





“Why researchers work in management schools: A comparative study of motivation and job satisfaction in France and Norway”

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WHY RESEARCHERS WORK IN MANAGEMENT SCHOOLS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION IN FRANCE AND NORWAY

Abstract

If any country is interested in high scientific results, it should have highly motivated and satisfied researchers. The purpose of this study is to establish the national characteristics and differences in motivation and job satisfaction of researchers in two developed European countries – France and Norway. The management schools of French and Norwegian universities were chosen for this study. A five-stage research methodology, including surveys, in-depth interviews, and statistical testing, was used to test four hypotheses. According to the vast majority (16 out of 20) of motivators considered, the average scores in Norway are higher than in France. Only four motivators are exceptions, namely challenging work, interesting work, job security, and social benefits, for which the French are somewhat better motivated. In general, French researchers have lower job satisfaction than their Norwegian colleagues. The only exception is the dissatisfaction of Norwegian senior researchers with their professional learning conditions. The considered case study proves that each European country, having its own system of incentives and working conditions, provides different levels of satisfaction for different researchers working there. The results will allow one to improve national incentive systems by benchmarking and adopting best practices within the continent.

Keywords

motivation, job satisfaction, researchers, management school, France, Norway

JEL Classification

M54, I23, J81

INTRODUCTION

Obtaining scientific results and findings is hard work done by people called researchers. Researchers, like other workers, have certain expectations from their work; that is, they are motivated in a certain way. However, depending on the extent to which these expectations or motivations are satisfied, their productivity and quality of work vary (Halkos & Bousinakis, 2010; Albert et al., 2016). There is evidence of a positive relationship between motivation and job satisfaction (Ahmed, 2011; Ali & Anwar, 2021) as well as between job satisfaction and performance in academia (Singh & Jain, 2013; Wahyudi, 2018).

Solving the global problems of humanity, e.g., those defined in the 17 goals of sustainable development by the UN (Halkos & Gkampoura, 2021), requires significant involvement of researchers. They are expected to be highly productive in finding promising fundamental tasks and applied solutions. Therefore, their countries must effectively motivate and satisfy them. However, it is known that every country that has academic autonomy has its own system of motivating researchers. Therefore, the satisfaction of researchers in different countries should

be different. In this sense, it would be important to determine best practices and implement them in other countries. That is why it is crucial to compare motivation and job satisfaction in homogeneous higher educational institutions of two different countries to understand national differences and their positive and negative aspects.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

For the most part, the existing studies on motivation and job satisfaction among researchers are case-based and consider these categories using the examples of individual research and education institutions. They can mostly be grouped into two large groups. The first group evaluates job satisfaction in connection with other factors, e.g., organizational culture (Chipunza & Malo, 2017). The second one reveals the main motivators influencing the work of researchers.

From the first group, Veldman et al. (2013) studied the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in the Netherlands using the narrative-biographical method. They found that teachers may have positive job satisfaction despite, in the eyes of the students, a poor teacher-student relationship. Malik (2023), on a random sample of academicians from various universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, found that job satisfaction has a significant relationship with turnover intention. Wijaya et al. (2020), on a sample of teachers from secondary schools and universities in Indonesia, found a significant influence of culture and gender on job satisfaction. Stankovska et al. (2017) found that academic researchers at one of the Bulgarian universities are more satisfied with their salary, colleagues, promotion, work procedures, and management but were less satisfied with fringe benefits, contingent rewards, nature of work, and communication. However, Auriol et al. (2013) did not confirm these results and found the strongest satisfaction of Bulgarian researchers with degree of independence and level of responsibility with a very weak satisfaction by salary. Nevertheless, Jeremiah et al. (2019) considered the reward as a function of job satisfaction on a sample of South African educators working in public technical vocational education and training. The results show that rewards, including salary, significantly influenced job satisfaction. Moreover, Moloantoa and Dorasamy (2017) also found that salary is a significant factor influencing the job satisfaction of Lesoto academic employees.

Therefore, the influence of certain factors, such as salary or gender, on academics' job satisfaction in different countries can be different.

From the second group, Manolopoulos (2006) studied the motivation of researchers from the research laboratories of multinational enterprises in Greece and found that in the peripheral economy of the EU, professionals in the field of R&D are motivated by external rewards, mainly economic rewards. However, Kızıltepe (2008) found that students are the main source of motivation for university teachers in Istanbul University.

Unfortunately, all these publications contain mononational cases and do not analyze the influence of the national factor on the motivation and job satisfaction of researchers from different countries.

Speaking about comprehensive international studies, one can single out OECD statistical reports that compare countries about the career characteristics of doctoral degree recipients, including their job satisfaction. In particular, the 2013 OECD report found that among all categories, satisfaction levels with salary and benefits are the lowest in most countries. The highest level of satisfaction for researchers in observed 14 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Turkey) was found by location, degree of independence, intellectual challenge, level of responsibility, and contribution to society (Auriol et al., 2013). Moreover, researchers from one of the most developed of these countries – Belgium – were the least satisfied among all of them according to location, degree of independence, intellectual challenge, level of responsibility, contribution to society, job security, working conditions, and social status. Researchers from the Netherlands (regarding benefits and salary), Israel (regarding independence and social status), Malta (regarding location and job security), and Spain (regarding contribution to society, intellectual challenge, and working conditions) were the most satisfied. This means that the

Western academic model is not uniform in terms of researchers' perceptions and needs additional research to improve.

The recent publication by Goncharuk and Cirella (2022), with inter-country comparison, considers both categories together: motivation and job satisfaction. In the example of one French and one Bosnian university, they found a difference between Western and Eastern European academic models that include also different motivations and job satisfaction of university staff. Bosnian academics are better motivated than French colleagues and are better satisfied with teaching and administrative work conditions, while French colleagues are better satisfied with research conditions only. This comparing approach is interesting. However, it is obvious that Western researchers have a different motivation and job satisfaction than their Eastern colleagues, considering the huge differences in academic models, funding, and other opportunities for researchers in these two models. OECD report (Auriol et al., 2013) mostly confirms this outcome. However, it may seem that the Western academic model is homogeneous and that all countries following it have similar motivation and job satisfaction among researchers. However, this may not be the case. Moreover, lower researchers' job satisfaction in Belgium in comparison with other Western European countries (Auriol et al., 2013) supports this idea.

Thus, this study decided to test this assumption on the example of two developed countries of Western Europe, namely France and Norway. The purpose is to establish national characteristics and differences in the motivation and job satisfaction of researchers in France and Norway. The hypotheses are as follows:

H1: There is no difference between the motivation of management school researchers in France and Norway.

H2: There is no difference between the job satisfaction of management school researchers in France and Norway.

H3: There is no difference between the job satisfaction of researchers of the same gender at management schools in France and Norway.

H4: There is no difference between the job satisfaction of researchers of the same career stage (early-stage, experienced, and senior) at management schools in France and Norway.

2. METHOD

The most appropriate and widespread method of researching motivation and job satisfaction of employees is a survey. Among the latest and most relevant questionnaires for surveying academic staff is the questionnaire with 20 motivators by Goncharuk and Cirella (2022). This set is quite widely used in the analysis of the influence of demographic factors on employee motivation, e.g., in health-care (Goncharuk et al., 2020) or higher education (Goncharuk & Vinot, 2023). They are sufficiently comprehensive and contain both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, in the motivation part, this study applied this questionnaire without changes. However, due to the discrepancies found in salary satisfaction, e.g., in Bulgaria, it was appropriate to add another satisfaction factor to this questionnaire – salary. Thus, Appendix A shows the final version of the survey questionnaire after modification.

In order to clarify certain responses and determine the underlying reasons for the responses in the surveys, the study applied in-depth interviews, which are a fairly common qualitative research method (Minichiello et al., 2008). As Mgaiwa (2023) and Chen (2023) show, interviews help to reveal the deep factors influencing job satisfaction of academic staff.

To ensure that the compared objects were homogeneous, it was decided to study researchers working in the same field of knowledge, namely in management schools. Such schools are present both in France and Norway; they employ both young researchers (postgraduate students) and experienced professors of different genders and experiences.

To test the hypotheses of the study, the following sequence of tasks is used:

- 1) In order to obtain honest answers and maintain complete anonymity, questionnaires were distributed both offline and online (Google form).

- 2) The survey results were grouped by country of affiliation.
- 3) The results were analyzed graphically (on a radar chart), and then the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric statistical test (Kruskal & Wallis, 1952) was used to test the main research hypotheses H1 and H2 for every motivator and job satisfaction factor from the questionnaire. Kruskal-Wallis statistical non-parametric test is a method of testing whether samples come from the same distribution is the non-parametric version of the one-way ANOVA (McKight & Najab, 2010). The null hypothesis of the Kruskal-Wallis test is that the mean ranks of the groups are the same.
- 4) If the main hypotheses H1 and H2 (null hypotheses) are not confirmed, additional hypotheses H3 and H4 should be tested regarding which groups of respondents have national differences. The Kruskal-Wallis statistical non-parametric test was also used to check them.
- 5) In-depth interviews with six researchers (two per career stage) have been conducted to determine the reasons for possible differences in job satisfaction.

The management schools of French (in Lyon) and Norwegian (in Agder) universities were chosen for this study. In each of these countries, 200 invitations to fill in the questionnaires were sent out (in online and offline forms).

Respondents were chosen randomly. However, not all of them answered the questionnaire. The response rate was 47%, with 94 completed questionnaires received in France and 94 completed questionnaires in Norway. Both groups of respondents work in management schools in the southeast of

appropriate countries. The statistical distribution of sample respondents is presented in Table 1.

In fact, all career stages and genders are represented in the sample. The only exceptions are Norwegian female senior researchers (full professors) because in Norway, in general, they are in an absolute minority and make up only 23% of the total number of full professors (Kyvik, 2015). Unfortunately, there are no females in the observed Norwegian management schools with such a position.

The data for the questionnaire sub-scales and total scores were non-normally distributed. Hence, this study performed non-parametric statistical tests.

3. RESULTS

Figure 1 presents average comparisons of the survey results on the motivation of management researchers in the two countries.

As can be seen, according to the vast majority (16 out of 20) of motivators, the average scores in Norway are higher than in France. Only four motivators are exceptions, namely challenging work, interesting work, job security, and social benefits.

Testing of the null hypothesis, thanks to the Kruskal-Wallis test, was not confirmed for any of the 20 motivators. The highest probability of the null hypothesis was found at the level of 0.909 for the motivator interesting work, which indicates that the preference of the French for it is insignificant.

Moreover, according to nine motivators, the probability of the null hypothesis turned out to be lower than 0.05, which means a significant difference, namely: challenging work; ability to make a strong

Table 1. Sample description

Profession	France				Norway			
	Female	Male	Sum	Mean age (SD)	Female	Male	Sum	Mean age (SD)
Early-Stage (Ph.D. Students)	2	16	18	26.4 (0.29)	20	26	46	35.1 (1.93)
Experienced (Assistant/ Associate Professors + PostDocs)	22	16	38	47.8 (1.98)	16	14	30	44.2 (2.15)
Senior (Full Professors)	22	16	38	49.8 (0.82)	0	18	18	57.3 (2.42)
Total	46	48	94	44.5 (1.56)	36	58	94	42.3 (1.74)

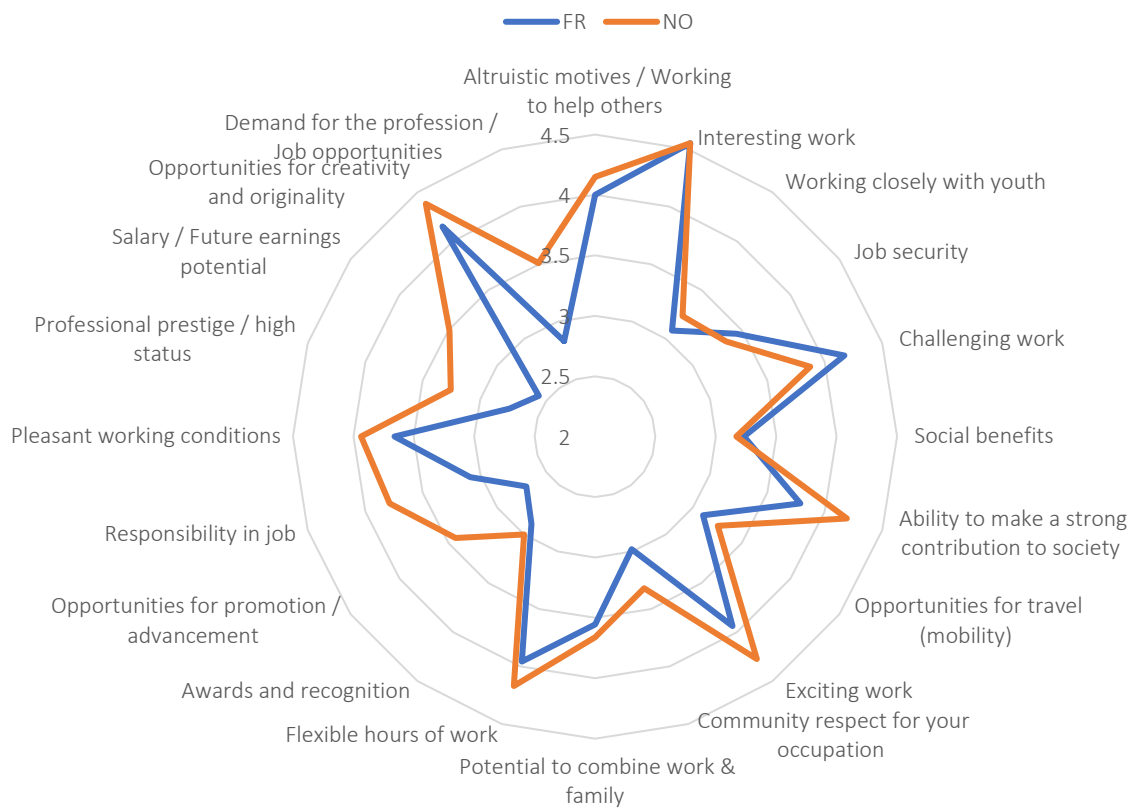


Figure 1. Motivators of researchers in French (FR) and Norwegian (NO) schools of management

contribution to society; exciting work; community respect for your occupation; opportunities for promotion/advancement; responsibility in the job; professional prestige/high status; salary/future earnings potential; and demand for the profession/job opportunities.

Among other motivators, one can also single out pleasant working conditions, which have a probability of the null hypothesis at the level of 0.081 that also indicates a rather significant discrepancy between the two countries for this motivator.

Thus, *H1* was not confirmed. Significant differences were found for half of the considered motivators compared to one identical one, with a probability of about 0.9.

Figure 2 shows a radar chart that graphically compares job satisfaction between French and Norwegian researchers.

Norwegians are more satisfied with all six considered factors. Kruskal-Wallis test of the null hypothesis for each of the six factors found a

low probability ranging from 0.0001 for administrative work to 0.755 for professional learning. This means that *H2* has also not been confirmed. Moreover, in part, administrative work has an almost zero probability, which means there is a significant difference in satisfaction with administrative work between researchers from the two countries.

To understand the source of the identified differences, an additional analysis was conducted on two characteristics, namely gender and career stage.

When the two countries are compared in terms of job satisfaction of researchers of the same gender, it is possible to notice whether the level is the same for colleagues of the same gender in France and Norway (Figure 3).

Norwegian male researchers seem to be relatively most satisfied with their work, especially in the areas of teaching, research, and administrative work. French female researchers have the lowest satisfaction for most of the factors considered among all

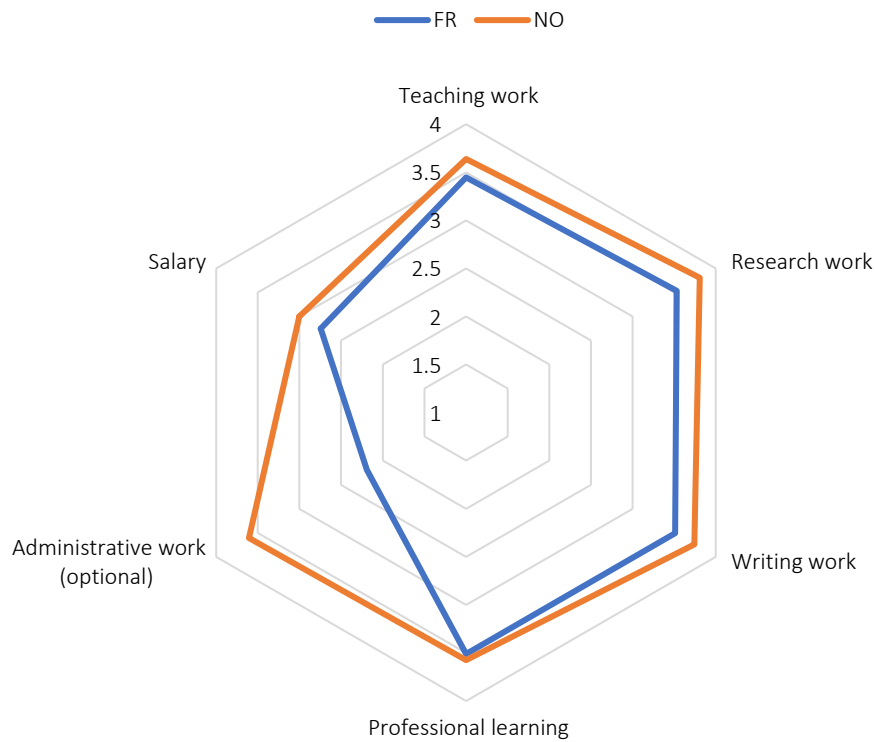


Figure 2. Job satisfaction of researchers in French (FR) and Norwegian (NO) schools of management

the groups studied. They are especially dissatisfied with research, writing, and administrative work. In contrast, female researchers from Norway are more satisfied with their salary and professional learning conditions than all other groups.

When testing *H3* by the Kruskal-Wallis test, it was established that it is confirmed with a probability of more than 0.95 only for teaching work among women of two countries (0.966). This means that female researchers in France and Norway are equally

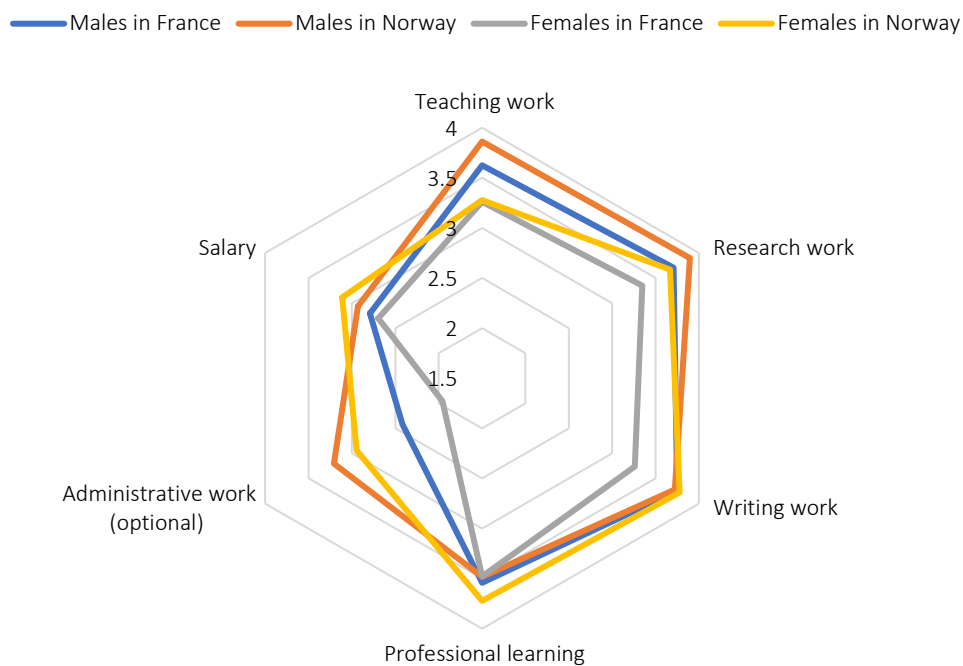


Figure 3. Job satisfaction of researchers in French and Norwegian schools of management by gender

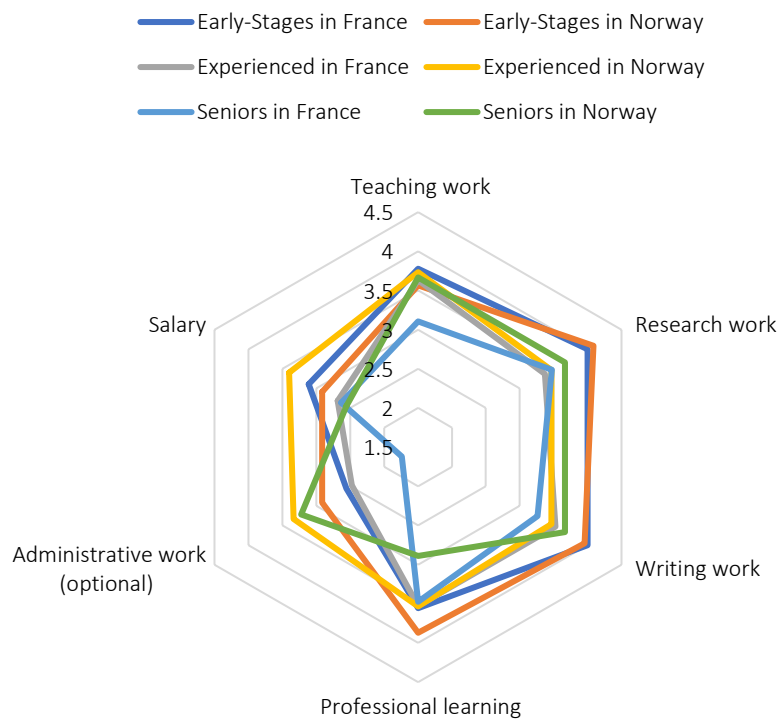


Figure 4. Job satisfaction of researchers in French and Norwegian schools of management by career stage

satisfied with teaching conditions. However, since their average self-assessments are significantly lower than males' (see Figure 3), it can be said that they are equally low in satisfaction with this factor.

At the same time, according to the administrative work factor, both genders have confirmation of the hypothesis with a probability significantly lower than 0.05. Moreover, it is almost zero for females (0.003) and males (0.005), indicating a significant difference in satisfaction with administrative work between the two countries. It is also possible to single out the low probability (0.098) of *H3* between the groups of females in the two countries on the writing factor, which indicates the extremely high dissatisfaction of French researchers with the conditions of writing research papers, which is much lower than that of other groups of respondents, including French males.

Figure 4 shows a comparison of researchers' job satisfaction by career stage that revealed some interesting results.

Early-stage researchers in both countries are more satisfied with research and writing conditions

than other categories of researchers. Moreover, the probability of confirming *H4* by writing is high (0.842), which indicates the equally high satisfaction of young researchers in both countries. According to other factors, the probability for the early-stage researchers of the two countries ranges from 0.331 to 0.643, which means that there are no significant differences between them.

A comparison of experienced researchers revealed confirmation of *H4* by research (1.000) and professional learning (0.956). However, for administrative work and salary, the probability of the null hypothesis is very low (0.017 and 0.065, respectively). Hence, there is a significant difference between French and Norwegian experienced researchers by these two factors.

The difference between senior researchers turned out to be even more significant. Although Norwegians are significantly more satisfied with administrative work (probability 0.002), French seniors are significantly more satisfied with professional learning than Norwegians (probability 0.027). It is also possible to single out a low probability of the null hypothesis for teaching (0.066),

which indicates significantly higher satisfaction of Norwegians with teaching conditions. However, a surprise was the confirmation of the hypothesis with a probability of 0.917 for the salary factor, and at a very low level (about 2.6). This indicates the same dissatisfaction of full professors with their salaries in both French and Norwegian management schools.

4. DISCUSSION

The non-confirmation of *H1* indicates the existence of differences between the motivation of researchers in management schools in Norway and France. Despite being equally motivated by interesting work with a probability of 0.91, significant national differences were found for half of the studied motivators. This means that there are significant differences in the Western academic model from country to country that must be considered in research and practice.

Comparing the results for France with Goncharuk and Cirella's (2022) survey results for 2019, one can see a significant decrease in the motivation of French researchers, especially in the part of interesting work, and only a certain increase in the part of challenging work. Apparently, this difference could have been influenced by various factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic (Goncharuk & Vinot, 2023) experienced between these studies conducted (2019 and 2023) or a significant difference in the incentive systems between the Paris (UP7) and Lyon universities studied.

Therefore, further research could determine the reasons for such differences in the motivation of researchers in different French universities, especially before and after the pandemic. It would also be exciting to establish the reasons for the relatively high motivation of Norwegian researchers. This may be due to a better system of work incentives or other values, which makes the respondents of this country significantly more motivated than their French counterparts in almost all of the studied motivators, except for job security, challenging work, and social benefits. According to the results, French researchers mostly work in management schools mainly because of the fear of being unemployed, the need for challenges, and for the sake of social benefits.

The non-confirmation of *H2* also points to the different satisfaction with the work of researchers in the two countries. In fact, according to all considered factors, Norwegian researchers were, on average, more satisfied. The difference is especially significant in the perception of the conditions of administrative work, according to which the Norwegians have a high degree of satisfaction, and the French showed the lowest one. According to this factor, the results of the study coincide with the results of Goncharuk and Cirella (2022), where the administrative work of the French researchers had the lowest level of satisfaction (2.5 out of 5), even lower than their Bosnian colleagues (2.8). In this study, the average score for French researchers is even lower (2.2). This may indicate a general overload of administrative duties among French researchers and university teachers, and dissatisfaction with this has increased over the years.

Testing *H3* and *H4* made it possible to establish the reasons for the low satisfaction of French researchers. In particular, females and senior researchers are the most dissatisfied with administrative work. These two groups of respondents are generally the most dissatisfied with their work among all the groups studied. In-depth interviews confirmed these results and revealed that, in contrast to early-stage researchers, senior researchers noted an overload by administrative duties as one of the main barriers to their effective work.

There are a number of reasons why French senior researchers are overworked. First, administrative responsibilities (diplomas management, recruitment and selection of students, research projects management) are naturally entrusted to senior researchers, while administrative support is very poorly supervised. As a result, a substantial proportion of day-to-day management work is carried out by senior lecturers when it could easily be delegated to less qualified staff. Particularly in French universities specializing in humanities and social sciences, this administrative understaffing is even more pronounced. This is confirmed by the results obtained by Dakowska (2023), which state that during the pandemic, administrative staff in French universities were overloaded much less than professors.

Second, the overload of administrative tasks can be explained also by the growth of manage-

ment innovation in French universities, which is emphasized by 93% of teachers and researchers (Tandilashvili, 2018). Finally, as Pace et al. (2021) distinguished, there is a recent tendency in French and some other European countries' universities when professors are engaged in more and more administrative responsibilities with or without additional benefit.

In addition, the very limited number of promotions possible in the hierarchy of senior researchers leads to a 'glass ceiling,' which means that prospects of progression within a given grade are minimal. As a result, a form of discouragement can be observed due to the lack of medium/long-term incentives. Apparently, weak career prospects have led to a reduction in the number of academic workers in French universities by almost 7% for the last decade (Civera et al., 2023). Moreover, it is more widespread in management science because there is a powerful network of private non-university business schools – "Grandes Écoles" (Carton et al., 2018), which offer competitive salaries and favorable work conditions and are particularly attractive to senior researchers.

More specifically, female researchers are even more dissatisfied with their administrative work. This is understandable in terms of long-term ca-

reer management, as the progression process involves a firm commitment to research until the age of forty in order to become a full professor, which is still largely dominated by male researchers. Even more, the 'accelerated' process known as 'agrégation du supérieur' (Pigeyre & Sabatier, 2012) is a national competition that requires those who pass it to be appointed to a post they did not choose throughout France. As interviews found, some women give up this competitive examination to preserve their family life. Finally, as salaries are, on average, lower than equivalent jobs in the private sector, these jobs can be perceived as "side jobs," which do not allow for long-term professional fulfillment.

In general, French researchers have lower job satisfaction than their Norwegian colleagues. The only exception is the dissatisfaction of Norwegian senior researchers with their professional learning conditions. Apparently, senior Norwegian researchers in management schools need better conditions for professional learning, as new opportunities for the development of teaching and research appear every year. However, unlike their French colleagues, they are not sufficiently trained in these innovations. Perhaps they should be trained together with early-stage researchers who are satisfied with professional learning in Norway.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to establish the national characteristics and differences in motivation and job satisfaction of researchers in two developed European countries – France and Norway. It can be argued that there is a significant difference between motivation and job satisfaction between researchers from management schools in Norway and France. Obviously, the considered case proves that each developed European country, having its own system of incentives and working conditions, provides different levels of satisfaction. Even across the three categories considered, namely country, gender, and career stage, a number of significant differences were found, which supports the argument about the difference in motivation and satisfaction of researchers from the two countries.

The results provided an opportunity to improve national incentive systems by benchmarking and adopting best practices within the continent. The continuation of the practice of multinational surveys, as was done by the OECD (Auriol et al., 2013) and the expansion of it to the pan-European level, will allow one to understand the challenges and best practices that other countries should adopt. European structures can implement the research methodology proposed and demonstrated in this study to conduct pan-European surveys and benchmarking. Implementing the best practices in various European countries should improve the motivation and job satisfaction of European researchers. This will definitely improve the efficiency of their work as well as accelerate scientific and technical progress.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Anatoliy Goncharuk.
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 Formal analysis: Anatoliy Goncharuk.
 Funding acquisition: Anatoliy Goncharuk.
 Investigation: Anatoliy Goncharuk.
 Methodology: Anatoliy Goncharuk.
 Project administration: Didier Vinot.
 Resources: Anatoliy Goncharuk.
 Supervision: Didier Vinot.
 Writing – original draft: Anatoliy Goncharuk.
 Writing – review & editing: Didier Vinot.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Questionnaire to study researchers' motivation and job satisfaction

Source: Goncharuk and Cirella (2022), modified by the authors.

What motivates you in your work?						
No.	Motives	Levels of evaluation				
		1 no matter	2 weak	3 medium	4 important	5 very important
1	Altruistic motives/Working to help others					
2	Interesting work					
3	Working closely with youth					
4	Job security					
5	Challenging work					
6	Social benefits					
7	Ability to make a strong contribution to society					
8	Opportunities for travel (mobility)					
9	Exciting work					
10	Community respect for your occupation					
11	Potential to combine work and family					
12	Flexible hours of work					
13	Awards and recognition					
14	Opportunities for promotion/advancement					
15	Responsibility in job					
16	Pleasant working conditions					
17	Professional prestige/high status					
18	Salary/Future earnings potential					
19	Opportunities for creativity and originality					
20	Demand for the profession/Job opportunities					
How do you evaluate your working conditions by type?						
No.	Type of work	Levels of evaluation				
		1 very bad	2 bad	3 modest	4 good	5 excellent
1	Teaching					
2	Research					
3	Writing					
4	Professional learning					
5	Administrative work (optional)					
6	Salary					