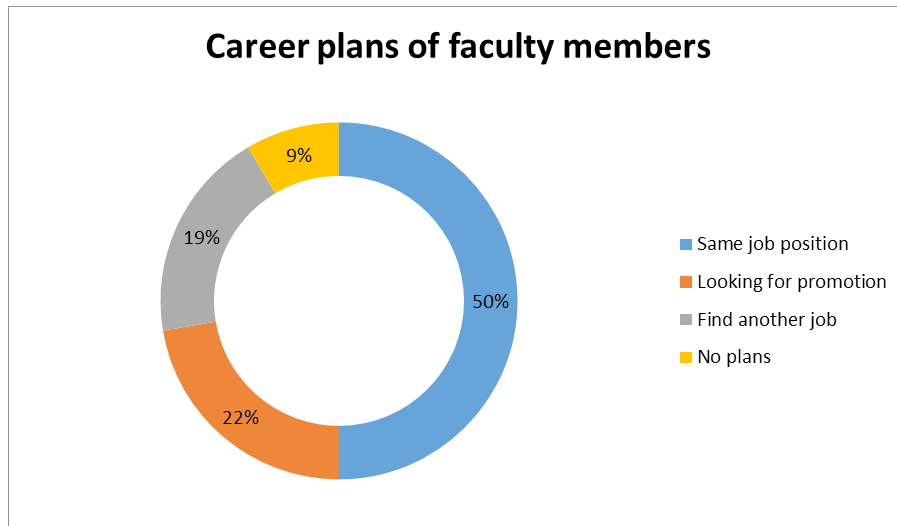


Figure 3: Career plans of faculty members of a National University

Career plans of faculty members, both local and foreign show that the vast majority of them plan to stay at the same job position. This might be the loyalty matter as well as the security question in the context of increased labour market uncertainty in Kazakhstan. Correlational analysis showed that this indicator has relations to the age 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".

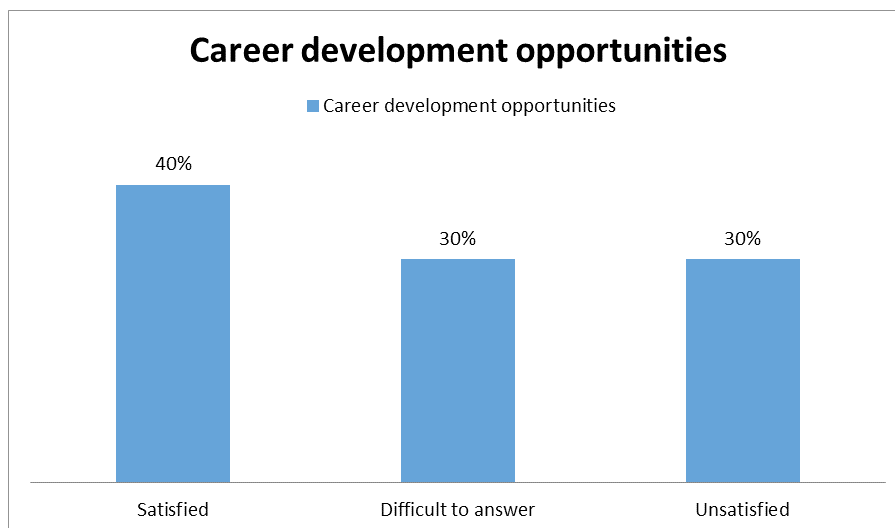
Loyalty of staff is the characteristic that reflects their commitment to the organization. It is more likely that loyal staff has higher job satisfaction level

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.

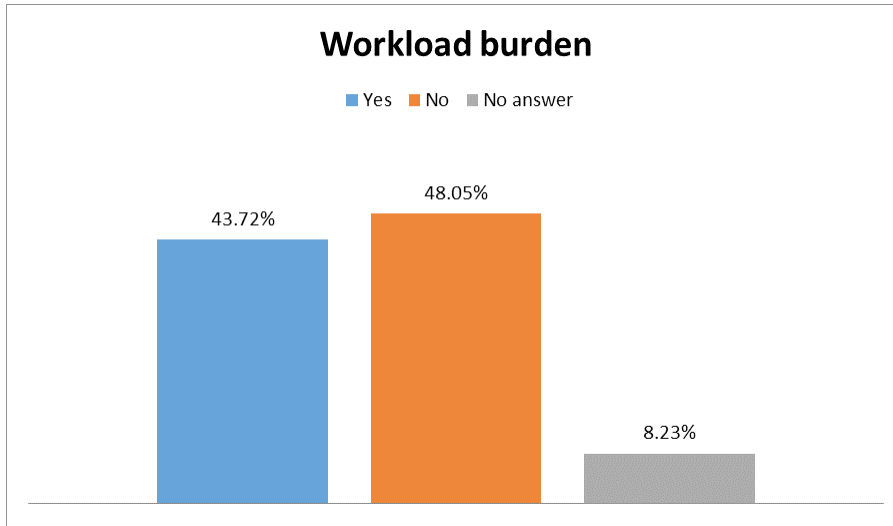
Research findings concerning their job promotion ambitious reflected that about 70% of participants preferred not to answer, 10% of participants preferred to stay on the same job position, another 20% identified their career promotion ambitious as following: leading specialist, lecturer, the head of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



**Figure 4: Career development opportunities**

Another aspect that can influence the motivation of faculty members is the work burden. 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 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.

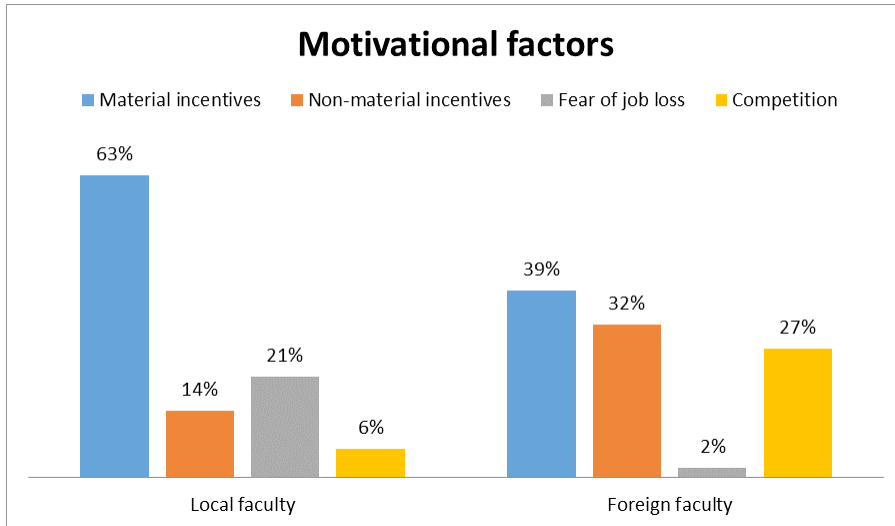


**Figure 5: Workload burden**

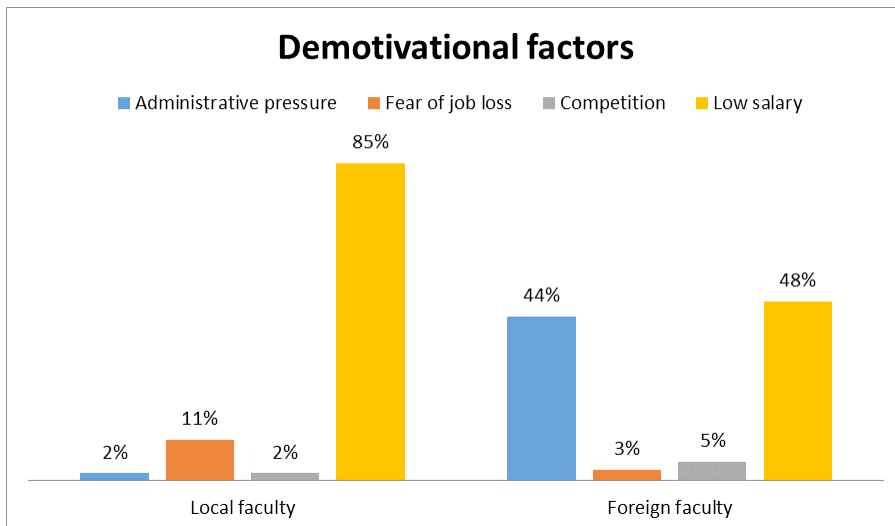
Job satisfaction level closely connects with the concept of labor values and structure of work motivation. Labor values can be divided on basic factors (which decrease level of job dissatisfaction but do not motivate employees) and substantial factors (motivators) which can influence on faculty members' productivity and efficiency and increase level of job satisfaction. These factors determined by the content 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. The motivational and demotivational factors are divided among local and foreign faculty members. This split will let us to see the difference in motivational drivers which seems to be unusual but expected outcome of the research. Among motivational factors there are four major categories including material incentives (salary, bonuses, extra-curricular payments), non-material incentives (opportunity to growth, recognition, self-improvement), fear of job loss and competition. According to local faculty material incentives and fear of job loss are the main motivational drivers (63% and 21% respectively), whereas among foreign faculty we can observe that material and non-material incentives are almost equally important (39% and 32% respectively). The interesting difference can be seen regarding job loss fear and competition. Comparing to local faculty, their foreign counterparts do not think that job loss fear can motivate them, whereas local faculty members do not seem to be competitive players.

At the same time we can see very controversial demotivational factors both among local and foreign faculty. There are four factors identified by participants,





**Figure 6: Motivational factors**



**Figure 7: Demotivational factors**

two of them are universal and can work in two ways as motivational driver and cause of stress. The vast majority of local faculty can be demotivated in case of low salary and other factors such as administrative pressure, fear of job loss and competition are minor and unimportant. From the point of view of foreign faculty, there are two main factors that equally affect on their motivation, which are administrative pressure (44%) and low salary (48%), fear of job loss and competition are also minor

and not really important factors. Administrative pressure which involves workload, work burden and relationships with authorities can be really high in some of the universities in Kazakhstan due to internal organizational culture and management peculiarities and expectedly this might distress foreign faculty members.

## CONCLUSION

In the conditions of internationalization of higher education and cultural diversification of faculty, this study shows the peculiarities of motivation of faculty in Kazakhstan. The research shows the relatively positive situation with the job satisfaction level and psychological aspects of motivation among local and foreign faculty members. It seems like local faculty are more material driven and still possess fear based behavior inherited from the Soviet period work approach, whereas foreign faculty value opportunities for development and healthy competition. However, the existing issues in the national universities 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. These factors can lead to the low level of motivation and decrease of productivity. The findings can lead us to the conclusion that in order to keep faculty members in good motivational shape it is vital to apply unique leverage for each group and probably for each cultural subgroup, based on the work related values. The polyethnicity of Kazakhstan and high number of foreign workers makes it perfect site for exploration of cross-cultural traits in motivation. The further research of cross-cultural peculiarities of motivation among faculty members involving more universities and other higher education institutions in Kazakhstan will let us to present more detailed picture of the issue.

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