

# Motivation of University Authorities Aimed at Creating Favorable Learning Environment in the Course of Restructuring Higher Education Institutions

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of institutional changes on the working environment and health of employees working in the Centralized dean's office and students, their motivation and training duties. Research methods included observation, interviews, questionnaires and statistical approaches. Research results suggest that formation of the learning environment is most strongly influenced by a number of factors, such as institutional changes, infrastructural developments of the University managerial qualities of employees, their cooperation level with students and above all - motivation for creative and conscientious work, individual and career development conditions, socio-psychological climate and management style. The study found the following dependence of students: combination of work and study duties increased the frequency of stress cases and ill health, but increased motivation for the development of self-organization.

**Keywords:** educational institution, favorable learning environment, reforms, motivation of university authorities, social and psychological climate

## INTRODUCTION

World economic prospects are associated with the transition to the post-industrial development stage, which in turn is characterized by the transition from the manufacturing to service economy. In this respect, cost-effectiveness is determined by using the potential of highly qualified personnel, new knowledge and skills, technologies and management practices (Hadiullina, 2006). Recent researches indicate that the transition from manufacturing to service economy resulted in a parallel transition from the secondary to higher education. This means that earlier the "middle class" representative required only complete secondary education in order to be employed at production site; however, the service sector today requires at least Bachelor degree.

The education system plays a key role in further development of human potential in the post-Soviet countries to the level of developed economies. At the same time, the very higher education promotes human capital development, which determines the efficiency and competitiveness of the national economy (Hanushek, 2013). Efforts are focused on the creation of favorable working conditions, training and application of technology providing the possibility to determine the human potential, its further development, talent management (Chulanova, 2013; Vinichenko et al., 2017). Post-Soviet countries have an urgent need for highly qualified personnel (Kibanov, 2014; Frolova, 2016). Socio-economic conditions of transition economies require introduction of new strategies and mechanisms with a view to ensure competitiveness of business processes, human potential development and to create an effective motivation system (Kibanov, 2013; Frolova, 2014; Tella, 2007). These processes are common for all areas, including the higher education system in the post-Soviet countries.

In the context of a general need for higher education, the quality of education becomes the main competitive advantage. The quality of higher education directly affects human capital, increases its competitiveness, but at the

### Contribution of this paper to the literature

- Improving the quality of education is foremost associated with the promotion of research activities, creation of favorable training conditions, which meet the educational needs of students.
- Interviews with students revealed importance of providing favorable environment related to learning empathy and responsiveness of employees working in the Centralized dean's office of RSS.
- The identified trend related to the improvement of learning environment that affected health status of students, in the course of university reforms was accompanied by a fragmentary decrease in the quality of educational services and increase in work intensity.

same time, shifts focus on commercialization of education (Douglas et al., 2008; Kirillov et al., 2015.). Globalization and the high social mobility leads to commercialization of education and perception of students mainly as customers of higher education organizations (Mark, 2013). Higher education system in all post-Soviet countries requires modernization in order to raise the quality of education in local universities and to provide student satisfaction.

Globalization processes determine the fact that national universities need to be competitive in the global education market. Negative aspects related to internationalization of higher education, such as commodification and commercialization, brain drain, elitism and loss of cultural identity are more illustrative of the developing countries (Knight, 2015). One of specific features peculiar to the post-Soviet countries is the demographic decline, which makes brain drain losses even more tangible (Froumin, & Smolentseva, 2014). In addition to direct losses caused by immigration, brain drain affects the quality of human capital.

Study tours of undergraduate and graduate students to the developed countries is also a kind of brain drain because it is highly probable that the best of them will remain there along with subsequent employment. However, this process is less obvious, and therefore poorly understood. The outflow of the best students from higher education institutions (HEIs) can be stopped through a high level of student satisfaction; its key parameters include the quality of education and the learning environment (Wilkins, & Balakrishnan, 2013). Student satisfaction is seen as a competitive advantage in the competitive environment of international education.

Key factors that determine student satisfaction in the learning process include responsiveness of clerical personnel, stable communication links, usefulness or functionality of education programs (Douglas et al., 2008, Vinichenko et al., 2016). Studies show that students are overall satisfied with such characteristics as tangibility, assurance, reliability and empathy of staff but not much satisfied with parking facilities, computer labs, cafeteria services, complaint handling system (Malik et al., 2008). Another significant factor is the favorable social and psychological climate, which encourages and values the student initiative (Rozendaal et al., 2005).

In recent years, more attention is paid to the study of teacher satisfaction as a factor that affects both the learning quality and the learning environment. Teacher satisfaction promotes the quality of education and research activities. HEIs can improve the quality of educational services for students only through providing relevant motivation for their employees (Chen et al., 2006).

In the search for highly qualified academic and administrative staff, HEIs in the post-Soviet countries face the problem of brain drain. In this context, this process is seen primarily as a drain of highly skilled and trained specialists from the developing countries to the developed ones. In this case, the state loses both the professional and the funds that were spent on his/her training. In addition, brain drain also has a negative impact on the training quality of future specialists. The main cause of scientific brain drain from the post-Soviet countries is self-realization of specialists since working conditions and wages in the post-Soviet countries and in the developed countries differ by several times (Beine, & Rapoport 2008). Since the state is unable to provide all this for the experts, HEIs have to deal with the problem of attracting and keeping valuable employees.

First, the academic authorities should focus on providing monetary and non-monetary benefits to motivate their faculty members; otherwise, they may physically or psychologically leave their organization (Siddique et al., 2011). Despite division of the above incentives into the "tangible" and "intangible" ones, they are interrelated in practice (Dejneka, 2016). Higher education employees' focus on high salaries and fair promotion systems related to their needs; this particularly refers to high salaries, fairness and transparency in the system of incentives. (Chen et al., 2006). Other significant incentives include collegiality in decision-making, provision of internal communications and abundant research resources (Liu, & Perry, 2016; Cummings et al., 2016; Bharadwaj, 2014; Becerril-Ángel et al. 2017).

In the developed countries, research resources are provided through the integration of education, R&D and production sites through the creation of technological parks, technopolitan structures, implementation of training programs and research works according to the orders of industrial corporations. At the same time, as regards the Soviet system of education, many universities did not combine educational and R&D activities in contrast to the

Western countries – training and R&D functions were divided (Kuraev, 2016). Consequently, universities performed only the training function, whereas research functions were performed by research institutes. In this regard, many universities in the post-Soviet countries do not have adequate research facilities, and the level of state funding does not provide the possibility to create them.

Other factors providing high-quality education in the developed countries include a multichannel system of financing, administrative efficiency, bringing the training structure and content in line with the individual and market economy requirements. At the same time, the most important factors providing high quality of education include administration efficiency and creation of favorable learning conditions.

Authorities of modern higher education institutions in the developed countries focus primarily on improving the quality of education, which includes promotion of research activities, creation of favorable training conditions, which meet the educational needs of students (Douglas et al., 2008). In the developing countries, the main problem is the lack of resources required by the educational institutions, which reduces competitiveness of higher education (Zhankaziev, 2012).

Development of higher education systems in the developing countries is characterized by several negative trends, such as lower volumes of public funding, insufficiently developed system of educational grants for youth and the remaining authoritarian management system of state-owned HEIs (Kravtsova, 1998). These trends greatly reduce the possibilities of educational institutions to provide favorable learning conditions for students and relevant motivation of authorities.

All these trends are peculiar, in particular, to the Russian education system. In this context, there is an urgent need to provide deep and comprehensive transformation of the Russian education system with allocation of resources and creation of mechanisms aimed at their effective use (Denisova, 2012). However, the necessary organizational change of HEI may cause a negative attitude on the part of their staff (Vakola, & Nikolaou, 2005). Significant, although necessary changes may give rise to uncertainty and demotivation among employees; this will adversely affect the quality of the entire educational process. In order to prevent this process, one needs to provide practical study of relevant rearrangements and response of university authorities to these changes.

In this paper, the authors consider an example of the Russian State Social University (RSSU). The RSSU example is characteristic for the consideration of factors that affect motivation of the university authorities and student satisfaction with the learning process.

In 2015, institutional changes in this university were implemented with a view to provide optimization of educational management costs, which implied reducing the number of units and the number of employees in the system of dean's offices. These rearrangements aimed at improving the efficiency of the educational process, staff and cost optimization. The essence of the above reforms was to eliminate duplication of functions among dean offices of various faculties in RSSU by uniting them in a single center – Centralized dean's office. As a result, dean's offices related to various faculties were eliminated and the Centralized dean's office was created. This structural unit assumed management functions over all departments located in the Moscow premises of RSSU. This ensured optimization of all administrative and educational processes. At the same time, the volume of tasks increased significantly. Another important additional function entrusted to the Centralized dean's office, was cooperation with students and providing advice on all educational and methodical issues along with assistance in dealing with these issues.

The purpose of this paper was to study the impact of institutional changes on the motivation of employees working in the Centralized dean's office staff, as well as the degree of student satisfaction with these changes.

## METHODS

The study groups included employees of the Centralized dean's office (23 respondents) and a group of graduate students (45 respondents). The age structure of employees showed dominance of the younger age group up to 30 years (60.9%). The number of employees belonging to the medium age category (over 40 years) was 21.73%. The difference between employees belonging to the younger age group (up to 30 years) and the medium age group (30-40 years) was quite significant - 60.9% and 17.37%, respectively. There were no older workers (aged over 40 years). Vocational and qualification structure of the personnel working in this structural unit indicated high educational level of employees: employees with higher education made 52.18%, students-workers of RSSU - 26.09%. Employees with secondary, secondary vocational or incomplete higher education made 21.73%. The average length of service made approximately 9 years and their length of service within the University - 4.5 years. The gender composition of the Centralized dean's office showed significant predominance of women - 78.27%.

In order to assess the structure and nature of employees' motivation, the authors of this research used Gerchikov's (2005) methodology. This methodology aims at identifying human motivational profiles with a view to create relevant and effective system of incentives. V.I. Gerchikov (2005) identified five types of motivation:

- Instrumental (employees are interested in remuneration, work is regarded as a tool used to satisfy human needs, the ability to earn keep independently);
- Proprietary (responsibility, initiative, discretion without top-down control and restrictions);
- Professional (self-expression and proof of being the best in one's profession through the implementation of difficult tasks, work content matters, in contrast to remuneration, freedom of operational action);
- Patriotic (devotion to the values of relevant institution, public recognition of usefulness and indispensability of a certain institution);
- Downgraded (escape motivation) (employees are satisfied with low qualification and remuneration, do not want to grow, low responsibility and activity, indifference to the labor essence).

As part of this methodology, one could define the most appropriate kinds of incentives:

- 1) Instrumental incentives. The main positive types include financial, natural incentives (car service, house rent or purchase, payment for tuition), career growth; the negative ones include monetary punishment.
- 2) Proprietary incentives. Positive types include - financial, organizational incentives (organization and favorable working conditions), natural incentives (career growth); negative types do not apply categorically to these incentives.
- 3) Professional incentives - monetary and moral incentives, participation in co-ownership and management; negative types are prohibited.
- 4) Patriotic incentives - paternalism, participation in co-ownership and management, moral incentives; penalties are applicable in symbolic form.
- 5) Downgraded incentives (escape motivation) - natural incentives, paternalism, moral neutral incentives; negative types - in a basic form. Institutional incentives, participation in the co-ownership and management, career and development are prohibited.

Employees were offered a questionnaire called "Motivational profile", based on multiple choice with a view to assess the respondent's attitude toward job duties, colleagues, management, staff and remuneration. For example, "Motivational profile" included the following question: "What does your income mean for you?" with several answer options, in particular, payment for the time and effort spent on performing job duties; payment for my knowledge and qualification, above all; payment for my work contribution to the overall performance of the institution; I need a guaranteed income, albeit not very high; Whatever the income, I earned it myself; Other answer options (please, specify).

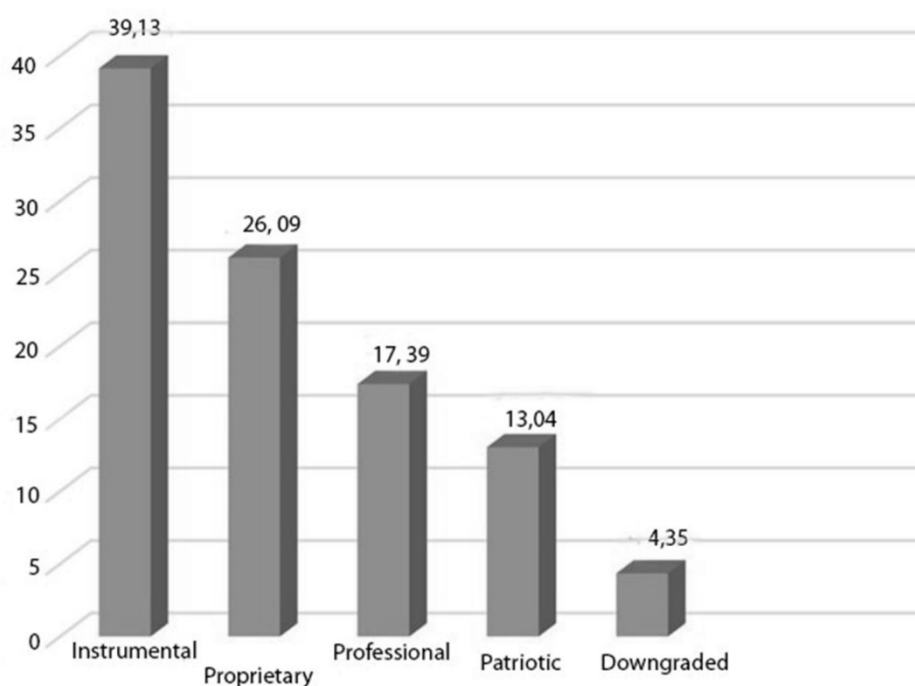
On this basis, specific motivational profiles were determined and options aimed at improving the incentive system were proposed.

The authors used Batarshv's (2002) test "Integral job satisfaction", which provided the possibility to evaluate not only job satisfaction but also its components, such as assessment of work interest, relations with senior management team, socio-psychological climate related to the teaching personnel in general, and satisfaction with working conditions. Staff efficiency improvement was considered through achievement motivation, which was defined as motivation, aimed at the best possible performance of any activity aimed at the achievement of a certain result, which could be assessed through the success criterion (Gordeeva, 2002).

Students were trained according to the management curriculum (personnel management, state and municipal administration, management). The gender dimension was characterized by a shift towards the female representatives (women made 82.2% and men - 17.8%), mean age - 21.67 with a standard deviation of 0.75. Demographic information was collected in order to determine possible correlation between sex, age and answers (Douglas et al. 2008), excluding the year of study, which was the same for all students.

Students assessed their learning environment by using a questionnaire. The main part of the questionnaire included the 52 statements with a multiple 5-point Likert-type scales (ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree), which were related to the degree of satisfaction with the learning process, health status of respondents, and the relationship between the learning environment and health status of respondents.

Overt observation method was used as well. Experts described learning conditions, the nature of their impact on job satisfaction, health status of employees and students "from inside" the studied social groups. The obtained results reflected not only the degree of satisfaction, but also health status of students in different years of study as well as the dependence health - study + work.



**Figure 1.** Motivational profile of employees working in the Centralized dean's office of RSSU

## RESULTS

The authors found that employees of the Centralized dean's office had the following motivational types (in order of importance): instrumental - 39.13%, proprietary - 26.09%, professional - 17.39%, patriotic - 13.04% downgraded - 4.35% (Figure 1).

Remarkably, the instrumental type became very vivid; this type is characterized mainly by financial (monetary) incentives. At the same time, the proprietary, professional and patriotic types were quite close to each other, with a gap of 5%. This structure allows the university authorities to set priorities with the view of improving the motivation and incentive system, making it clearer.

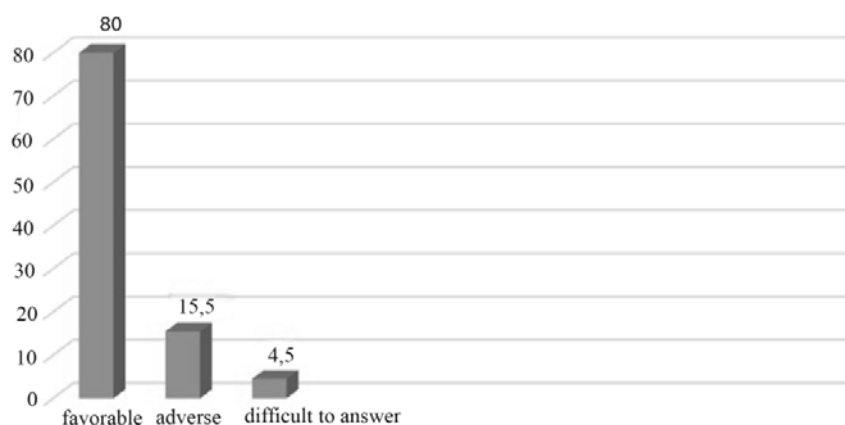
### Evaluation of Learning Conditions by Employees of the Centralized Dean's Office

Data analysis of the questionnaire "Integral job satisfaction" revealed that most employees of the Centralized dean's office (69.6%) were not satisfied with the size of their salaries. 34.8% of respondents do not consider themselves successful in their professions, 17.39% believe that their official job position does not correspond to their abilities, and 13.04% do not observe further development of their professional skills.

Average job satisfaction among employees of the Centralized dean's office made 60.9%. The share of unsatisfied employees reached 13.04%.

Employment history directly affects job satisfaction of employees working in the Centralized dean's office. For example, among employees whose length of service was less than 2 years, the proportion of dissatisfied people was almost 2 times higher than the average data for this sample. During the interview, it was found that employees with minimum length of service were largely unsatisfied with remuneration, considering the system of material incentives as "not quite fair". In general, this category of employees more critically evaluated specific features of their work, describing it as "routine" and "uninteresting". As regards the gender dimension, women assessed decrease in the job satisfaction level primarily through high workload, difficulties in obtaining "time offs" to solve personal problems. In interviews, some women noted that their work significantly limited their privacy along with a negative impact on family relations.

The share of the dean's office employees who were satisfied with their working conditions made 87%. The majority (69.6%) of employees believe that the socio-psychological climate in their collective is favorable, at that, 26.09% of employees believe that this climate could be better.



**Figure 2.** Student assessment of their learning environment

According to this category of respondents, problems are associated with the lack of sustainable communication among colleagues. Some respondents noted lack of support from senior management team of RSSU.

The study showed that 69.6% of employees positively assessed their relations with the university authorities. At the same time, 30,4% of employees think that the existing management style is not suitable for them.

Employees with longer employment history considered that their immediate supervisor might have a lesser degree of control over them, providing relative autonomy in the implementation of their job responsibilities. As shown by results of other studies, the majority of professional workers require less direct control on the part of managers, they increasingly need protection and support for their initiatives (Bryman, 2007). In addition, employees would like to participate more actively in the managerial decision-making process; they are also dissatisfied with workload quality planning. During the interview, the following views were expressed: "In addition to the direct fulfillment of current obligations, authorities often require fulfillment of time-consuming tasks within short timeframes". Irregular working hours, the need to work during weekends – all this is considered in terms of the planning problems associated with the university authorities.

Collective decision-making and informational openness contribute to maintaining work-life balance, increase job satisfaction of employees (Houston et al., 2006). Other important factors related to effective management in the field of higher education include continuous curriculum planning, clear sense of direction / strategic vision, encouraging open communication and workload adjustment possibilities (Bryman, 2007).

The ongoing institutional changes were positively assessed by most employees of the Centralized dean's office (73.92%). At the same time, these employees noted the increased intensity of work, work responsibility, creative and professional growth possibilities along with relatively low wage growth.

The main concern during the first and subsequent (carried out in spring 2016) institutional changes was a fear of being fired. This and related fears were associated with a negative experience of previous reorganizations that took place with the arrival of new bosses who gathered new teams, or with the elimination of the structural unit.

This opinion was expressed by 91.35% of people working in the Centralized dean's office. At the same time, 17.39% considered that their dismissal or elimination of the structural unit would lead to revision of their future development (education) plans, including plans within the Russian State Social University.

### ***Student assessment of their learning environment***

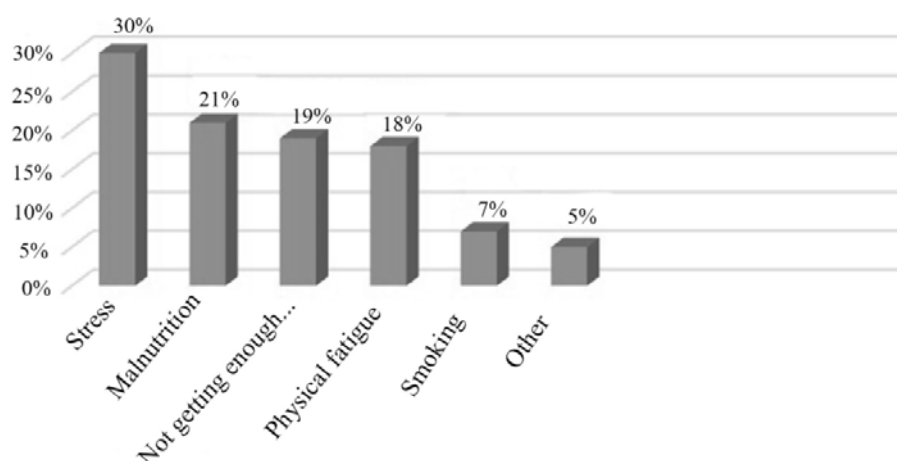
It was found that the main motives of the working students included their earnings (100%), obtaining practical work experience and length of service (83.3%), which increases their value in the labor market and employment possibilities, adjustment of their further development vector and career opportunities (50%).

### ***Learning environment***

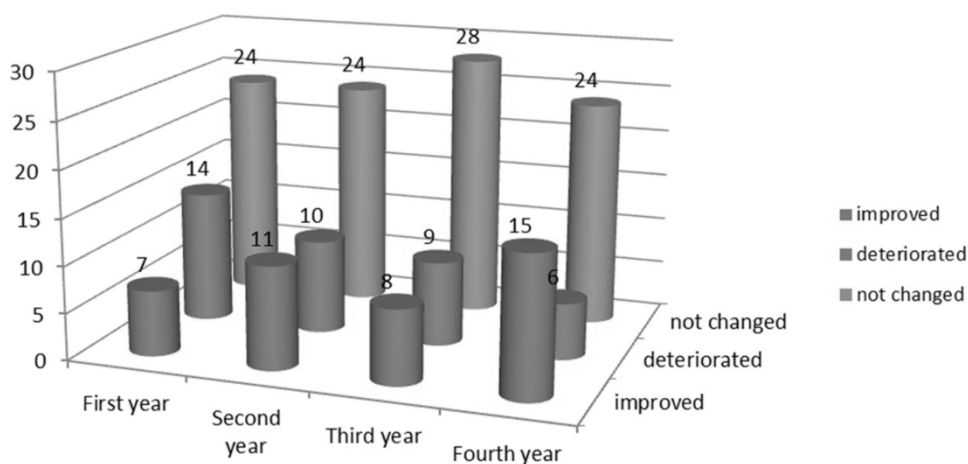
Learning environment was generally assessed as favorable (80% of respondents) (Figure 2).

During this survey, a group of students noted a number of factors that affect the learning environment.

Favorable factors, primarily included the University infrastructure advantages. Students praised the work of public catering facilities (dining room, cafe), university libraries, objects of cultural and recreation infrastructure. Development of a favorable learning and recreation environment is the most important factor, which improves



**Figure 3.** Factors having negative impact on student health status



**Figure 4.** Student assessment of their learning environment throughout four years (various years of study)

student health status, their level of satisfaction and interest in the development of educational programs. In addition to the learning environment, there are certain other essential facilities, which are also important for the students, i.e. the well-managed cafeteria, parking facilities, playgrounds and other arrangements of physical and mental health (Malik et al., 2008).

The main negative factors affecting the learning environment are presented in [Figure 3](#).

Dynamics of changes in the views of students regarding their learning environment throughout recent years is generally stable with a decrease in the proportion of students, who noted deterioration of their learning environment ([Figure 4](#)).

Most students noted that their learning environment contributing to maintaining their health status markedly improved. Thus, 15.5% of respondents noted that in the first year of study the learning environment did not contribute to the improvement of their health status (insufficient number of rooms in a hostel, inconvenient timetables), while in the fourth year of study only 6.7% of respondents negatively assessed the learning environment with regard to this parameter. At the same time, only female respondents with an average age of 21.75 noted improvement of their learning environment.

Apart from this, the working students noted that in spite of favorable working and learning conditions, their combination contributed to the development of frequent stress and ill health, but increased their motivation for self-development (self-management). This dependence was determined by the fact that students had significant physical and emotional overload under the influence of several factors: most students did not have relevant experience as regards development of effective self-management, combination of work and study; they also faced difficulties in building relations at work, in the university environment, with their friends and families. In addition,

they had a fear to worsen their financial situation, being regarded as losers among their peers and teachers. In terms of finding ways to improve the efficiency of self-organized learning, one should pay attention to the use of Interactive Learning System (ILS) (Rozendaal et al., 2005).

The university authorities should play a special role in overcoming these problems. Effective cooperation between the university administration and students is a key factor in providing student satisfaction with their learning conditions. As shown by relevant results of other studies, students are interested in empathy and support provided by the university authorities (Malik et al., 2008).

## DISCUSSION

Creation of a favorable and safe learning environment by employees of the Centralized dean's office was directly determined by their motivation regarding creative and conscientious work.

Effective motivation strategies should be based on specific features of human resources related to a specific institution: gender, level of education, work experience, material expectations (Bright, 2005).

Motivational profile, socio-demographic and professional qualifications of university employees largely determine the structure and ways of improving relevant motivation and incentives.

The observed prevalence of instrumental type of motivation (39.13%), job satisfaction (60.9%) and dissatisfaction with the size of their wages (69.6%) in the employees of the Centralized dean's office under the increased workload and labor intensity, determines the need to improve the system of motivation and incentives in terms of increasing the size and changing the wage structure. The employees of Massey University, New Zealand faced similar situation. They were dissatisfied with increase in the workload combined with the absence of wage growth. Practice shows that increase in workload and labor intensity should be intertwined with the key performance indicators and with the effectiveness of accrued items (Houston et al., 2006).

Redistribution of workload in terms of university reforming requires decentralization of budgets, reporting of structural units up to the division level as well as job cuts. This leads to stress, diseases and job dissatisfaction. These issues are relevant to the universities of the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Houston et al., 2006).

It is important to make active use of reserves within staff grading, extending relevant incentives. One should provide real financial remuneration to the most effective employees for outstanding achievements - competitive agreements, organization of significant events, establishment of useful contacts, participation (win) in profession-related competition; RSSU anniversary remuneration depending on the availability of continuous length of service in the Russian State Social University, remuneration related to other memorable (holiday) dates; the introduction of easy-term loans provided continuous length of service in RSSU (over 10 years), etc. (Kirillov et al., 2015).

Shun-Hsing Chen et al. (2006) consider that the above problems could be solved through the creation of a satisfaction model, based on increase in wages, spiritual growth with regard to personal resources.

In terms of increasing significance of the senior-level management and independence related to the direct impact on the basic elements of motivation (monetary interest), the executive staff of the Centralized dean's office should be given the opportunity to independently distribute part of the income derived from business activities of the Russian State Social University, among its employees.

The said institutional changes related to motivation allowed the university authorities to achieve satisfaction of their employees in creating favorable learning environment: the staff was largely satisfied with the working conditions (87%), which improved by 11% over the past two years. The working conditions included factors related to the Metle (2003) satisfaction factors: overall job satisfaction; pay and security; co-workers; supervision; promotion; and content of work.

Favorable social and psychological climate was provided (69, 6% of respondents noted its improvement by 8.9%). It was estimated as a working atmosphere in the study.

Generally, the University chose a democratic management style that met the expectations of most employees (69.6% of respondents noted its improvement by 8.9%), but it requires certain modifications (30.4% of respondents), especially during peak workload on employees of the Centralized dean's office. This includes trust, mutual respect, and collegiality in decision-making as well as integrity, honesty and fairness. The obtained research results generally correlate with the search for an effective leader behavior, which refers to heads of structural units of various universities in the UK, US and Australia for the last 20 years (Bryman, 2007).

Additional reserves for increasing staff efficiency imply non-financial motivation and incentives. Relevance of this approach was confirmed by the results obtained in the course of identifying motivational profiles of employees. It is possible to increase staff efficiency of the Centralized dean's office by using non- monetary incentives - more systematic career management, participation in management activities, delegation of authority and by using moral



incentives. Clear and goal-oriented career management of employees will increase loyalty and quality of staff referring to the instrumental and proprietary motivational types (65.22% of respondents). In the future, this may lead to a wage increase, which is interesting for the instrumental, proprietary and professional motivational types (82.61% of all employees). Participation in governance, freedom of action in obtaining the delegated authority will activate the professional and patriotic motivational types of employees (30.43% of the employees). The use of moral incentives will be helpful in improving the learning environment on the part of the professional and patriotic motivational types (30.43% of employees) (Siddique et al., 2011).

Data obtained by using A.V. Batarshev's (2002) testing methodology indicate that a number of employees working in the Centralized dean's office were not successful in their professions, their official job position did not correspond to their abilities and they did not observe growth of their professional skills. This refers primarily to employees aged under 30. Talent management, professional building of labor and management career; creation and actual use of HR reserves, participation in the management activities, delegation of authority; assignment of scientific and honorary titles; creative cooperation teams with the view of working in the promising areas with the advanced companies; participation in innovative projects; rotation of employees working in the Centralized dean's office with faculty members, taking into account possible personnel changes within the institutional developments - all this will meet expectations of employees, increase their loyalty, belief in the future employment within the university as well as their motivation for persistent and effective work.

In addition, this situation allows application of moral incentives that regulate the employee's behavior upon the expression of public recognition, free time incentives; programs associated with reduced tuition fees, especially when it comes to its continuation on higher levels, scholarship programs and health care programs in the clinic of RSSU.

Comparative analysis revealed that among the factors affecting the learning environment, fear of being fired prevailed (91.35% of respondents), while the style of leadership was in second place (30.4%), and socio-psychological climate in the team - in third place (26.09%).

Stress from fear of being fired presents a limited resource, as well as a negative aspect. The fear of job cuts often turns productive and creative work of staff into the fight for survival, intrigues against colleagues, kowtowing to senior management instead of increased institutional productivity, efficiency and competitiveness in the market. Normal competition among workers is substituted with the struggle for survival, which has a negative impact on maintaining favorable and safe learning environment.

Fear of being fired during university reorganization significantly reduces quality of the learning environment. This should be considered and this negative impact should be reduced through skillful action in relation to the administrative staff: the availability of ideas and prospective development of the institution, complete confidentiality of institutional changes along with full openness of the value and labor efficiency of each employee, psychological support of all employees, providing confidence in the future through competent career development of all employees. It should be remembered that inept actions of authorities might reduce motivation efficiency (Bryman, 2007).

Students provided original assessment of the learning environment. In addition to the overall positive assessment, they noted a negative factor - stress related to the organization of the educational process, which directly depended on the work quality of the dean's office employees. The university reform affected the quality of educational services in the organization of educational process. It should be noted that quality reduction was fragmented and temporary; it was constantly in focus of authorities at all levels of the University and they reacted promptly to its reduction. Improvement of working conditions was provided through the implementation of student time management and other personnel management technologies (Vinichenko et al., 2016).

In general, the analysis of student views revealed a tendency of continuous improvement of the learning environment along with university reforms and fragmented decline in the quality of educational services. Over the four years of study, the number of students who negatively assessed the learning environment in terms of their health status, decreased by 8.8%. In terms of gender, improvement of the learning environment was noticed only by female representatives with an average age of 21.75.

This trend suggests that activities of the administrative and managerial staff, as well as other university employees generally contributes to creating favorable and safe learning environment.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of institutional changes on the working environment and health of employees working in the Centralized dean's office and students, their motivation to the qualitative fulfilment of their office and training duties. Key findings suggest that institutional changes had a generally positive impact on the learning environment of the university. Most employees of the Centralized dean's office were

satisfied with working conditions, and most students noted considerable improvement of their learning environment that had a positive impact on their health status.

This suggests that the university authorities managed to provide reasonable institutional changes with due regard to the results of international studies related to the learning environment. They selected optimal management style, used the university infrastructure aimed at providing individual development and career growth along with favorable social and psychological climate and high-quality management, ensured relevant level of cooperation with students, which generally provided motivation for creative and conscientious work.

At the same time, the study showed that fear of administration officials to be dismissed in the course of university reorganization significantly reduced work quality and the learning environment. Employees with a short employment history (up to 2 years) are more critical (compared to the old-timers) in assessing their work specifics. They are largely unsatisfied with the wage level. Employees with longer employment history complained of the excessive external control. Female (rather than male) employees more often noted that their work intensity had a negative impact on family relations and limited their privacy.

The revealed motivational types of employees allow the university authorities to define more clearly priorities in improving financial remuneration. Key performance indicators should be linked more closely with the accrued items. In order to improve the working and learning environment, one should actively use such non-monetary reserves as talent and career management, participation in the managerial activities and delegation of authority.

The identified trend related to the improvement of learning environment that affected health status of students, in the course of university reforms was accompanied by a fragmentary decrease in the quality of educational services and increase in work intensity.

It should be noted that interviews with students revealed importance of providing favorable environment related to learning empathy and responsiveness of employees working in the Centralized dean's office of RSSU. In addition, students praised the work of public catering facilities (dining room, cafe), university libraries, sports facilities as well as cultural and recreation infrastructure. These factors are very important for students in addition to the learning environment not only in terms of maintaining their health status, but also in terms of improving their satisfaction with training.

Remote location of students from the place of employment had a substantial impact on the learning environment. Substantial time required to travel to the place of study caused lack of sleep, poor diet and physical fatigue. The study found the following dependence of students: combination of work and study duties increased the frequency of stress cases and ill health, but increased motivation for the development of self-organization (self-management). In general, favorable learning environment at the university provided increase in the number of students, who noted improvement of their health status. This trend is gender-specific.

Thus, the university authorities play a decisive role in the formation of a favorable learning environment. Effective cooperation between the university authorities and students is a key factor in providing student satisfaction with their learning conditions.

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