

Work Motivation: Comparative Analysis between Serbia and Bulgaria

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Abstract

In this article work motivation and value of labor are analyzed on a theoretical level as factors for organisational effectiveness. The motives for work are related to job satisfaction and organisational effectiveness. Motivation for optimal work activity depends on the extent that work is a value for the individual employee. If work contributes to meaning it is a value that is a sufficient motivating factor. Reasons are given for the concept that the strength of work motivation depends not only on personal, but also on organisational factors such as the system of remuneration, group size, feedback, etc.

KEYWORDS: motives, values, work, satisfaction, organisation

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Psychological and economic perspectives of motivation

Research throughout the twentieth century has identified different criteria and approaches for measuring the effectiveness of organisations. The motivation for work has always been considered an important determinant.

In today's business world the effectiveness of the organisation is not only associated with the motivation of the individual, but more broadly with the overall motivation of the work team. Teams play an increasingly important role in modern organisations and therefore to achieve effectiveness it is important not only to motivate the individual but also the team as a whole. In many organisations today the ultimate responsibility for work is increasingly shifted from individuals to teams (Hackman,1987; Ilgen,1994). Notwithstanding this trend, one cannot ignore the fact that in order to be effective organisations depend on the motivated individual for whom work is an intrinsic value.

Some authors are inclined to explain motivated behaviour, including the motives for work, from the perspective of reinforcement theory. Skinner (1950) explored reinforcement as motivators in animals. The theory contained three key variables - stimulus, response and reward. The stimulus is an event outside the individual that cause a behavioural response. The reward is provided if the reaction to the stimulus is correct and is seen as a reinforcement of the correct response. Through reinforcement the individual learns the right response in the presence of the appropriate stimulus. According to reinforcement theory people's behaviour depend mainly on external reinforcements, i.e. the rewards or punishments, rather than internal motives.

The concept of "intrinsic-extrinsic" motivation is attributed mainly to E. L. Deci (Deci, 1972, 1975; Deci,Ryan 1985; but see also Muchinsky, 1993; Robbins, 1998). The research they reported demonstrate that causal attribution affect human behaviour. In his *Intrinsic-Motivation Theory* Deci suggested that people are motivated by external rewards (for example, money) or alternatively by internal subjective reasons for example by the experience of pleasure from work-related behaviour. According to Deci intrinsic motivation energizes and directs behaviour primarily for reasons personal satisfaction. For many people work has an intrinsic value apart from any rewards. At the same time if an individual is not particularly attracted to a job but participates because of pay (extrinsic motivation), then increasing the pay will increase the level of motivation and efforts. On the other hand, Deci suggested that if an employee inherently likes work because it gives them pleasure or because of any other intrinsic motivation, it is likely that increased pay will reduce the level of motivation. Deci concluded that providing external rewards to people who like their work actually reduces their motivation. This finding produced many additional studies and evaluations of practical applications (Kruglanski, 1975; Lepper, Greene, 1978; Deci, Ryan 1985). Deci's conclusions are not universally supported (see: Hamner, Foster, 1975; Phillips, Lord, 1980; Muchinsky, 1993).

An individual's motivation is influenced by intellectual, social, economic, emotional and other factors. In line with this, motivating a diverse workforce helps the companies create a workforce composed of people with many different backgrounds, perspectives, skill sets, and tastes (Radovic-Markovic, et.al.2014). According to Radovic –Markovic by bringing together the different backgrounds, skills, and experiences of the diverse workforce, businesses are better able to produce innovative and creative solutions that are a must to succeed in an increasingly competitive economy.

Many authors (e.g. Atkinson, Birch, 1978; Kanfer, 1990; Vroom, 1964) consider motivation an internal condition that energizes and directs the individual where to invest time and effort. It is clear that the strength of motivation depend also to some extent on the meaning that is attributed to a certain activity, on the intrinsic value of work, and more particularly on the content of the task that is performed. What is considered the purpose of work has a major impact on both motivation and behaviour of individual (Locke and Latham 1990). Overall work-related motivation is impacted by whether the work has a significant purpose, in the short-term range or as a long-term strategic goal.

During the last quarter of the 20th century the motivation theory of Vroom enjoyed extraordinary popularity (Vroom, 1964). The popularity of Vroom's ideas is probably due to practical applications in the field of business. While the majority of studies support the theory, there are researchers who are skeptical about the validity of the concepts advocated in Vroom's theory (Heneman, Schwab, 1972; Reinharth, Wahba, 1975). Other researchers attempted to modify the theory (Graen, 1969; Porter, Lawler, 1968). The theory of Vroom is relevant to work activity as it accentuates expectation. According to Vroom, the strength of motivated behaviour depends on the expectation that the completed action will be successful and rewarded, and on the attractiveness of the reward.

Regardless of culture work motivation is influenced by several other factors. An important variable is the system of remuneration introduced into organisational policy. The current trend is shifting the focus of responsibilities from the individual to teams. Managers therefore should strive to motivate the team as a whole and not just focus attention on the individual. Creating "team motivation" depend in turn on the system of remuneration that exists within the organisation. For example, if remuneration focuses on individual rewards that would tend to reduce the level of cooperative behaviour required by team work and creates internal contradictions and conflicts (Argote, McGrath, 1993).

Motivation for work is however dependent not only on personal characteristics, but also on the characteristics of the group and group phenomena, e.g. social loafing (Ingham, Levinger, Graves, Peckham, 1974; Kravitz, Martin, 1986). Studies show that large groups that produce anonymity and de-individualization produce social loafing (Jackson, Harkins, 1985). Other studies have demonstrated the harmful effect of social loafing on group performance (Karau, Williams, 1993) and its relationship to work motivation. The detrimental effect of social loafing on the effectiveness of the group can be reduced when individual performance is identified through feedback as a control mechanism. The influence of feedback on productivity on work and on the effectiveness of the organisation has been demonstrated in other studies (Algera, 1990; Locke, Latham, 1990).

We also should not ignore the manager's role in a workplace that fosters high employee morale and positive employee motivation. They must use a variety of methods such as modifying the work environment, promoting employee participation and rewarding employees. In this context, managers must play a more supporting rather than supervisory role in the whole process of employees learning (Radovic-Markovic, et al. 2014).

Studying of motives for work of employees from Bulgaria and Serbia

This research aims at studying which are the leading motives for work of employees from organisations based in Serbia and Bulgaria. It covers aspects of work concerning mainly *external* factors for the individual like payment, working conditions, job security. The assumption is that various values related to work would motivate each individual to a different extent. The task of this research is to identify the main trends in work motivation of the subjects from the two countries on the basis of their choices of the motives for work they stated as being most important for them.

Research Methodology

Based on the review of the literature a survey questionnaire was developed. The study was undertaken in the year 2014 in Bulgaria and Serbia. The questionnaires were completed using an electronic survey system. The survey asked participants to choose one out of six factors in terms of importance for motivating them to do their work. The response categories were from 1 = “most important” to 6 = “least important”.

The main hypothesis in the research is that the monetary rewards play a role in motivating employees (Champagne, McAfee, 1989). The main aim of the research is to find out the differences in the leading trends between the two countries by studying the factors motivating employees for work.

Subject of research

— The Serbian sample

The sample consisted of 100 participants of Serbian nationality found by using an online version of the survey. The participants were adult employees randomly sampled from companies in Serbia.

Gender divided the sample into two almost equal by size groups, with slight domination by the female gender (around 55%).

Distribution of respondents by age showed that 59% were between 26 and 34 years old. Fourteen percent of the subjects were aged 45-54 years followed by those aged 18-25 and 35-44 years (10% each). The smallest age group (7%) was the one of respondents aged 55-64. The data demonstrated the sample was relatively young.

By the degree of education, the respondents in this sample were divided as follows: 58% of them have a master's degree. Twenty-six percent of the subjects were people who have graduated high school, followed by 12% college graduates. The smallest portion of participants (4%) had a primary school diploma.

In conclusion, the demographic profile of the sample revealed a young sample dominated by women and by people with master's degrees.

— The Bulgarian sample

The sample consisted of 54 participants of Bulgarian nationality found by using an online version of the survey. The majority of the sample included women (83%). Men were seventeen percent.

In terms of age, 35% of the respondents were between 26 and 34 years old. Twenty-six percent of the subjects were aged 35-44 years followed by those aged 18-25 (24%). The smallest age group (15%) was the one of respondents aged 45-54. The mean age of subjects was 33 years.

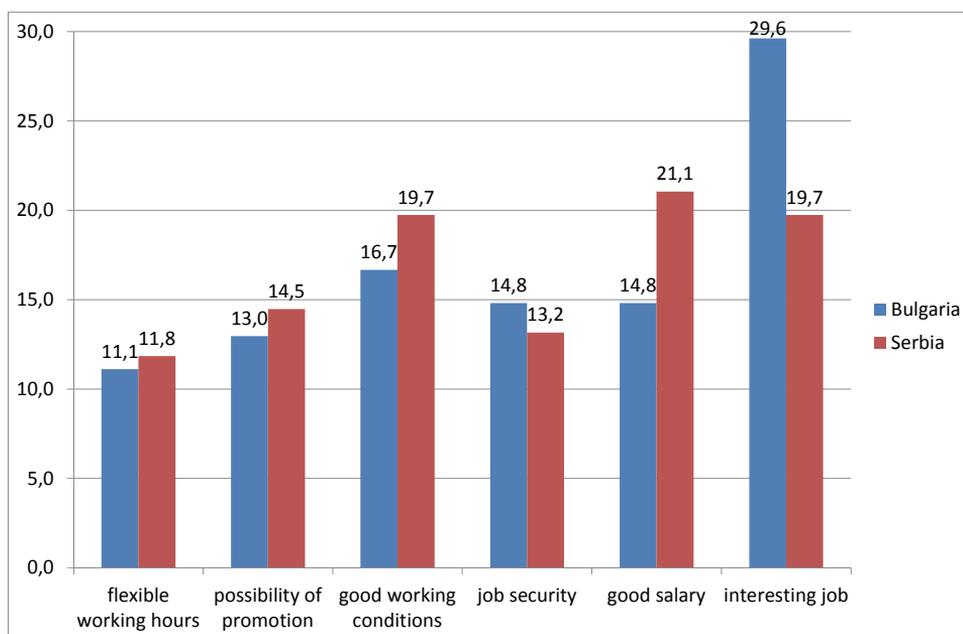
With regard to their education, 61% of the respondents had a master's degree, 33% had completed a bachelor's degree, while 6% had graduated high school.

In conclusion, the demographic profile showed a young female sample which consisted mainly of people with a master's degree.

Results and discussion

This research does not claim it is comprehensive. Its aim is to find out the presence of certain trends in the two samples. The comparative analysis of the results yielded from the two countries is visualized in Table 1. As a leading motive for work the respondents from Serbia stated the good salary whereas in the Bulgarian sample the leading motive was the interesting job.

Table 1: Comparative analysis of the results from the research



The difference between the distributions is not statistically significant (Chi-square = 2.25; $p = 0.813$). The differences between percentages of the particular factors are also not statistically significant although there are two large differences – in “good salary” ($t = -0.93$; $p = 0.178$) and in “interesting job” ($t = 1.28$; $p = 0.101$). The high degree of closeness of the results in the two countries is evidenced by the high value of Spearman's Rho: 0.657.

However, the study of work motivation yielded interesting results in the Serbian sample. **The good salary** is the leading aspect that motivates the employees. The next two important factors for the subjects were the **interesting job** and **good working conditions**. The

third leading motive in the responses of the subjects was the *possibility of promotion* in the organisational hierarchy. *Job security* was pointed as a fourth important motive for the respondents. The least important motive indicated by the subjects was *the flexible working hours*.

The main hypothesis of the study, i.e. that monetary rewards play a role in motivating employees was *confirmed* by the results in this sample.

The respondents from the Bulgarian sample indicated *the interesting job* as the most important motive. The next important motive was the *good working conditions*. It was followed by two equally important motives for the subjects: *the job security* and *good salary*. Then the respondents pointed to the motive *possibility of promotion* in the organisation. As in the Serbian sample, the least important motive for the Bulgarian respondents was the *flexible working hours*.

In the Bulgarian sample, the main hypothesis was *rejected* as the good salary was not among the leading motives.

An interesting aspect in relation to education was the fact that more than a half of the respondents in the study (58% of the Serbian and 61% of the Bulgarian) had completed higher education.

With respect to distribution by gender and age, both samples were dominated by young women aged between 26 and 34 years.

In conclusion, we could say that the research fulfilled its aim revealing the various trends in the motives of employees from the two countries. The conducted analyses are not comprehensive but they provide directions for further research. The samples are considered through the differences in gender, age and education of participants but the collected demographic data allows future analyses using other characteristics like length of service, demotivational factors for work etc. This would reveal new aspects of motives for work, related to job satisfaction and organisational effectiveness.

Summary of the analyzed data

The studied motives are difficult to consider as separate and independent factors leading to work satisfaction. They are interrelated and represent the main needs of the employees that form stable work motivation. The main aim of the research was to find out which are the leading motives for work of employees from Serbia and Bulgaria.

The results from the conducted research identify some differences in the individual perceptions of work values that motivate the employees in Serbia and Bulgaria. Talking about the two populations, however, we have to bear in mind that we use this term only conditionally, and only with regard to this research which is not representative for the two countries. Also, the percent differences between the two samples are too small. Nevertheless, for the respondents from Serbia there was a trend – i.e. the main motive for work was the good salary which confirmed the research hypothesis. To some extent this result can be interpreted as expected because people at this age are more oriented to material security. The financial security is often a main criterion of choice among the young people as it is related to increase of their material standard and creation of a family and home.

As it was indicated, the Serbian sample is relatively homogeneous by gender as the women are slightly more than the men. Identification of payment as a main motive is a

serious indicator that the material well-being turns into a priority also of working women. The change of the status of women during the last decades, from housewives and mothers to active employees, is a trend which is observed in many societies and cultures. The results from this research are an evidence of the more active role of women on the labor market and of their desire for fair and satisfactory payment of work. It can be said that motivation of women for good payment of work is as clearly expressed as the one of the men in this sample.

In the Bulgarian sample the main motive stated by the respondents is the interesting job. Probably for the respondents material pay itself is insufficient to form satisfaction in the employees as the factor "money" is the third important factor. As it can be seen from the results, for the employees it is important that they like their job and are attracted by it. It is possible that this trend is due to the fact that part of the subjects from the Bulgarian sample is included in continuing education and qualifications. Most probably, this dominant need for knowledge at the moment when the research was conducted influenced their motivation for engagement in a job that is interesting.

The least important motive for the respondents in both samples is the flexible work time. It is obvious that this trend is valid for these samples. It seems that for the young people who are striving for material security and fast promotion in the organisational hierarchy the fixed working hours are not problematic. The need for flexible working hours is characteristic for more mature people and for the employees who have families. The flexible working hours suppose easier planning and organisation of tasks and activities in everyday life and provide better balance between the personal and professional life of employees.

Conclusion

Work motivation is really a determinant of organisational effectiveness, which means that the effectiveness and productivity of an organisation will be higher if individuals are highly motivated for work activity. But in itself the high motivation for work depends on many other factors of psychological and organisational nature. Employees will be highly motivated for work if there is job satisfaction, if work itself is valuable to them, if work activity is related to their long-term strategic purposes, etc. In addition to these personal factors, there are organisational factors that determine the motivation for work and these are: the system of remuneration, organisation size, the presence of a feedback as a control mechanism of work performance, etc. All these factors must be considered when developing a common concept of the psychological and organisational factors which determine organisational effectiveness.

Identification of the motives in this research showed the various importances of certain work values for the respondents from both countries. It could be summarized that the external factors like the possibility for promotion, provision of the necessary conditions for work and the flexible working hours motivate the employees' behaviour. However, for them the more important motives are the good salary and the needs for an interesting and attractive job.

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