

FACTORS AFFECTING MOTIVATION FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT IN ACADEMIC WORK PRODUCTION OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES' FACULTY MEMBERS

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Abstract: The purposes of this study were to assess the factors affecting motivation in the academic work production of private universities' faculty members, and to develop the strategies which might better motivate Payap University's faculty members to produce academic work. The primary sample consisted of 641 faculty members from private universities. Data collection was by means of interviewing and a 5 level rating scale questionnaire which was prepared with expert advice. Cornbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was .949. The data was analysed by using Principle Component Extraction and Orthogonal Rotation with Varimax Method. The strategies were developed through a focus group from Payap University's faculty.

The result showed that there were 8 significant factors affecting motivation involving 64 parameters accounting for 66.724% of variances: an academic environment, pride in the achieved work, rewards and resulting contentment, support offered, institutional commitment, perception of duties, encouragement from peers and family, and quality assurance processes. The motivational strategies proposed for Payap University's faculty members were tied to strategies proposed for improving academic environments, increasing pride in the achieved work, providing support facilities, rewarding members and gaining increased contentment, and institutional commitment. The proposed strategies were classified into 3 levels: institutional strategies, faculty level strategies and personal strategies.

Keywords: Motivation Factors, Academic Work Production, Private Universities

Background

Higher education has a major role to play in enhancing human resource development, and the higher education institutions are also the mainstay of social and economic solutions and serve as society's intellectual bank. Knowledge has been gathered and serves as a depository of world heritage. The higher education institutions have to enhance their academic and professional development and upgrade educational quality and standards to meet the world standard.

Especially to respond to the globalization and the regional development, cooperation among countries

fosters developments such as the ASEAN Community. According to the ASEAN Charter, launched in 2007, a closer cooperation in education and human resource development will empower the people of ASEAN and strengthen the ASEAN Community. Thus, establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015 will unavoidably affect Thai universities in every aspect in the need to reach the standards acceptable by international communities. Beyond meeting demands of the ASEAN Community, other Thai higher education strategies strengthening the institutions have been launched. A high priority strategy focused on the quality of faculty members because instructional staffs are one of the most important assets of education quality towards raising the standard of the graduates, the administration and the establishing and developing a knowledge-based society and the Learning Society, enhancing the reputation and social acceptance of the institutions.

The latest development of ASEAN cooperation, cooperation on developing Research Clusters for South-East Asia, has arisen from a meeting in March 2010 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The expected outcome will be 3-year roadmap for promoting research competitiveness among universities in ASEAN by means of Research Clusters and Centers of Excellence. The roadmap will focus on building up key platforms for regional research assessment, research publications and academic research clusters.

The representatives of ASEAN members believed that the research will be a solid foundation that will lead ASEAN to sustainable development. The faculty's ability for doing research and producing academic productivity are significant. The Strategic Network for Faculty Development to Enhance the International Competitiveness Project has identified problems of higher education in Thailand (Office of Education Council, 2008), including issues of instructional staff performance. The university research has been insufficient and mostly not relevant to social needs in Thailand. The ability to compete internationally that is linked to the quality of academic work is low. It appears that a major obstacle to the development of academic staff is lack of interest on self-improvement, in developing their own capacities and productivity (Office of Education Council, 2005: 70).

Wilhelm von Humboldt, who founded the University of Berlin in 1810, made a statement interpretable as referring to personal development: if there is one thing more than another which absolutely requires free activity on the part of the individual, it is precisely education, whose object it is to develop the individual. Thus, Self-improvement is the foundation of all development. It is a process aimed at increasing

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knowledge, the ability to work, both in terms of ideas, knowledge and action. It is a systematic and continuous process, building self-confidence and understanding, and simultaneously the creation of an academic career. Momentum in self-improvement enables teachers to keep learning and doing research. However, higher education institutions, particularly private institutions of higher education, have focused on teaching as the core mission (Kriengsak Chareonwongsak, 2002). University administrators have also overlooked the importance of academic production (University Affairs, 2001). Faculty lack of incentives for academic productivity (Sarawat Seedee, 2004).

In psychology, human motivation is defined as the power that helps a person initiate a persistent behavior with a certain degree of intensity in order to achieve a long term goal (Geen, 1995). The prior studies of motivation factors in academic productivity identified two categories of personal motivational factors that drive academic productivity: extrinsic factors and intrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors include university policy and administration, salaries and other financial remuneration, quality of supervision, quality of inter-personal relations, working conditions, feelings of job security; and intrinsic factors include status, opportunity for advancement, gaining recognition, responsibility, challenging or stimulating work, sense of personal achievement and personal growth in a job. The different between these two motivations is that intrinsic motivation is caused by the needs of self, while extrinsic motivation is often caused by instrumental value, either positive or negative (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Deeper understanding of faculty staff motivation can directly affect the quality of the faculty and therefore the quality of higher education in general.

Purposes of this research

The purposes of this study were to assess the factors affecting motivation in the academic work productivity of private universities' faculty members, and to develop the strategies which create incentives for self-improvement in academic work productivity by Payap University's academic staff.

Research Methodology

Interviews were carried out with 13 experts (Professors and Associate Professors from Chulalongkorn University, Mahidol University and Chiangmai University) was to gather subjective perspectives that would contribute to the design of a questionnaire based on a literature review. The questionnaire consisted of 64 items with 64 variables. The sample was one thousand and thirteen lecturers from 29 private universities; included in the population were professors and associate professors, 20 assistant professors and 11

lecturers from each of the universities chosen by simple random sampling. The data collection was by questionnaire mail out, and 641 usable returned questionnaires, representing 63.3%. In this study to create possible strategies, 18 staff comprising Vice Presidents, Assistant Vice Presidents and Directors responsible for the management of academic staff, Deans and various faculties in Payap University were included by means of purposive sampling.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from a private institution of higher education faculty was analysed by basic statistics and Factor Analysis. Factor analysis of data found high correlation between variables. The sample group size is appropriate for factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO-MSA) score of 0.964. Chi-Square of the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is 34804.901, $df=2016$ and $sig=0.000$. Factor analysis was applied to all 64 variables under study using the Principle Components Analysis and Varimax rotation. The extraction of 64 variables identified 8 components with an Eigen Value higher than 1.00 The factor analysis results of the study appear in Table 1:

Table 1: The Factor Analysis Results – 64 Variables

Component	Eigen Value	% of Variance	Cumulative % of Variance
1	15.78	24.65	24.65
2	11.51	17.98	42.63
3	4.16	6.50	49.13
4	3.34	5.21	54.34
5	2.91	4.55	58.89
6	1.83	2.87	61.76
7	1.71	2.67	64.43
8	1.47	2.30	66.72

The extracted components were listed in order of their significance as follow:

- Component 1 Academic environment
- Component 2 Pride in the achieved work
- Component 3 Rewards and resulting contentment
- Component 4 Support offered
- Component 5 Institutional commitment
- Component 6 Perception of duties
- Component 7 Encouragement from peers and family
- Component 8 Quality assurance process

The strategy has been developed so as to create incentives for Payap university faculty to engage in self-improvement and increased academic productivity, involved Payap administrators' focus group discussion taking up results of the SWOT

analysis and preparation of the TOWS Matrix to determine the appropriate strategies.

Findings

The study found eight separate factors that motivate private university faculty in academic productivity involved 8 components and 64 factors which were ranked by their level of influence as follows:

1. Academic environment involved advice or guidance, sharing and learning networking, facilities, university management and workload.
2. Pride in the achieved work related to academic recognition, type of work, and value of work.
3. Rewards and resulting contentment related to the compensation, monetary awards, salary and academic rank.
4. Support offered related to funding, the administrator supporting and work publishing.
5. Institutional commitment related to pride in the institution and desire to be involved in contributing to the reputation of institution.
6. Perception of duties related to features of academic performance.
7. Encouragement from peers and family related to family and colleagues supporting.
8. Quality assurance process related to the quality assurance in the university.

Additionally, the study found sub-factors which were crucial in affecting motivation to produce academic work. Three components were found which influence private university faculty members' motivation in academic work productivity (see chart).

1. Impetus toward self-development consisted of factors that encourage the need for faculty self-development, including faculty roles, institutional factors, and factors related to professional goals, and family support.
2. Organizational atmosphere took in the appropriate circumstances, including facilities, organizational culture, and leadership.
3. Incentives were a positive motivational influence, including rewards and academic recognition.

This study proposes creating and implementing appropriate strategies to increase Payap university faculty productivity, which include institutional strategies, departmental strategies, and individual level strategies.

1. The academic atmosphere strategies, at the institutional level, involved attention to policy as well as to organizational structure, at the departmental level including mentors or advisors in doing academic work, to sharing of knowledge and expertise within the University, and promoting the use of shared resources for the creation of scholarly works.

2. Strategies encouraging pride in accomplishment at the institutional level related to workload policy, job evaluation, and putting research results into practical use; and at the departmental level, including faculty development planning, incorporating research results into teaching and learning processes, and disseminating of research results in the public forum.

3. Support strategies, at the institutional level, involving structures and policies to support staff creativity, and at the departmental level a funding research plan.

4. The rewards strategy including developing a rewards system at the institutional level, and an academic productivity reward system at the departmental level.

5. An institutional commitment strategy to promote feelings of loyalty and affiliation to be established at academic staff level, to support self-development and creative productivity.

Discussion

"A high-quality and well-motivated teaching staff and a supportive professional culture are essential in building excellence" (Unesco 1994). In relation to academic excellence, barriers to academic work production were identified. Several studies have identified the barriers to research as lack of knowledge, understanding and skills (The direction of education in the National Economic and Social Development Plan No. 10 (BE 2007-2011) (2008: 15); Hemmings, Rushbook, Smith, 2007; Pensri Chirinang, 2007; Gedvara Manphian, 2004; Orawan Sudhipitak, 2001). One of the problems that affect motivation in academic work production of academic staff is lack of guidance. Studies have shown that lecturers at private universities need guidance from experts to help them create academic work (Jirawan Chanperang, 2007: 111). This finding is consistent with the empirical data obtained from interviews with experts. Having expert advisors support staff in developing academic work will help to create an appropriate institutional atmosphere, which in turn will help the lecturers' productivity.

Another factor that improves motivation in academic work production is establishment of a network of involved persons across the university, including academic staff, students and support staff, to form a multidisciplinary group supporting research efforts. Faculty staff employees are motivated in such a way as to increase interaction with each other (Daft, 2007), with the culture or values of the organization acknowledged as encouraging all sectors to fully satisfy responsibilities (Gilmartin, 1999). Having a good atmosphere will influence the productivity of the lecturers. Aksarapak Lucktong (2005: 122) found that

Thai social culture encourages individual effort so networking and cooperation need to be encouraged by using meetings and groupings within and between universities (Jirawan Chanperang, 2007; Jantarat Phutigriyawat, 2008; Pensri Chirinang, 2007; Pongpatcharin Putwattana, 2002; Tassanee Tharanon, 1998). Cooperation in a community of scholars will contribute to faculty satisfaction in their work (August, and Waltman, 2004: 179). This is consistent with the study of Wayne and colleagues (1999), who found that the number of attendees in seminars or training can affect the success of the work.

Another factor affecting motivation in academic work production is access to facilities and resources, including an appropriate workplace and availability of materials and tools. These need to be sufficient to support intended academic work. Having a good environment, good hygiene standards, and high convenience are factors that motivate work (Supatra Suparp, 2002, Wanraphi Thavornchai, 2005, Issayaporn Pittayaporn, 2005). Lecturers have a desire to have modern and adequate research resources (Apichat Homklai, 2007; Prapaipan Jarutawee, 2007; Namthip Ongardwanich, 2007). Resources facilitating academic work enhance the creative capabilities of academic staff (Bland et al., 2006). Establishment of research centres and/or support groups assist the production of scholarly works (Corley, & Gaughan, 2005).

Other factors that affect motivation in academic work production involve management and workload. The University's policy on the creation of technical guidelines, regulations or rules is associated with the creation of an academic atmosphere. Rules and regulations setting out this atmosphere should be brief, concise and made active quickly to assist lecturers to carry on research (Somchai Pattsan, 2002). Regarding leadership, management must set clear policy for the creation of scholarly works. Regarding the preparation of regulations and guidelines, problems can arise if these are complex procedures and regulations (Orawan Sudhipitak, 2001). In addition, there should be expert, credibility persons as academic role models working to foster self-improvement of academic staff.

Previous research finds that time constraints are a major obstacle for producing academic work, owing to the impact of faculty workload (Charochinee Chaimin and Prapapun Plaichan, 2008; Pongpatcharin Putwattana, 2002; Apichat Homklai, 2007; Prapipan Jarutawee, 2005; Thawatchai Uttawiboonkul, 2000; Chumroon Somboon and Niwat Sirikul, 2003; Payomporn Kaemavong, 2005; Sax, 2002; Mallard & Atkins, 2004; Kocabas, 2009; Santo et al., 2009; Smeby and Try, 2005). On the contrary, however,

experts interviewed said that time itself is not the main barrier. The main barrier is time management.

Academic work is a continual process requiring continuing effort; when the work is published the achievement should gain recognition by peers, administrators, students and in the wider society, to create more confidence in the faculty. Thus, recognition is also essential to successful academic production (Prasong U. Thai, 2005). Teachers are motivated to develop an academic career in part by recognition, and this factor is enhanced if the private higher education institutions provide the agency responsible for the dissemination of scholarly works of the lecturers (Tassanee Tharanon, 1998; Suwanna Thongsrisuksai, 1997; Sarawut Seedee, 2004).

In the academic work process, personal attributes, such as a thoughtful and observant curiosity, patience and enthusiasm, diligence and discipline must be present continuously for high-quality performance, as these are features of the character of a good researcher (data from interviews with experts; Nop Sriboonnark, 1997: 188). Academic productivity should be difficult enough to be a challenge, and the staff will then put in strong efforts to achieve the goal, thereby improving their own development. The academic tasks which challenge the faculty will help to motivate the staff to keep improving their productivity (Rattapol Phromsard, 2004; Ladda Kunnanun, 2001).

Moreover, research or academic productivity which meets the needs of society is more important than the needs of the individual. The faculty will be seen to be more valued for contributing to the society, and their satisfaction will be improved. This feedback will result in even more effort on the part of them, in a virtuous circle. This effect coincides with the highest priority needs stated in Maslow's thinking on human motivation.

A quality assurance system is another factor in academic productivity. It can enhance the confidence society has in the quality of operations and the productivity of institutions. In this study it is seen as a lesser factor in the motivation of academic productivity by academic staff. It can be concluded that internal factors such as satisfaction on the part of academic staff are more important than the operation of external factors such as institutional quality assurance operations or external audits. It was found that communication inside the institution regarding the importance of quality assurance will help fulfil personal and institutional goals by reinforcing the idea that they are the same, although in practice there are limitations on how far understanding of this point can pervade the university (Surapong Thongpunchang, 2002).

It can be said that the creation of change in academic behaviour is linked to both internal motivation and external motivation. The goal of motivation is to make faculty want to develop their own creative work. Lecturers need to understand their roles so they can perform their duties properly. They have to be self-motivated, but the environment will help them achieve their goals (Boydell 1985). Academic work productivity is a complicated process which takes patience and effort. To produce academic work is a challenging task which relates positively to degree of commitment to the organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1990).

Faculty need to improve themselves in order to become valuable human resources of the university, again encouraging further staff efforts, in a virtuous circle. The final goal for this process is academic excellence. The culture of the organisation will be improved in the direction desired; further funding for presentation of research results will be available, gaining networking with the academic professionals outside the institution for consultation or advice, exchange learning with colleagues and senior faculty, gaining administrative support, opportunity to enhance the knowledge and skill in the academic work creation, will also be incentives for increasing academic work productivity.

Recommendations

For the university, establish institution policies to better assist fulfil faculty needs for self-improvement, to enhance loyalty, and to improve staff feelings of affiliation. Institution has to give priority to creation of an academic atmosphere by providing facilities, resources, networks supporting research, and rewards including financial rewards as well as recognition. Further research should be carried on to deepen understanding of variables not fully explored in this study, such as commitment to the institution, and also into negative factors affecting research.

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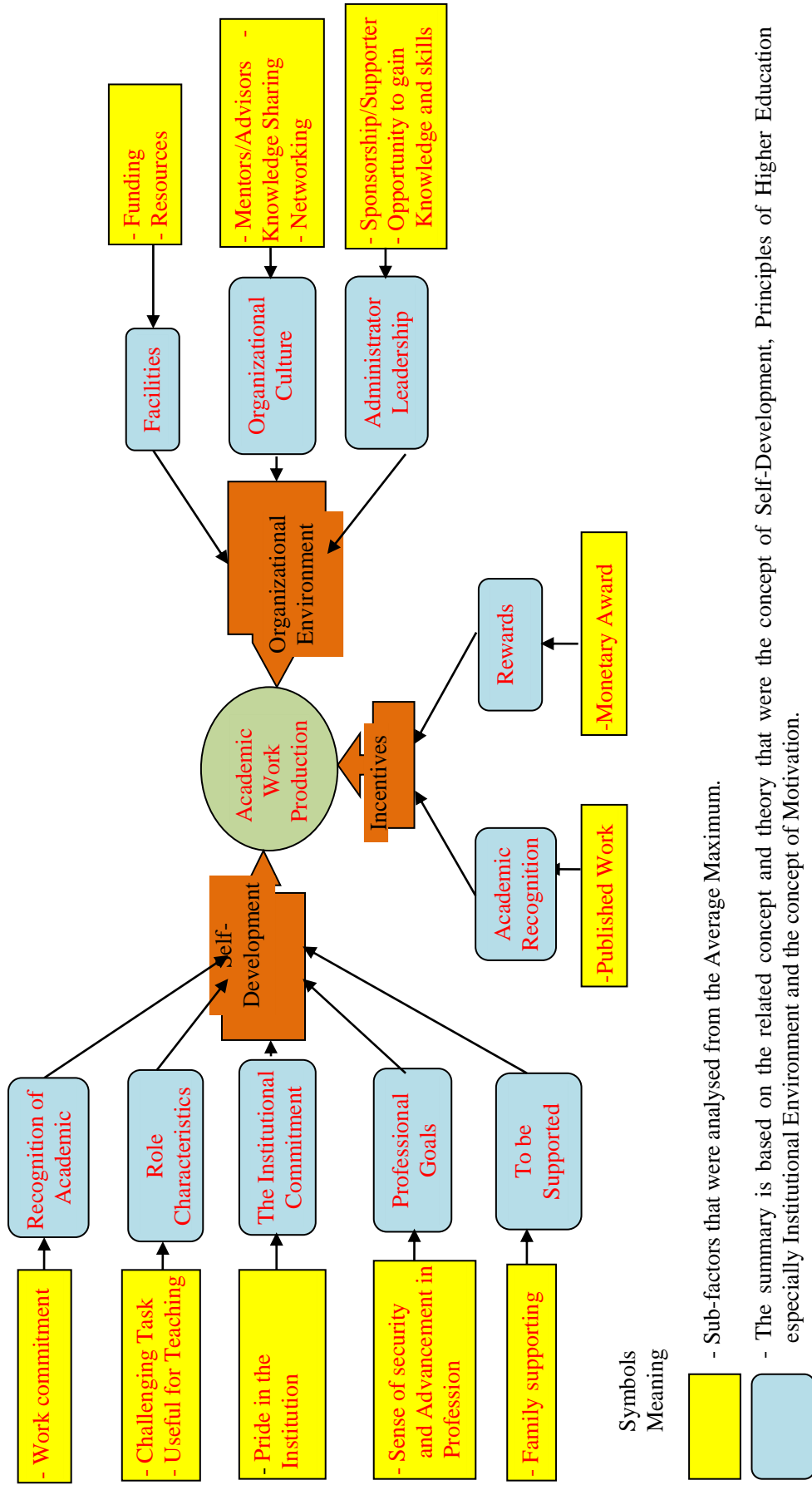


Figure 1: Sub-factors Affecting Motivation of Private University Academic Staff in Producing Academic Work