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APPROACHES TO IMPROVING THE MOTIVATION OF HEADS OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: Improving the motivation of heads of preschool educational institutions is an important prerequisite for ensuring management efficiency, quality of educational services and sustainable development of the organization. Improving the motivation system should be based on a combination of material and non-material incentives, including fair remuneration, clear criteria for assessing work results, professional development opportunities, career advancement mechanisms and forms of public recognition. The study of international experience shows that effective motivation systems contribute to increasing the initiative, responsibility and quality of management of leaders.

The article proposes approaches to improving the motivation of heads of preschool educational institutions using the example of preschool educational institutions in the Vanadzor community.

Keywords: preschool educational institution, head of preschool educational institution, salary, non-material motivation, material motivation, motivational system.

JEL code: D63

Research aim: The research aim is to identify effective directions for improving the motivation of heads of preschool educational institutions and to develop approaches for improving the motivation of heads of preschool educational institutions in the Vanadzor community.

Research novelty: Approaches to counterbalancing the material and non-material motivation of heads of preschool educational institutions have been developed, the application of which allows for a systematic approach in assessing the results of the study.

Introduction

Preschool education is one of the fundamental links of the education system, the effective organization and development of which is largely determined by the activities of the heads of institutions (OECD, 2019). The head of a preschool educational institution is responsible not only for managing administrative and organizational processes, but also for developing the educational environment, coordinating the work of teaching staff, and ensuring the quality of education (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2024). In these conditions, the motivation of the head becomes an important prerequisite for management effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 2023).

In modern management theories, motivation is considered as a set of factors that stimulate and direct a person's behavior, which contributes to increasing work efficiency, initiative, and responsibility (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Increasing the motivation of

leaders is of great importance in terms of ensuring the development and competitiveness of preschool institutions.

Research results

International experience shows that increasing the motivation of heads of preschool educational institutions is considered an important prerequisite for improving the quality of education and ensuring the effectiveness of management. The approaches used in different countries, although they differ in their content and organizational features, are mainly aimed at increasing the professional involvement, responsibility and work efficiency of heads.

Let us consider the features of the motivational systems of heads of preschool educational institutions in Sweden, Estonia and Singapore. The choice of countries is due to the fact that Sweden is considered one of the first leading countries where preschool education became an important part of state policy and motivational systems were introduced for heads of community preschool educational institutions (Lohmander, 2017), (TALIS Starting Strong, 2024). Estonia was chosen as a former Soviet republic that now has well-established motivation and evaluation systems for community preschool leaders (Early Learning, 2020). Singapore was chosen because in Singapore preschool leaders and their motivation systems are managed not by local governments, but by government agencies, public foundations and non-profit organizations (Tan, 2017). A comparison of the motivation systems for community preschool leaders in Sweden, Estonia and Singapore shows that each country has developed a different model of management and

motivation, driven by educational policy, state governance structure and societal priorities.

The Swedish system is characterized by a high degree of decentralized management, with key powers delegated to communities.

In this model, the main factor in motivating kindergarten leaders is professional autonomy. Principals have broad authority in the organization of the educational process, staff management, and institutional development. For this reason, in Sweden, non-material motivation - trust, professional freedom, and work well-being - often have greater importance than financial incentives. In the Swedish model, the evaluation system is mainly collaborative and less based on strict KPIs.

This promotes creative and flexible management, but can sometimes limit measurable performance monitoring. The Estonian system can be seen as an intermediate model between Sweden and Singapore. It maintains a high level of community management, but at the same time widely uses KPI-based evaluation mechanisms. Principals' motivation is formed by a combination of educational results, management effectiveness, and community evaluation.

In Estonia, financial motivation of managers is already more closely linked to performance results. Performance bonuses, community bonuses and a performance appraisal system promote effective management. At the same time, great attention is paid to professional development and continuous training, which forms not only material, but also professional motivation.

The Singapore system is a more centralized and results-based model. Here, the management of preschool education is

coordinated by the state body, the Early Childhood Development Agency, and the activities of managers are strictly controlled through the GQA. The core of the motivation system in Singapore are measurable performance results, state assessment and a clear career advancement system. The motivation of Singapore managers is largely determined by GQA-based bonuses, mandatory leadership development programs and career growth opportunities.

The motivation system of the heads of the RA community preschool educational institutions can be effectively enriched from the experience of Sweden, Singapore and Estonia, by choosing those tools that are compatible with the management and financing conditions of the RA. In particular, the Swedish experience is a model for the transition from control to result-based assessment.

From the Estonian model, the introduction of result-based GQMs and the use of a measurable system for evaluating the performance of the head can be applied in the RA. From the Singapore system, the introduction of continuous training and a mandatory and incentive system in the motivation system of the heads of the RA community preschool educational institutions can be applied.

In the Republic of Armenia, the vast majority of preschool educational institutions operate as community non-profit organizations, which determines their specific management and financing system.

The Law on Local Self-Government of the Republic of Armenia stipulates that the community, in order to exercise its powers, may

establish institutions, commercial and non-commercial organizations by decision of the community council.

Preschool educational institutions simultaneously carry out educational, social and community functions, and their activities are regulated by interrelated mechanisms of state educational policy, local self-government and financial and economic management.

Preschool educational institutions, as community non-profit organizations (NPOs), operate in a multi-level management system, where there are interrelated mechanisms of state government bodies, local self-government bodies and the institution's internal management. In this system, the degree of autonomy of NPO leaders, decision-making opportunities, financial management competencies, forms of control and accountability requirements directly affect their professional satisfaction and motivation, (RA Law on NPOs), (RA, Educational Inspectorate).

The approaches to motivation management of heads of pre-school educational institutions NPOs of Vanadzor community were studied.

The following problems exist in the motivation system of the heads of preschool educational institutions of Vanadzor community:

1. The municipality and other structures participating in the management of preschool educational institutions have not developed a motivation system for the management staff of preschool educational institutions. There is no clear mechanism for assessing motivation.

2. Almost complete absence of non-material motivational factors, there is no developed system through which non-material motivational factors will be introduced.

3. Deficiencies in the performance evaluation system of heads.

Based on the identified problems, we propose approaches to improving the motivation of heads developed by us (see Figure 1).

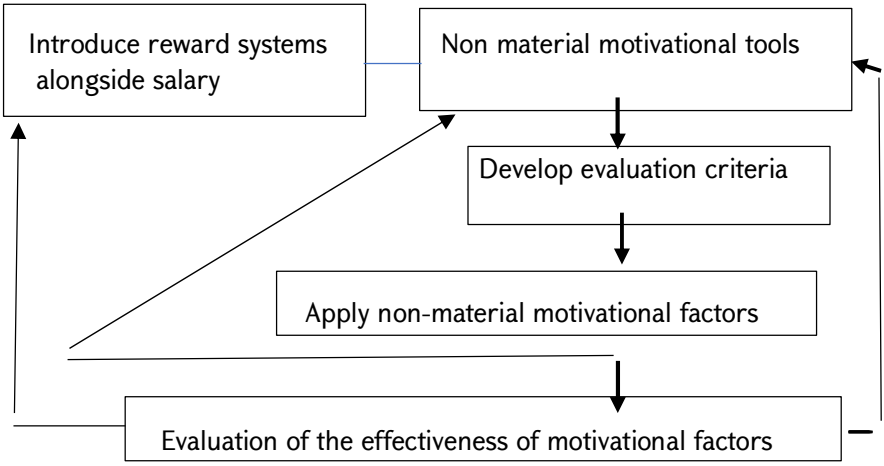


Figure 1. Approaches to improving the motivation of the heads of preschool educational institutions of the Vanadzor community

The goal of the proposal is to develop and introduce a motivation system in the personnel management system of preschool educational institutions that will add new quality to the management of the motivation of the heads.

Thus, the approaches to improving the motivation of the heads of preschool educational institutions of the Vanadzor community are:

- ✓ Introduce reward systems in parallel with the salary.

Taking into account that according to the RA Law on preschool educational institutions, the municipality establishes the norms for financing the activities of preschool educational institutions under

community subordination at the expense of local budget funds. Therefore, taking into account modern approaches to the motivation of heads, it is possible to introduce different reward systems with basic criteria in parallel with the salary.

- ✓ Increase the level of professional qualification.

Those managers who will strive to increase their qualification level, will participate in offline and online trainings in their field of activity on their own initiative, will receive a year-end award, 10 free visits for 2 people for the entire next year to museums and theaters of the Vanadzor community. In parallel, as a result of the annual declaration of income from 2025, in case of participation in some courses, they may also receive a refund of social expenses.

Therefore, such an approach will contribute to employees striving to increase their educational qualification level. As a result, the community will have motivated employees, as well as managers with new professional skills, as a result of the introduction of this reward system. The application of such an approach does not require additional financial costs.

- ✓ The number of years worked in a given educational institution.

Introduce a project for providing salary supplements to educational institutions managers, according to which each manager who has worked in the same institution for more than 10 years will add 20,000 drams to the established monthly salary rate. Therefore, even if all managers at some point become employees of the same institution for 10 or more years, then (35x20000=700000 AMD) will increase the annual budget by only 7000 000 AMD. In the 2025 community budget, the "Salaries and Bonuses" item provides for 643.250.000 AMD, so even in the case

of a bonus for all managers, it (700 000 AMD) is only 0.1% of that amount.

- ✓ Apply non-material motivation tools.

Given the financial limitations of the community budget (Vanadzor community budget), it would be expedient to introduce modern non-material motivation factors in addition to salaries and reward systems. This will allow reducing employee dissatisfaction with the amount of salary and will increase the external motivation of employees.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the use of non-material motivational factors, we propose to develop performance evaluation criteria for the management of the educational institution by the relevant department of the municipality.

According to the established regulations, the performance evaluation of the heads of educational institutions is mainly carried out by the education inspection body (RA, educational inspection body). Also, the municipality carries out inspections and establishes control over financial statements. In parallel, educational institutions undergo internal and external evaluation. The internal evaluation is carried out by the educational institution and published once a year. Parents, authorized bodies of state and territorial education management, representatives of local self-government bodies and the given educational institution participate in the external evaluation. However, the results of these evaluations are only published or informed to the relevant managers, there are no developed motivational systems for the best results. Therefore, in addition to this, we propose to develop control and evaluation systems by the Vanadzor municipality, which will serve as the basis

for the introduction of non-material motivational factors into the motivational system of educational institutions.

Thus, we propose the following criteria for evaluating the performance of heads of educational institutions for the purpose of applying non-material motivational factors:

1. Planned inspection visits on a semi-annual basis.

Develop and organize planned inspection visits on a semi-annual basis. During the visit, the emphasis should be on the level of general work organization, these visits should be without prior notice. The criteria for assessing the activities of the educational institutions during the visit will be the following:

- ✓ Presence of management staff at the workplace - yes 1, no 0.
- ✓ Sanitary and hygienic conditions of the educational institution (for the assessment of directors). Carry out the assessment using the following scale: insufficient - 0 points, satisfactory - 1 point, average - 2 points, complete - 3 points.
- ✓ The employment of children in the educational institutions' groups at the time of the visit (for the assessment of methodologists), based on the developed educational program. Carry out the assessment using the following scale: insufficient - 0 points, satisfactory - 1 point, average - 2 points, complete - 3 points.

Written conclusion and assessment by the inspector(s) within the framework of 0-3 points: insufficient - 0 points, satisfactory - 1 point, average - 2 points, complete - 3 points.

At the end of the inspection, if necessary, the inspection assessments should be interpreted by the evaluator. The inspection

sheet is subject to signature by the director and deputy director, where, along with signing, it should be noted whether they agree with the assessment results or have objections, which will be noted after signing. Confirmation by signature will make it possible to reduce the subjectivity factor of the inspection participants, as well as the assessee will be informed about the result on the spot and will be sure that the results will not change after the inspection.

And the indication of disagreement with the assessment results of the inspection will make it possible to observe, analyze, and if necessary, provide feedback from the municipality to detail the fact that the objections are justified or unfounded. This will help prevent the head of the educational institution from developing anti-motivational factors due to the feeling of being unfairly evaluated.

The heads of educational institutions that received an average positive assessment (2 and 3 points) as a result of the visits will receive verbal praise, and those educational institutions that received a positive assessment and conclusion based on the results of all planned inspections for the year will receive certificates of honor and certificates of gratitude from the heads of those educational institutions, which will be awarded in a ceremonial manner.

Considering that the number of operating educational institutions under the jurisdiction of the community is 23 as of 2025, visiting 4-5 educational institutions on average per month does not represent additional financial costs, since visits are still made by the given department of the community administration, but they are not planned and do not include a special evaluation mechanism. And such an approach will allow visits to be planned

and clear assessment mechanisms will be applied. As a result, the introduction of a non-material motivational mechanism will enable the manager to increase his motivation towards his work, being appreciated for his work is an important motivational factor.

The goal of applying criteria for assessing the effectiveness of managers' activities is to ensure the objectivity of the assessment and make the work results measurable.

2. Complaints and applications acceptance system.

Develop and implement a complaints and applications acceptance system regarding the activities of preschool educational institutions. The goal of this approach is to be constantly informed about the current activities of preschool educational institutions, which will allow to fully assess the activities of the head in his daily work, and to draw appropriate conclusions after assessing the credibility of positive and negative opinions.

The "Development Programs, External Relations and Information Technologies Department" of the Municipality shall develop and implement a complaints and applications acceptance system for each preschool educational institution on the website of the Vanadzor community municipality: cmis.vanadzor.am, in the preschool educational institutions (kindergartens) section, and provide logins and passwords to parents and employees of preschool educational institutions. By logging in with these logins, parents and employees will have the opportunity to write their positive and negative opinions about the preschool, which will be accessible only to the relevant department of the community municipality, and the department will try to analyze, develop steps

towards solving the problems, and in case of praise, will provide letters of appreciation, and in case of grant and subvention programs, the resolution of the problems of those preschools will have priority.

3. Interviews with specially developed assessment questionnaires.

As a result of solving the problems of the motivation system of the heads of preschool educational institutions of the Vanadzor community, we will have more motivated leaders, which will contribute to the team they lead providing better quality education in the community. And the provision of quality preschool education will contribute to increasing the quality of human capital in the community.

The mechanisms for applying the factors of the motivation system of heads of preschool educational institutions, in parallel with the NSOs, can also be used to manage the motivation of heads of NSOs (community commercial organizations).

The use of such an approach in a NSO (community commercial organization) will contribute to having motivated leaders, as a result of which the organization managed by it will be provided with high-quality preschool services and high profitability due to the diversity of services provided by it. A certain part of the resulting profit can be directed to the community budget, which will allow financing educational, social and economic programs of the community economy.

Conclusion

Improving the motivation of heads of preschool educational institutions should be considered as an important tool for improving the quality of education and ensuring management efficiency.

The formation of an effective motivation system requires the combined use of material and non-material incentives, the introduction of clear performance evaluation criteria and the creation of favorable conditions for the professional development of leaders. Such an approach can contribute to the modernization and development of the community-based educational institutions and management system of the Republic of Armenia.

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ՆԱԽԱԴՊՐՈՑԱԿԱՆ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՍՏԱՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՂԵԿԱՎԱՐՆԵՐԻ ՄՈՏԻՎԱՑԻԱՅԻ ԲԱՐԵԼԱՎՄԱՆ ՄՈՏԵՑՈՒՄՆԵՐԸ

Հասմիկ Դավթյան
Հայաստանի եվրոպական համալսարան, ասպիրանտ

Բանալի բառեր - նախադպրոցական ուսումնական հաստատություն (ՆՈՒՀ), ՆՈՒՀ ղեկավար, աշխատավարձ, ոչ

նյութական մոտիվացիա, նյութական մոտիվացիա, մոտիվացիոն համակարգ:

Նախադպրոցական ուսումնական հաստատությունների ղեկավարների մոտիվացիայի բարելավումը կարևոր նախապայման է կառավարման արդյունավետության, կրթական ծառայությունների որակի և կազմակերպության կայուն զարգացման ապահովման համար: Մոտիվացիոն համակարգի կատարելագործումը հիմնվում է նյութական և ոչ նյութական խթանների համադրման վրա՝ ներառելով արդար վարձատրություն, աշխատանքի արդյունքների գնահատման հստակ չափանիշներ, մասնագիտական զարգացման հնարավորություններ, կարիերայի առաջխաղացման մեխանիզմներ և հանրային ճանաչման ձևեր: Նախադպրոցական ուսումնական հաստատությունների ղեկավարների մոտիվացիայի բարելավումը պետք է դիտարկել որպես կրթության որակի բարձրացման և կառավարման արդյունավետության ապահովման կարևոր գործիք:

Արդյունավետ մոտիվացիոն համակարգի ձևավորումը պահանջում է նյութական և ոչ նյութական խթանների համակցված կիրառում, աշխատանքի գնահատման հստակ չափանիշների ներդրում և ղեկավարների մասնագիտական զարգացման համար նպաստավոր պայմանների ստեղծում:

Հոդվածում առաջարկվում է նախադպրոցական ուսումնական հաստատության ղեկավարների մոտիվացիայի բարելավման մոտեցումները Վանաձոր համայնքի ՆՈՒՀ-երի օրինակով:

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