

# Specificity of the Motivation for High-Quality Publications in Russia

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**Abstract** – This theoretical study divulges the specificity of the Russian stakeholders' motivation to increase the number of articles in Scopus/WoS by Russian researchers. The research toolkit covers the stakeholder approach, PRISMA recommendations for systematic literature review, methods of deduction, comparison, and qualitative content analysis. We concluded that Russia is quite specific on this topic and found three primary Russian specifics: a unique stakeholder - the unified state bureaucracy; two unique motivational drivers of the researcher stakeholder - professional development and favourable academic environment; three unique motivational drivers of the university management stakeholder - political pressure reduction, power, and effective management.

**Keywords** – motivation, high-quality publications, stakeholders, research management, university, Russia.

## 1. Introduction

Increasing journal publications in the Web of Science (WoS)/Scopus global scientometric databases is now paramount to higher university rankings, student influx [1] and funding [2]. Essential prerequisites to achieve this goal are the stakeholders' motivation for such publications and the national science policy [3].

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The specific context has a significant impact on the nature of these prerequisites. In addition to foreign practices, national science policy has to reckon with native specifics of research development [4], resulting from the influence of political, economic, cultural and religious factors [5]. As for the motivation for WoS/Scopus-indexed publications, referred to here as "high-quality publications", its nature depends heavily on the stakeholders concerned. It is also widely believed that this type of motivation is country-/community-specific [6], [7], [8]. Therefore, one can conclude that the context and the actors involved strongly affect the motivational drivers for high-quality publications.

Russia's specific context in recent years addresses a number of government rules and programs on science development (e.g. [9], [10], [11]), the bureaucratic vertical of power [12], and the introduction of the so-called "new" public management in universities [13]. The WoS & Scopus literature review conducted in this article on the motivation in Russia for high-quality publications revealed some empirical studies for Russian universities. But no theoretical and large-scale empirical studies country-specific to Russia were found.

The *research aim* of this article is to clarify the specificity of the motivation of Russian stakeholders to increase the number of articles by Russian researchers in journals indexed by WoS/Scopus. This aim is achieved through a *theoretical study* using stakeholder theory and a review of the WoS & Scopus literature found by April 2022. Applying the stakeholder approach allows for clarifying differences in motivation content and drivers. In this context, the motivation of researchers is to increase the number of high-quality publications, while encouraging researchers to achieve this goal is the motivation of all other stakeholders.

Three *research questions* (RQ) arise in this article:

- RQ1: What are the stakeholders in Russia influencing Russian researchers to increase the number of their high-quality publications?
- RQ2: Which drivers motivate Russian stakeholders to contribute to increasing high-quality publications by Russian researchers?

- RQ3: What are the specifics of Russian stakeholders' motivation for high-quality publications?

A structured approach based on PRISMA recommendations for systematic literature review, methods of deduction, comparison and qualitative content analysis are the *research tools* of this study.

## 2. Research Process and Methods

The research process took place in *two stages*.

A systematic review of WoS & Scopus literature indexed before April 2022 covered the *first stage*. As a result, Russian stakeholders and their motivational drivers regarding this topic were identified. These drivers were ranked separately by stakeholder type.

The literature review followed the *structured approach of the PRISMA recommendations* [14], using the *protocol* shown in Figure 1.

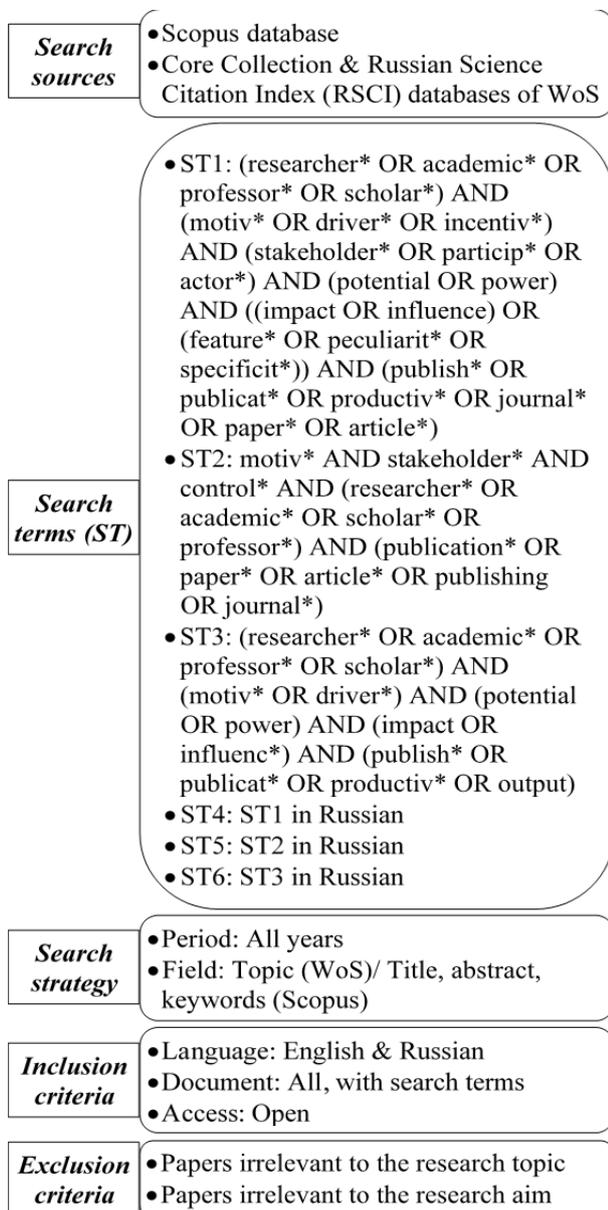


Figure 1. Review protocol

*Five steps* were incorporated in the first stage. In the first step, "Identification", 12 initial literature searches were conducted, following the review protocol. Thus, 3965 records (Table 1.) were retrieved. They were checked for duplicates in the second step, "Screening". Among them, 730 duplicates were identified and removed. Thus, the number of non-duplicate records for further review became 3235. In the third step, "Eligibility", the abstracts of the non-duplicate records were analyzed using *deduction and content analysis methods*. Following the exclusion criteria, 3219 records were excluded as irrelevant. Thus, 16 papers eligible for this review were approved. They were analyzed in detail in the fourth step, "Inclusion". The full text of 1 paper was not found, and 2 of the other papers were identical. For these reasons, 2 papers were excluded. The other 14 papers were considered completely relevant and formed the *sample of this study*, covering references from [15] to [28] (Figures 2. and 3.). In response to RQ1 and RQ2, findings were made for stakeholders and their motivational drivers to encourage Russian researchers for high-quality publications in the fifth step ("Synthesis"). Motivational drivers were classified by stakeholder type and then into extrinsic and intrinsic. Further, the drivers of each stakeholder were ranked (Figures 2., 3., 4.).

Table 1. Records found in WoS & Scopus until April 2022

Records identified	Search Term						Total
	ST1	ST2	ST3	ST4	ST5	ST6	
WoS (Core Collection & RSCI)	654	179	1053	6	489	7	2388
Scopus	816	151	610	0	0	0	1577
<b>Total papers identified</b>	<b>1470</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>1663</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3965</b>
Duplicates							730
<b>Total non-duplicate papers</b>							<b>3235</b>
<i>First exclusion</i>							3219
<i>Second exclusion</i>							2
<b>Papers included in the sample of this study</b>							<b>14</b>

RQ3 was answered in the *second stage*, revealing the specifics of Russian stakeholders' motivation for high-quality publications. It was found based on the *comparison method*. The highest-ranked motivational drivers for two stakeholders, the researcher and the university management, were compared in detail (Table 2., Figure 5.) with those in a comparative database. As a result, differences/similarities (coincidences) were identified between these drivers of Russian stakeholders and comparative sources.

The comparative database covered three empirical studies found in WoS & Scopus (Table 2.), incl. references [8], [29] and [30]. These studies concern the motivational drivers for high-quality publications in post-socialist countries and are detailed enough to

allow comparison. More specifically, they refer to the following countries/universities: reference [29] - Croatia, [30] - Romania, and [8] - one Bulgarian university. The choice of post-socialist countries as a comparative basis is due to the similar socio-economic situation and problems with Russia after 1990, incl. in research management. In the research environment, this proximity creates a reliable basis for correct conclusions about the specificity of Russia's motivation for high-quality publications.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Response to RQ1

Regarding the motivation for high-quality publications, this study identified *four Russian stakeholders* as follows:

- Researcher;
- University Management;
- Government; and
- Unified State Bureaucracy.

The unified state bureaucracy is a collective designation of politicized administrators at various levels (incl. heads of institutions and heads of scientific/ educational organizations) and privileged academic entrepreneurs (incl. high-ranking participants, groups of researchers and lecturers) seeking to maximize their private efficiency (career growth acceleration, strengthening the status in the organizational hierarchy, increasing financial income, etc.) [24].

#### 3.2. Response to RQ2

Motivational drivers generally differ in nature, depending on stakeholder type [31]. That's why motivational drivers were systematized here by

Reference	Extrinsic driver							Intrinsic driver						
	Academic pressure reduction	Career growth	Collaboration	Competitiveness	Fair wage system	Favourable academic environment	Incentive payments	Research funding (Grants)	Researcher's reputation	Academic freedom	Contribution to society	Creative work	Professional development	Scientific interest
[15]														
[16]														
[17]														
[18]														
[19]														
[20]														
[21]														
[22]														
[23]														
[25]														
[26]														
[27]														
[28]														
Rank	4	3	5	7	4	2	2	7	3	6	4	4	1	2

Figure 2. Motivational drivers of the Russian researcher stakeholder for high-quality publications

stakeholder type, although the whole sample lacks such a classification. In addition, motivational drivers were classified into intrinsic and extrinsic.

The *drivers of Russia's motivation for high-quality publications* identified here are as follows:

- Researcher stakeholder (Figure 2.) - 14 drivers:
  - extrinsic: academic pressure reduction, career growth, collaboration, competitiveness, fair wage system, favourable academic environment, incentive payments, research funding (grants), researcher's reputation;
  - intrinsic: academic freedom, contribution to society, creative work, professional development, scientific interest;
- University management stakeholder (Figure 3.) – 8 drivers:
  - extrinsic: career growth, effective management, government subsidies, political pressure reduction, power, university ranks improvement, university reputation enhancement;
  - intrinsic: contribution to society;
- Government stakeholder (Figure 3.) – 1 extrinsic driver: Russian universities rank improvement;
- Unified state bureaucracy stakeholder (Figure 3.) – 1 extrinsic driver: private efficiency.

Summarizing the results for RQ2 also included ranking the motivational drivers for each stakeholder (Figures 2., 3. and 4.). Mentions of the drivers in the sample were the basis of rankings, with each driver being counted once per source. The motivational driver rankings for the Russian stakeholders of the researcher and the university management are presented graphically in Figure 4., respectively Figure 4a. and Figure 4b. In addition, Table 2. lists the three highest-ranked drivers of these two stakeholders.

Reference	University management								Government	Unified state bureaucracy
	Extrinsic driver							Intrinsic driver	Extrinsic driver	Extrinsic driver
	Career growth	Effective management	Government subsidies	Political pressure reduction	Power	University ranks improvement	University reputation enhancement	Contribution to society	Russian universities rank improvement	Private efficiency
[15]										
[16]										
[17]										
[18]										
[21]										
[23]										
[24]										
[25]										
[26]										
[27]										
Rank	5	2	3	4	4	1	2	5		

Figure 3. Motivational drivers of the Russian stakeholders of university management, government and unified state bureaucracy for high-quality publications

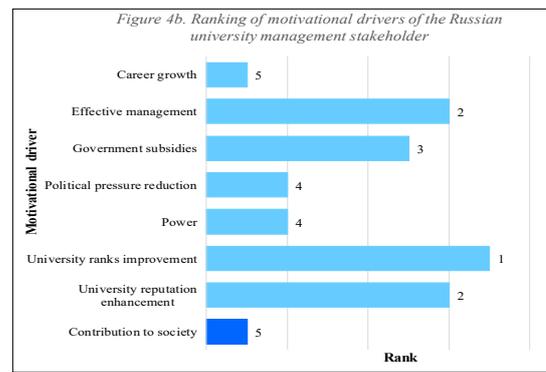
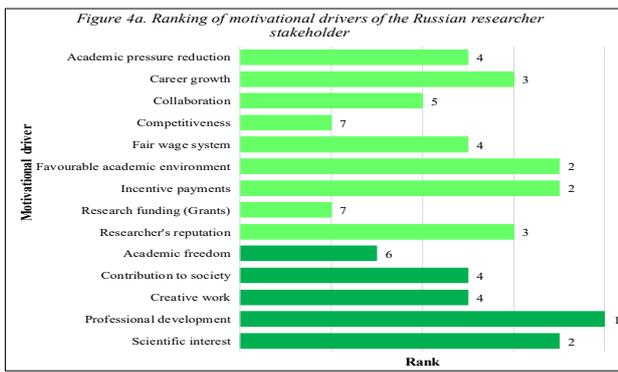


Figure 4. Motivational driver rankings of Russian stakeholders of the researcher and the university management

### 3.3. Response to RQ3

According to the results, the specificity of the Russian stakeholders' motivation for high-quality publications is in *three* main directions. The *first* concerns stakeholders. It lies in the existence of a Russia-specific stakeholder - the unified state bureaucracy (Figure 3.) with its single extrinsic driver - private efficiency. Until April 2022, the WoS/Scopus literature lacked this stakeholder for other countries.

The *second* direction concerns the motivational drivers of the Russian researcher stakeholder with the following specifics:

- Two unique motivational drivers: professional development and favourable academic environment. They were among the highest-ranked motivational drivers of this stakeholder (Table 2.), 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, respectively.
- Intrinsic top-ranked drivers of this stakeholder (Figures 2. and 4a.), namely professional

development (1<sup>st</sup>) and scientific interest (2<sup>nd</sup>).

- Half of the highest-ranked drivers of the Russian researcher's stakeholder had the same content as those in the comparison database but differed in ranks (rows 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1 in Table 2., Figure 5a.). These were the drivers of career growth, scientific interest and researcher's reputation.

The *third* direction concerns motivational drivers of the Russian university management stakeholder (rows 1.2, 2.2 and 3.2 in Table 2., Figure 5b.) with two specifics:

- Three unique motivational drivers: political pressure reduction, effective management and power. One of them, effective management, was highly ranked (2<sup>nd</sup>) in this sample for Russia.
- Significant similarity between the highest-ranked drivers of Russian and Bulgarian university management stakeholders - 3 coincidences out of 4 possible.

Table 2. Comparison of the highest-ranked motivational drivers for high-quality publications\*

Rank/ Stakeholder	Study			
	Empirical study on Croatia [29]	Empirical study on Romania [30]	Empirical study on Bulgaria [8]	This study of Russia
1	<i>First rank</i>			
1.1	enjoyment of science	career development	researcher's reputation	professional development ([16], [17], [18], [21], [22], [26], [27], [28])
1.2	-	-	university reputation	university ranks improvement ([15], [16], [18], [21], [24], [26], [27])
2	<i>Second rank</i>			
2.1	creative work	research recognition/ value	job satisfaction	favourable academic environment ([17], [18], [21], [22], [25], [27], [28]), incentive payments ([15], [17], [21], [22], [25], [26], [27]), scientific interest ([16], [19], [22], [23], [25], [27], [28])
2.2	-	-	increases in university subsidies	effective management ([15], [16], [17], [18], [25], [26]), university reputation enhancement ([15], [16], [18], [24], [25], [27])
3	<i>Third rank</i>			
3.1	researcher's reputation	research projects	promotion	researcher's reputation ([15], [16], [19], [21], [22], [28]), career growth ([17], [18], [20], [22], [27], [28])
3.2	-	-	increases in university ranks	government subsidies ([16], [17], [21], [23], [24])

\* Motivational drivers coloured in yellow are unique to Russia. The other colours correspond to those used in Figures 2., 3. and 4.

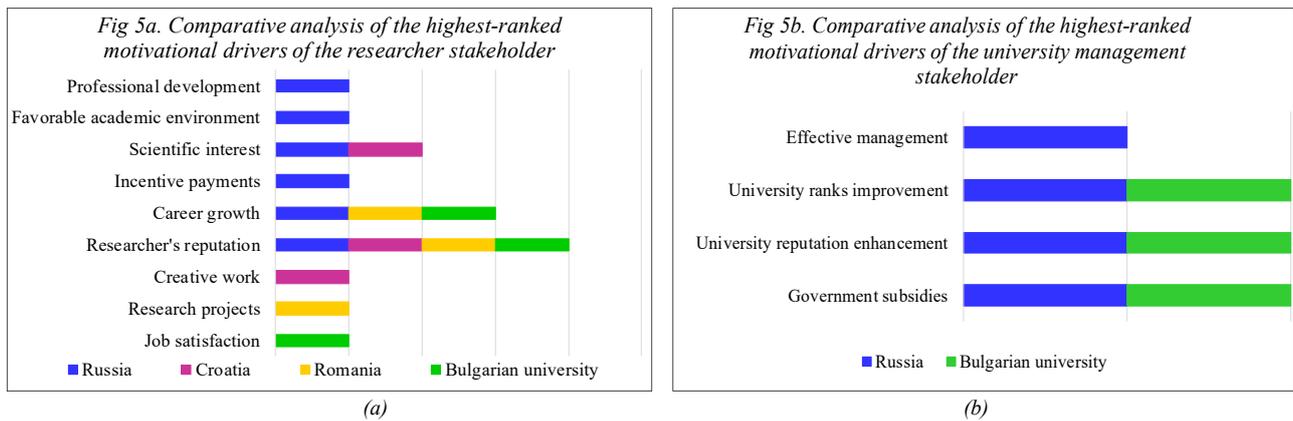


Figure 5. Comparative analysis of the highest-ranked motivational drivers of the stakeholders of the researcher and the university management for high-quality publications

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. RQ1

According to the literature, Russian stakeholders influencing the researchers' activity for high-quality publications were of two types: internal and external (see [32]) to the university. Internal stakeholders (researcher and university management) are typical for all universities, incl. Russian. The same goes for the government as an external stakeholder. The other external stakeholder, the unified state bureaucracy, is unique to Russia (comments in section 4.3.1).

### 4.2. RQ2

Most motivational drivers, 14, found in this sample addressed the Russian researcher stakeholder (Figure 2.). Since the number of high-quality publications depends on the initiative of researchers to publish, this is a logical result. In general, the motivational drivers of the Russian researcher stakeholder largely overlapped with those in the literature (e.g. [8]). As for the Russian university management stakeholder, this topic was also well-developed in the sample, with 8 motivational drivers found (Figure 3.).

The current topic was underdeveloped about the external stakeholders of Russian universities - the government and the unified state bureaucracy. The government motivation for high-quality publications was of interest to 4 sources - [15], [17], [21], [24] - and the motivation of the unified state bureaucracy was to 2 sources - [23], [24] (Figure 3.).

### 4.3. RQ3

#### 4.3.1. On the Russian unified state bureaucracy

The unified state bureaucracy is unique to Russia. Kurbatova et al. define it as a stakeholder comprising entities involved in the Russian vertical of power at three levels [24]: political, governmental, and institutional/departmental. These entities are the ones

who change the focus of Russian science policy from maximizing social efficiency to maximizing private efficiency [24]. According to Kurbatova et al., this distortion is due to the absence of a full-fledged agency chain in contemporary Russia: voters - public politicians - rational bureaucrats [24].

#### 4.3.2. On the motivational drivers of the Russian researcher stakeholder

*Regarding the unique motivational drivers:* As for *professional development*, none of the three comparison sources covered the same-worded driver. As for the *favourable academic environment*, Russian researchers understand it differently, both in terms of sources of comparison and with each other. Russian researchers address it to one or a combination of the following indicators: recognition mechanism ([18], [21], [22]), academic socialization/communication ([21], [22], [25], [28]), supportive management ([21], [25]), creative/democratic atmosphere ([18], [21], [26]), working conditions ([18], [25], [27], [28]).

*Regarding the top-ranked motivational drivers in comparative terms:* Two *intrinsic motivational drivers* were top-ranked by Russian researchers: *professional development* (1<sup>st</sup>) and *scientific interest* (2<sup>nd</sup>) (Table 2., Figures 2. and 4a.). These results confirmed the notion that intellectual aspirations (incl. the "love of science") are the most important to Russian researchers [16], [28]. For this comparative database, the *professional development* driver is unique to Russian researchers. The comparison of the *scientific interest* driver showed that it is among the highest-ranked only by Croatian researchers (Table 2., Figure 5a.).

The other highly ranked motivational drivers of Russian researchers were *extrinsic* (Table 2., Figures 2. and 4a.), incl. the *favourable academic environment*, *incentive payments*, *career growth*, and the *researcher's reputation*. For this comparative database, the *favourable academic environment* (2<sup>nd</sup>)

rank, Figures 4a. and 5a.) is one of Russia's unique motivational drivers. In our opinion, this result stems from the lack of consensus among Russian researchers on the content of this driver. The driver of *incentive payments* was not unique to Russia (2<sup>nd</sup> rank, Figures 2. and 4a.), but it was also not among the highest-ranked drivers of the researcher stakeholder in all three comparative empirical studies (Table 2., Figure 5a.). For Russia, financial assets on this topic cover the drivers of the fair pay system and incentive payments. The former driver concerns the introduction of effective contracts for researchers, and the latter - bonuses for high-quality publications paid to Russian researchers. These bonuses are high in Russia if one compares them with the fixed part of the researcher's remuneration. The driver of *career growth* (3<sup>rd</sup> for Russia, Table 2., Figures 4a. and 5a.) did not appear in the highest ranks only for Croatia, but it was ranked (under "promotion") in the same 3<sup>rd</sup> place by Bulgarian researchers. The *researcher's reputation* driver (3<sup>rd</sup> for Russia, Table 2., Figure 4a.) was among the highest-ranked drivers in all comparative sources (Figure 5a.). It was ranked in the same 3<sup>rd</sup> place by Croatian researchers.

Findings on the *differences/similarities* of the Russian researcher stakeholder based on the comparison of the highest-ranked motivational drivers (Table 2., Figure 5a.):

- On the content of motivational drivers:
- ✓ With 2 similarities in the highest-ranked motivational drivers per empirical study ([8], [29], [30]), Russian researchers were equally far from researchers in each of the three post-socialist countries on this indicator. If we comment on these results on behalf of the three countries, the findings are exactly the opposite, as each of these countries has 2 similarities with Russia out of 3 possible.
- ✓ There were the most similarities (3) for the researcher's reputation driver and the least (1) for the scientific interest driver.
- On the ranking of motivational drivers:
- ✓ In the Bulgarian and Croatian researchers' rankings (references [8], [29]), there was one eponymous motivational driver of the same rank as in the Russian one.
- ✓ No eponymous motivational drivers of the same rank were found in the rankings of Russian and Romanian (reference [30]) researchers.

#### 4.3.3. On the motivational drivers of the Russian university management stakeholder

*Regarding the unique motivational drivers:* The uniqueness of motivational drivers of *political pressure reduction* and *power*, specific to the Russian university management stakeholder, is a logical

consequence of the structure and exercise of state power in Russia. In this regard, it is crucial that Russia is both a presidential republic and a former socialist country. As for the third unique driver - *effective management*, its absence as a motivational driver in the comparative database is surprising.

*Regarding the highest-ranked motivational drivers in comparative terms:* Owing to the absence of data for Croatia and Romania, a comparison of the highest-ranked motivational drivers regarding the university management stakeholder is only possible between Bulgaria and Russia (Table 2., Figure 5b.). Except for the effective management driver, the results of this comparison were a complete match of the highest-ranked motivational drivers in content and no match in their rankings. These results and the unique motivational drivers describe *differences/similarities* between the Russian university management stakeholder and the comparative database.

All findings and conclusions in this study are in terms of Russia. They are only representative of the review protocol *limitations* (section 2), the sample of this study (references from [15] to [28]) and the comparative database used in it (references [8], [29] and [30]).

Our recommendations for *future research* on the motivation for high-quality publications in Russia are to explore the mutual influences between motivational drivers and the interactions/interrelations between Russian stakeholders, as well as their impact on citation counts of Russian researchers. Taking them into account would save resources [33] and increase the productivity of researchers/universities [34], resulting in increased efficiency of research management in Russia.

## 5. Conclusion

This article has clarified the specificity of the Russian stakeholders' motivation to increase the number of articles by Russian researchers in the global scientometric databases of Scopus and Web of Science. To this end, a *theoretical study* was conducted. It is based on stakeholder theory, PRISMA recommendations for systematic literature review, methods of deduction, comparison, and qualitative content analysis.

The main conclusion of this study is that *Russia is quite specific* on the topic of motivation for high-quality publications compared to empirical studies on post-socialist countries found in WoS/Scopus by April 2022.

The following primary specifics of the Russian stakeholders' motivation for high-quality publications were identified:

- Unique Russian stakeholder - the unified state bureaucracy, motivated solely by its private efficiency;
- For the Russian researcher stakeholder:
  - Two unique motivational drivers: favourable academic environment and professional development;
  - Intrinsic top-ranked motivational drivers - professional development and scientific interest;
  - Quite a different content of the highest-ranked motivational drivers of the Russian researcher stakeholder compared to empirical studies on post-socialist countries. It is even more true for the ranks of the highest-ranked motivational drivers. According to this indicator, Russian researchers were equally far from Croatian and Bulgarian researchers, and there was no similarity with Romanian ones.
- For the Russian university management stakeholder:
  - Three unique motivational drivers: political pressure reduction, power, and effective management;
  - Except for the effective management driver, a complete match in the content of the highest-ranked motivational drivers of Russian and Bulgarian university management stakeholders and no match in their ranks.

We hope that these findings will support the governance of Russian science and all scholars involved in research management.

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