TEACHER MOTIVATION TO WORK AT UNIVERSITIES – THE EXAMPLE OF THE NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

The article examines the motivation and motivating university employees, particularly teachers. I emphasize the importance of the work teachers do and their motivation at universities. The main question the article addresses is: how motivated are teachers to do their jobs? I obtained answers to this question using a diagnostic survey done among a representative research sample at the National Defence University (NDU) in Warsaw.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER AND MOTIVATION AT THE UNIVERSITY

Motivating and motivation to work are of utmost importance in the performance of one's profession. One may think that this issue has been sufficiently researched – and indeed many researchers have sought to describe why humans behave one way and not another, determine the motives for human acitivity, and uncover what leads humans to have the attitudes they have. However, the issue of motivation has not yet been fully explored, as J. Penc has said: "interesting studies and discussions exist in this area, but there are also serious areas of ignorance. The question thus remains an open one of what actually motivates people to act." [1996: 136].

Acquiring knowledge about motivation and motivating is valuable because it can be used to effectively influence people to activate their internal motivation and inspire a desire to act. Shaping appropriate attitudes in employees requires of management considerable effort and consistency, as well as the selection of appropriate motivational techniques. However, every human differs in terms of personality and the hierarchy of values one keeps, so each is guided in life by different motives. Recognizing them and appropri-

ately using knowledge acquired about motivation are among management's responsibilities, so that it can integrate the goals of employees with those of the organization and, ultimately, ensure the latter's improved effectiveness.

The motivation of personnel leads organizations to accomplish their goals and perform effectively [Ściborek 2012]. People, then, are the organization's most important resource, for it is they – not great amounts of capital or the degree of advanced technology applied – that embody the organization's potential [Kopertyńska 2008].

University teachers are no exception in this regard – motivation is also important for them. The creative character and double value of a teacher's work testify to its importance – "just because a creative teacher will shape the creative citizen; a reflective teacher predisposes students to reflection and thought in their future work; a teacher open to the modern world will equip the student with the key today to a barely foreseeable future" [Król and Pielachowski 1995: 11–12]. Moreover, "new social trends, deepening mutual dependence, the dynamic development of local communities and changes occurring on a global scale have brought about an increasing need to shape young people's life skills and activities in a changing environment. The role of teachers, educators and all schools in spreading democratic values through active and participatory teaching has grown" [Styslavska 2012: 39]. Given the tremendous responsibility their work carries, teachers should be as motivated to do that work as possible. The effect of their professional work is knowledge imparted to students, skills learnt, and the attitude with which students approach the world.

The question therefore arises: how does one become a good teacher? Aside from gaining the appropriate preparation and qualifications, a potential teacher must also be convinced that joining the profession is the right choice – that is to say, to be appropriately motivated to do the job. One must also be aware that a university is an organization where the conducting of scientific research and teaching coexist. Research is orientated towards gaining knowledge about reality while teaching focuses on transferring knowledge together with various methods for researching reality. Accomplishing these two tasks requires academics who are highly qualified and competent [Jaskot and Jazukiewicz 2006]. To exploit the full potential of teachers, it is essential to apply the right motivational tools, as they promote a high degree of motivation to work. Of course, it is impossible to obtain the desired effects of the work of even the best teachers if they do not wish to pass their knowledge and skills to students, or if they do not feel the need for continuous training, in which case their knowledge becomes obsolete, and they cease to be experts in their specializations. This state of affairs is highly undesirable, hence, as with any organization, it is essential to develop motivation among university employees.

The mission of the National Defence University (NDU) is to endow graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to serve in command, in operational headquarters, at universities, and military and civilian institutions engaged in defending the state. Students are civilians trained to defend the state. Upon graduation, Academy graduates are prepared to work in any of the institutions of central government or local government related to the defense or security of the country, including the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provincial offices and Marshal's offices of cities, counties and municipalities, as well as in research institutions. In addition to its teaching objectives, the university also engages in scientific and research work, especially in the defense and security sciences.

The science of defense includes issues of state defense, as well as the theory of the art of war. Research on security focuses mainly on issues of state security at the national and international levels. Academy also does consulting work and has expertise in the following areas: the system and strategy of national security of the Republic of Poland, the state's system of defence and Poland's defence strategy, education and the education system in the Armed Forces, and education for security [NDU's mission…]. In addition to their responsibilities at teachers and scientists, officer-teachers also serve in the Polish Armed Forces. The combination of these two professions in a single military academic teacher can cause problems, because it is difficult to combine two such important issues for the state. This type of work requires from officer-teachers a great deal of sacrifice and willingness to perform a dual profession. For this reason, examining the level of motivation of teachers who are also officers, while also precisely defining motivational incentives, is as an extremely important but difficult undertaking.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION AND TEST SAMPLE

The general population included research and teaching staff employed at the National Defence University in Warsaw in the Department of Management and Command and the Department of National Security. The research was conducted only among teachers at NDU. Table 1 shows the breakdown, taking into account the individuals' title and the department in which they work.

TABLE 1. The number of faculty at NDU

Position	Department		
	Faculty of National Security	Faculty of Management and Command	Total
Professor	7	13	20
Associate Professor	27	19	46
Adjunct	69	51	120
Assistant	6	21	27
Total	109	104	213

Source: own study and elaboration based on data furnished by the personnel department of NDU, employee status as of 23.12.2013.

The general population numbered 213 but the study sample was narrowed down to 136 respondents. The research was done in the first half of 2014.

Employee status was one of the criteria of the research sample. Respondents were to choose one of three options: civilian employee, a civilian worker who is a reserve or retired officer, or an officer. The distribution broke down as follows: civilian employees made up 25% of the total, reserve or retired officers comprised 29.4% and officers made up the remaining 45.6%. The structure of the survey sample for this criterion is presented in Figure 1.
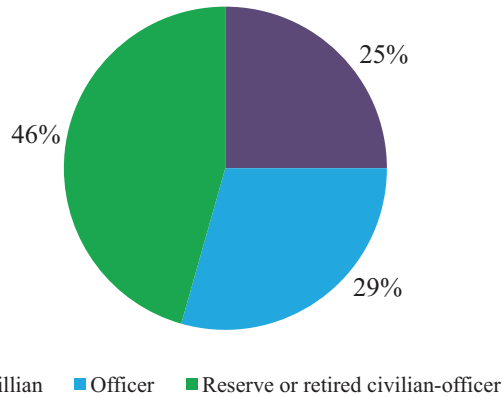
FIG. 1. The structure of the research sample for employee status
Source: own elaboration.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In order to closely examine the level of motivation of teachers to work, the following areas were distinguished: motivated to perform work generally, motivated to do research and teach, and work associated with organizational matters.

Questions about university teachers' motivation to perform work in the general distribution of responses are shown in Figure 2.

The next three figures present the levels of motivation to do research (Fig. 3), to teach (Fig. 4), and to do organizational work (Fig. 5).

Figure 3 clearly shows that all three types of teachers showed a high or rather high level of motivation to work generally and do research. None indicated a low or rather low level of motivation to work.
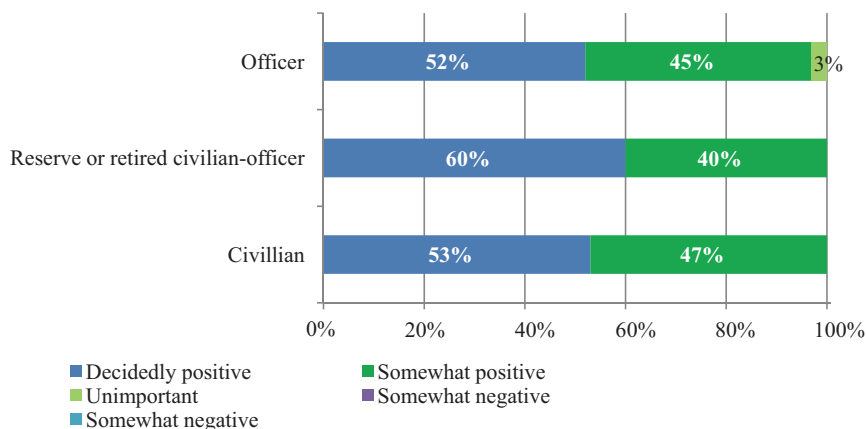

FIG. 2. The level of motivation of teachers to work at university
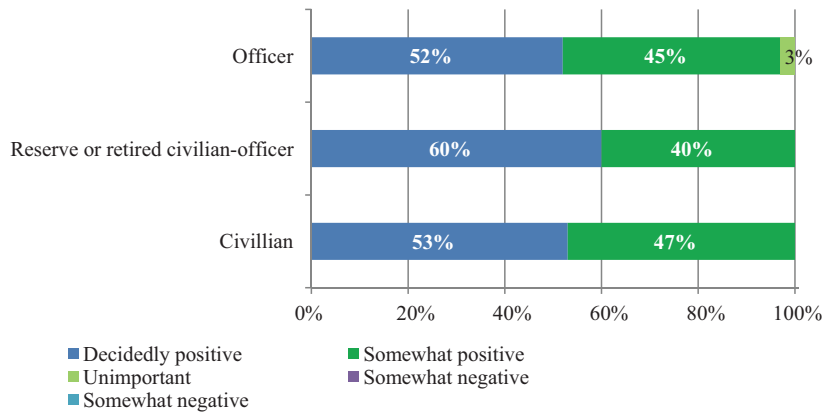Source: own research.

FIG. 3. The level of motivation among teachers to do research
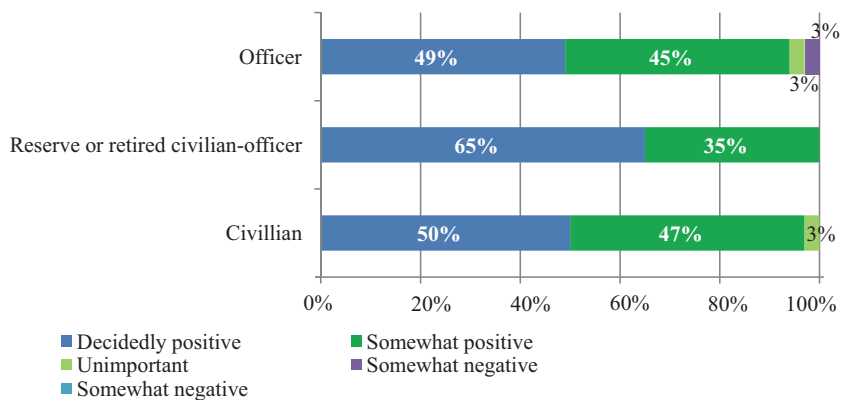
Source: own research.

FIG. 4. the level of motivation among teachers to teach

Source: own research.

The research indicates that only 3.2% of the officers feel demotivated to work as teachers at the university. It is possible that this results from the particular demands of working as a professional soldier while also being burdened with a large teaching load. In contrast, a full 32.2% of the officers and retired or reserve officers stated that they were not motivated to do work of an organizational nature at the university.

To explore which factors all three groups found to have a motivating effect, the questionnaire asked the respondents to assess the motivators the university used. They could state whether a given motivator had a motivating, demotivating or no effect. There were presented 33 motivating factors, though for the needs of this article the 10 most often chosen by the respondents as motivating them to work were used. Tables 2–4 present the sequence distribution of answers about the impact of individual factors on the three respondent types.
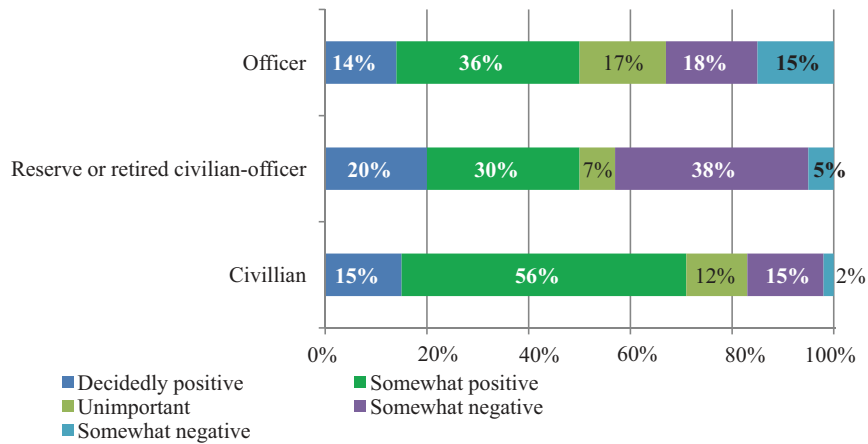
FIG. 5. the level of motivation among the teachers to do work of an organizational nature
Source: own research.

TABLE 2. The impact of the motivating factors according to the teachers-civilian employees (%)

Factor	Motivating effect	No effect	Demotivating effect
Job stability	93.9	3.0	3.03
The atmosphere in your team	94.1	5.9	0.00
Being responsible for jobs performed	90.9	6.1	3.03
Job satisfaction	94.1	2.9	2.94
The work gives me a sense of purpose	91.2	2.9	5.88
Opportunity to improve your skills, widen your knowledge through work	82.4	14.7	2.94
Working with students	94.1	5.9	0.00
Student assessments of you as a teacher (questionnaire assessments about your lessons)	85.3	14.7	0.00
Your supervisor's management style	82.4	11.8	5.88
The prestige of your position	69.7	27.3	3.03

Source: own research.

Table 4 shows that the same factors play an important motivating role for the teachers in all three groups. Interestingly, financial concerns were not considered important by any of them. This may indicate that high wages do not play a motivational role at the university. That, however, would contradict L. Evans' view that remuneration is an undeniably important motivator, especially when paired with the results achieved by employees at work [Evans 1998].

The respondents pointed to the following factors as essential for their motivation to work: "the work gives me a sense of purpose, team atmosphere, job satisfaction, responsibility for jobs performed and opportunity to improve your skills and widen your knowledge through work". As for differences, civilian teachers indicated that job stability and

TABLE 3. The impact of the motivating factors according to the teachers-reserve or retired officers (%)

Factor	Motivating effect	No effect	Discouraging effect
The work gives me a sense of purpose	97.5	0.0	2.50
Team atmosphere	85.0	10.0	5.00
Being responsible for jobs performed	97.5	2.5	0.00
Working with students	92.3	2.6	5.13
Opportunity to improve your skills, widen your knowledge through work	85.0	12.5	2.50
A sense of satisfaction from doing your work	87.5	7.5	5.00
Student assessments of you as a teacher (questionnaire assessments about your lessons)	75.0	25.0	0.00
Your current family situation	57.5	42.5	0.00
Identfying with the mission and goals of the department or institution	67.5	25.0	7.50
Your supervisor's management style	62.5	30.0	7.50

Source: own research.

TABLE 4. The impact of the motivating factors according to teachers-officers

Factor	Motivating effect	No effect	Discouraging effect
Opportunity to improve your skills, widen your knowledge through work	91.9	6.5	1.61
The work gives me a sense of purpose	85.5	4.8	9.68
Working with students	86.9	4.9	8.20
Atmosphere in your team	80.6	6.5	12.90
Job satisfaction	90.3	1.6	8.06
Being responsible for jobs performed	88.3	8.3	3.33
Student assessments of you as a teacher (questionnaire assessments about your lessons)	78.7	16.4	4.92
The prestige of your position	60.0	33.3	6.67
Job stability	70.0	18.3	11.67
Colleagues' recognition of your work	75.8	19.4	4.84

Source: own research.

job prestige were incentives, while reserve or retired officers indicated family situation as a positive motivator to work. In contrast, differences between the stimuli that motivate civilian teachers allow the generalization that the officers find recognition from their colleagues to be an important incentive, while civilian-teachers find that the leadership style of their superiors plays a motivating role.

Analysis of the above results shows that differences in the perception of the motivating factors are insignificant, so the same group of motivators has a positive influence on all three teacher groups at NDU [Wyszecka 2014].

CONCLUSIONS

A thorough diagnosis of the factors which influence teacher motivation and defining demotivating factors can effectively enable the development of teacher motivation, both among civilians and officers, to work as researchers and teachers. The research results also suggest that the NDU teachers' motivation to do any of the types of professional work is high. The results of research on teacher motivations allow the factors most commonly indicated by respondents as encouraging them to work to be determined. They include: a sense of accomplishment from doing one's job, a sense of satisfaction, the atmosphere at work, student assessments of you as a teacher, and taking responsibility for tasks performed.

Motivation and motivating professors therefore play a key role in educating a new generation. This is so essential because teachers dictate to a large extent whether the system of education operates effectively, which is why a strategic role is commonly attributed to them [Żukowska 2004]. In summary, following W. Okoń, the role of teachers in society should be emphasized because in creating science and possessing knowledge, they exert a tremendous influence on social development; at the same time, in educating highly qualified workers who will build society's future, they hold the key to that future [Okoń 1971].

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Summary. The aim of this article is to emphasize the importance of teacher motivation to work. I was interested in discovering key factors which contribute to teacher motivation to work at university, to doing research, to teaching and doing work of an organizational nature among civilian, officers and reserve or retired officers. It was found very important due to influence of motivation on, e.g. quality of school education or science researches. In order to indicate the main motivating factors to work in the university I used the results of diagnostic survey which was done among a representative research sample at the National Defence University (NDU) in Warsaw.

Key words: motivation to work, university teachers' motivation, motivating factors, military academic teacher

JEL: O15, I23

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