

INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS ON PREFERRED FORMS OF MOTIVATION

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Abstract

Within the worsening economic conditions, people become one of the most important aspects of the company success. Therefore, everything related to the proper management and development of human resources is crucial for the company. Motivation is one of the most important factors in the aspect of the management of human resources. Hence, the factor, influencing motivation, could play a vital role in the management of the staff. Namely, our main goal in the current article is to investigate the influence of demographic characteristics on the preference of certain motivational types. The study was held in the form of a survey among N=448 respondents in a governmentally owned railway company. For the investigation of the linkage between demographics and motivational preference, we conducted regression and correlational analysis. Our main findings proved, relatively weak, but still statistically significant influence of demographic traits on motivation.

Keywords: *workplace motivation; preferred motivators; demographics*

JEL Codes: M12; M54

Introduction

Motivation is a highly complexed process within the work place. Motivation is a process of taking a voluntary decision to undertake a particular purposeful action or inaction under given circumstances. It is of a subjective nature, runs within an individual's mind, and is reduced to the personal appraisal of all the impacts on him/her, of the signals sent by the economic, organizational and social environment of the enterprise (Dimitrova, Sotirova, p. 168). The problems of the matter interest scholars ever since management has been acknowledged as a separate science. Motivating employees is one of the most

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important processes within the management of human resources. Often times, namely the highly motivated staff is the tremendous difference between the good and great companies. The last is ever truer in complexed economical condition; such are the current due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Now, more than ever, managers must find ways to keep motivation in high levels in their companies and to apply the most favorable forms of it. Therefore, in the examination of motivation in the workplace, it is in high importance that managers acknowledge the employees not only as an instrument for fulfilling company goals, but as well as individually form person with its preference on motivation. The preference on their site could be influenced by numerous of factors both within the person and as a consequence of his social interaction. Moreover, knowing the factors that have a significant impact on the relationships and motivation could contribute to the formation of a correct view on the innovation culture in organizations (Kyurova, Koyundzhiyska-Davidkova, p. 130). Creating conditions for constant enhancement in the organization requires that all employees share the wish for improvement, which depends on their motivation (Angelova, 2019). The preference on their site could be influenced by numerous of factors both within the person and as a consequence of his social interaction. Hence, factors such as – personality traits (Bipp, 2010, p. 29); autonomy support (Gellet at all, 2017, p. 1167); leadership (Keating, Harper and David, 2013, p.34-35); leadership empowerment (Zang, Barton, 2010, p. 17); age and lifespan (Kanfer, Ackerman, 2004, p. 455-456), social interaction and cultural dependencies (Wood, Bandura, 1989, p.378-380), (Bandura, 2002, p. 280-282), (Roe, Zinovieva, Dienes, Horn, 2000, p. 675-677), could highly influence work motivation. The authors, which examine such influence, tend to notice the high importance in the demographic and personal characteristics of the individual. Among the formally mentioned studies, we aim to examine some of the most important demographic and personal characteristics in our current study.

Firstly we will define motivation, then we will examine former work on the thematic and lastly we provide our methodology, provide and analyze our results.

Motivation could be defined in various ways. The most common way to describe motivation is as a complexed process, which is highly depended of the interaction between the human and the environment. Motivation is the basis of employee behavior and performance. (Filipova, 2016, p. 80) Alternately, as Deckers (2010) describes it, a process initiating, directing and maintaining goal-directed behavior (p. 6). Form the other hand, motivation can be considered as a set of energetically powers, initiating the work behavior and determining its power, direction, intensity and duration (Pinder 2008, p.13). The basis for the motives of employee behavior is the need for both psychological and physiological sense of lack of something in the individual. (Filipova, 2015, p. 73) Consequently, motivation can be accepted as directing psychological process, built by various energetical

powers, having the goal to affect behavior in a way, determining the direction, intensity and persistence of individual's behavior (Ivanov, Usheva 2021, p. 98).

Another example of the motivation within its aspect of interaction with the environment is the so called concept of flow in workplace. Seeman & Seeman (2015) define the motivation as a intrinsic process, which is influenced by four factors – skill, capacity to work, challenge and work load (p.5). According to the authors, if the managers manage to balance these four factors, employees tend to self-motivate in their work. In this regard, Yaneva (2007) emphasizes that the work efficiency and the use of the employee's full potential is invariably related to his identification with the company and its goals (p.428). Hence, motivation can be also a process, which is more intrinsic than extrinsic. Intrinsically motivated staff are the focus of the latest research in motivational theories. Deci (1975) describes this process as a behavior in which there is not expected reward in result of the direction or results of the behavior and in which, the person is motivated more from the action itself than a possible reward (p. 23-24). Therefore, in some conditions the process of motivation and motivating does not need any form of reward when it is applied in the work environment. Deci and Rayan (2000) define motivation as an intrinsic process, in within three forms of needs must be fulfilled – competence, autonomy and relatedness (p. 231).

Therefore, motivation could be accepted as a constant interaction between the individual and the environment, but as well and as a constant pursuit of need fulfilment. Namely, needs could be described as an psychological irritation in the individual, which forces him to act in the direction, which he believes that will fulfil the desired. Needs are examined by many authors and their importance in work motivation a consequence of the work of many authors. Therefore, the views for the needs essence tend to differ. For example, Maslow (1954), describes 5 – psychological, safety, social, respect and self-actualization (p. 77-97). On the other hand, based on his work, Alderfer (1969) proposes only tree – existence, relentless, growth (p. 144). Hogan and Warremfeltz (2003), described – biological, needs for acceptance and approval, status, power and control over resources, predictability and order (p. 77). Needs and their fulfilment are a crucial part of motivational theory. In the current study, we will examine into what extend the preferred motivational types tend to differ in different people, based on their differences in demographic or individual aspect. Yaneva (2020) underlines that the need for additional training as a development perspective that increases the employees' work motivation (p.47).

As we mentioned above, motivation could be influenced by various aspects of individuals' life. In the further part of the paper we will examine more examples of this interaction. Our goal with this approach is to provide examples of previous work, which examines the motivational dependency in the aspect of demographic and individually based

factors. Among a study of 777 people, Hart et al. (2007) proved a link between basic personality traits and the achievement motivation people tend to have (p. 271-272). The Authors provided prove that given personality traits tend to increase intrinsic motivation and others, increase extrinsic motivation for work. Therefore, people with different personality traits are expected to prefer different kinds of motivational forms. On the other hand, personality traits could be different for different demographic groups. Costa, McCrae & Lockenhoff (2019) based on a review of numerous empirical studies, conclude, that personality the presence of certain personality traits differs in different age groups (p. 442). Therefore, not only personality traits can influence motivation, but also demographic profiles could influence indirectly motivation true their influence on personality. A more direct approach of influence of demographic characteristics, namely age is chosen by Shane and Heckhausen (2019) they conclude that age could influence control strivings; different trajectories across individual organizational and societal levels; the type off intensity of motivational strategies and the influence of them on adaptiveness; how goals are formulated; which motivational and volitional strategies are most relevant and effective within each phase of the goal cycle; how individuals optimize their development throughout their work life (p. 129). Hence, age can greatly influence the way people act in their work. Therefore, true the channels of the influences, mentioned above, we can conclude that age can affect also the preferred forms of motivation. In another aspect, Usheva (2015), states that the specific environmental conditions affect directly and indirectly human motivation for creative activity (p. 10). Hence, the environment and demographic characteristics, could lead to reduction or increase in creativity.

Another example of age influence on individuals on their competitiveness true out their life development. Mayr, Davidson, Kuhs & Harbaugh (2012) proved that with age increasing, propensity for competitiveness increases to certain age, to decrease to older age from 54 years to retirement. The author acknowledge different results in men and women, stating that overall, men are more competitive that women (p. 280). Consequently, if there is a higher propensity for one's competitiveness the preferred forms of motivation could differ. For example, in the early states of carrier development, people could desire more material stimulation, more gratification and pride from their work. Controversially, in later states of the career, people could strive for more calm work environment, providing them with enough opportunities for mastery and relatedness.

According to Dimitrova, with an aging workforce and a constantly declining population, good working conditions prolong the working lives of workers and create an environment in which valuable professionals are retained. In many professions and sectors, due to the demographic collapse, there is already a significant shortage of human capital, and at the same time there is a reluctance of the younger generations to focus on certain

areas of activity. The education system and the labor market also cannot create new specialists with the necessary speed. This requires paying special attention to the motivation of the older generation in companies.

As it was firstly acknowledged by Herzberg (1968), different kinds of professions tend to have different perforations on their behavior. The author stated that in some jobs, which are related to higher overall skills and certain levels of mastery, salary can be accepted as a hygiene factor. Controversially, in jobs with less requirements for skill and mastery, salary can be accepted as a motivator. In line of this Bandiera, Barankay & Rasul (2005) proved a strong increase of productivity among workers in fruit manufacturing company after the implication of piece rate motivational shames. Moreover, the authors prove that the increasing of hours worked, had poorer effect on overall results, compared to the time after the implementation of the motivational scheme (p. 928–929). The last could be stated also when it comes to different levels in the organizational structure of the companies. Where workers on lower levels, could have different preferred forms of motivation than workers on higher or management levels. Lifespan is a very important aspect when studying work force. Moreover, it influence is in the interest among many scholars in the past and also present research. Hence, Rudolph (2016) states that lifespan perspectives are becoming a dominant paradigm for understanding the role of age in work contexts, and the reviewed research in generally supportive of a number of predictions derived from various lifespan perspectives (p.151). Therefore, age and lifespan are very important once studying also the forms, which must be applied in the work environment.

With the above-mentioned studies, we aimed to underline the vast variety of influences on motivating people. It is easy to say, that if a person is in a certain state of his life development, to be motivated by given set of motivators when working. For example, young workers, without owned home, small children which they need to care of, are more favorably motivated by material stimulation. Controversially, employees, already fulfilled their overall life goals, will tend to be motivated by more non-material stimulation and will strive for more mastery, and fulfilment in work. There would be exception in this, but overall, life development and demographic traits in general have a great influence on the preferred motivators in work. Therefore, studies, examining the connection between the mentioned variables are with a high meaning when studying human motivation and its later implication on practice.

Methodology

The research was conducted in the form of an online survey in June 2020. The response group is part of a governmentally owned railway company in Bulgaria (n= 448).

In order to examine the workplace motivators, we gathered 38 examples from different theoretical sources and practice examples. The motivators were formulated into corresponding questions, using a 5-point Likert scale in order to examine the strength for each motivator, subjectively for each respondent. Then we divided the motivators into 6 modules as follows: 1. Work Environment (**WE**) ; 2. Remuneration (**R**); 3. Safety (**S**); 4. Personal development (**PD**) ; 5. Affiliation and social aspects (**ASP**); 6. Respect and self-respect. Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership (**RS; IC; AL**).

The **first** module had the goal to describe motivators linked with the environment to work, such as good working time, confirmable workplace, interior, ergonomics etc. The **second** module was linked to every material compensation which people can gain in their workplace. **Third** module had the goal to describe aspects of motivation, linked to the safety at work and safety which work provides in the life of individuals. The **fourth** module was designed to describe the necessity for people to improve and develop themselves. This module, described the higher set of needs and intrinsic motivation to work. **Affiliation and social aspects**, described the necessity of human contact in work. **The last** module was the most complex one. Our main goal was to describe intrinsic motivation and higher level needs. Therefore, the higher the personal attestation of the module, the higher the necessity for the motivators within it. For the attestation of modules, we calculated the mean average of the rating for each motivator and for each respondent.

In our study we examine demographics as follows – gender; age; educational degree; marital status; children to which the respondents must take care of; work experience inside the current organization an overall; hierarchy position.

For examining the influence of demographics on preferred motivation, we conducted regression analysis to examine the statistically significant influence among the response group and then we conducted a correlational analysis to evaluate the strength of this influence among our response group.

Results and discussion

Firstly in our result section, we will provide information regarding the demographics of the individuals in our response group. Later we will provide information regarding the descriptive statistics in the aspect of the preference of the modules and lastly, we will examine the influence of demographics on the preference of the modules.

The respond group is relatively equally divided by **gender** – 52% from the respondents are women and 48% are men. Among them, the largest part is above are the following **age groups** – 45 years old (53%); second largest age group is between 36 and 45 years (32%); the third largest age group is between 26 and 35 years (13%); the smallest age group is between 18 and 25 years old (2%). Therefore, the vast majority of the respondents are mid and before retirement age. When we investigate the **educational degree** we conclude that the largest part is with Masters degree (83%); second largest is with Bachelor degree (12%); only 4% are with high school education and only 1% are with higher degree that masters. As it comes to **marital status** the majority of the respondents are married (63%), or are living with someone in jointly home with someone (18%), and relatively small group are not married or living in a jointly home (19%). When evaluating the **presence of children** the largest part of the respondents do not take care of any children (38%), second largest group has 1 child that they are taking care of (34%), the third largest group has 2 children that they take care of (27%) and the smallest group is with 3 or more children which they take care of (1%). When we examine the **overall work experience** the largest art is with more than 15 years' experience (78%), the second largest is with between 11 and 15 years' experience (11%), third largest group is with between 6 and 10 years of experience (8%), the smallest represented group is with between 1 and 5 years of experience (3%). When investigating the **work experience in the current company**, the largest part is with more than 15 years in the company (43%), the second largest groups is with between 11 and 15 years in the company (15%), the third largest is with between 6 and 10 years (14%), and the smallest group is with between 1 and 5 years working in the company (28%). The last aspect of the demographics which was studies was **the position in the hierarchy**. The largest group on this trait is on a non-management position (58%), the second largest group are respondents on mid management position (29%), the third largest group is with respondents on low management position (supervisor, team leader etc.) (9%), the smallest represented group is on high-level management position (4%).

Now we will provide results related to the average attestation of the overall evaluation of the preferred motivators among our respond group. For the purpose of this, we will examine the descriptive statistics for the degree of preferred motivators among our respond group.

Table 1 – Descriptive statistics of the attestation of the preference of the modules

WE		R		S		PD		ASP		RS; IC; AL	
Mean	3,64	Mean	3,07	Mean	3,66	Mean	3,54	Mean	3,94	Mean	3,63
Standard Error	0,04	Standard Error	0,05	Standard Error	0,05	Standard Error	0,05	Standard Error	0,04	Standard Error	0,04
Median	3,75	Median	3,00	Median	3,75	Median	3,60	Median	4,00	Median	3,73
Mode	4,17	Mode	2,17	Mode	5,00	Mode	4,60	Mode	4,00	Mode	3,73
Standard Dev.	0,93	Standard Dev.	1,12	Standard Dev.	0,97	Standard Dev.	0,97	Standard Dev.	0,81	Standard Dev.	0,83
Sample Var.	0,87	Sample Var.	1,25	Sample Var.	0,93	Sample Var.	0,95	Sample Var.	0,66	Sample Var.	0,68
Kurtosis	-0,75	Kurtosis	-1,15	Kurtosis	-0,66	Kurtosis	-0,52	Kurtosis	0,46	Kurtosis	-0,09
Skewness	-0,38	Skewness	0,06	Skewness	-0,35	Skewness	-0,48	Skewness	-0,82	Skewness	-0,56
Range	4,00	Range	4,00	Range	4,00	Range	4,00	Range	4,00	Range	4,00
Minimum	1,00	Minimum	1,00	Minimum	1,00	Minimum	1,00	Minimum	1,00	Minimum	1,00
Maximum	5,00	Maximum	5,00	Maximum	5,00	Maximum	5,00	Maximum	5,00	Maximum	5,00
Sum	1631,97	Sum	1375,72	Sum	1641,92	Sum	1585,38	Sum	1763,20	Sum	1626,30
Count	449,00	Count	449,00	Count	449,00	Count	449,00	Count	449,00	Count	449,00

Source: Own research

As we can see the most preferred module is **affiliation and social aspects**. Therefore for the overall results in the group we can state that the linked to social aspects motivators could have the greatest effect when motivative the personnel. Controversially, the least preferred module is **remuneration**. Hence, in overall results, we can state that material stimulation could not motivate employees in the required state. Based on the above-mentioned empirical research on lifespan and workplace motivation, we could state that the largest part of older employees tends to not value remuneration at high levels. This we will investigate in the later part of our result section.

For the connection of demographics on the preference of modules among the group, we conducted a regression analysis for estimating the statistically significant influences of demographics. Therefore, we formulated an overall *Hypothesis* that different demographic traits influence the preference of modules in the group. Hence, if we prove a significant link between any of the demographics and the modules, formulated, we will accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. We will represent the result in Table 2, it depicts the statistically significant connections between the demographics and the preference of modules.

On the table we see the module preference on the left and the different demographics on the right. We represent only the correlational coefficients, which were proven to be statistically significant. For the rest of the insignificant results, we didn't provide information for correlation, because such was not proven as significant.

As we can see in Table 2, **Work environment** was affected only by the *presence of children* for which the respondents are taking care of. Moreover, the connection, despite week, is negative. Hence, we can state, that if the children are more, the overall preference of the work environment is expected to be less. We give these results to the preferential of

other motivators in work. Despite that we could prove any, there are proofs in other researches for the different preferred motivational types, based on the lifespan development. Therefore, we partially proved the work of the authors, when it comes to family and lifecycle development.

Table 2 – Correlations between demographics and preference of modules

<i>Modul./Demo.</i>	GEND.	AGE	EDUC.	MARI.	CHILD.	OVR.EXP	CO. EXP.	HIERAR.
WE	-	-	-	-	r= -0,10*	-	-	-
R	r= -0,07*	-	-	-	-	-	-	r= 0,06*
S	-	r= 0,12**	-	-	-	-	-	-
PD	-	r= -0,07*	-	-	-	-	-	r= 0,25**
ASP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RS; IC; AL	-	r= 0,05*	-	-	-	-	r= 0,10*	r= 0,13*

Remarks: $P < 0.05$.*; $P < 0.01$ **

Source: Own research

Remuneration proven a statistically significant connection between *gender* and *position in the companies' hierarchy*. It has been proven a positive influence of gender on preference of remuneration. In our study, we marked women as 0 and men as 1, so that we could carry out our regression analysis. Hence, we prove that for men remuneration is more valuable factor in motivation. When it comes to the investigation of the influence of the hierarchy position, we proved a weak positive, but statistically significant influence on the preference of remuneration. Therefore, we can state that within the higher positions, the preference of this module as a motivator tends to be higher.

As it comes to the results of influence of demographics on **safety** preference, we proved significant influence from *age* of the respondents. The influence is again relatively weak, but statistically significant. Based on the results of the analysis, we can conclude that with age increase, the preference of safety increases as well. We tend to give this to the calmer way of leaving of people in later part of their life. As we stated above with the advancement of the age, people tend to seek calmer and non-stressing environment for their work. Therefore, the results partly proved this.

Results proved a significant influence of *age* and *position in the hierarchy* on the preference of **personal development**. With age, the influence is weak and negative, meaning that with age increase the strive for development partially decreases in our group of respondents. Within the influence of the hierarchy position, the influence on preference of this module is moderate and positive. Therefore, when the individual is climbing the corporate ladder, his preference for personal development as a part of the motivational scheme in the company rises.

As for **affiliation and social aspects**, we couldn't prove any statistically significant connection with the demographics in our group. Hence, the preference of this module is influenced by other factors, which we simply do not investigate here.

We proved a weak, but statistically significant influence from *age*; *experience in the company* and *position in the hierarchy* on **Respect and self-respect. Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership**. The overall goal of this module was to investigate the intrinsic motivation and higher order need satisfaction. From our results was proven that with age increase, the preference of the module increases as well. Therefore, for older individuals, the higher level needs and intrinsically based factors tend to motivate in a greater amount. This is true also for experience in the company and the position in the hierarchy. Hence, people with more experience and higher position in the hierarchy of the company tend to prefer this module in a greater state.

Our results partly proved the formally mentioned research results in the survey. Overall, we proved, although weak influence of the demographics, a statistically significant one.

Concluding remarks

The current article was aimed to underline the high importance of motivation in the aspect of human resource management. We acknowledge the work of many authors, investigating the highly complexed problematics of motivation in the work place. It was underlined that motivation is influenced by numerous aspects within the interaction of the individual with the environment. Because of the literature review, we could conclude that socially based and demographically based influences on motivation are both strongest and most important in studying motivation in work. People interact every day with other individuals, which in one way or another could lead to behavior modulation, which can result in a certain tilt in preferred motivational type. The same can be stated for the demographics of the individuals. As they tend to formulate different types of behavior, it was logical to say that they can formulate a different kind of motivational preference.

As was mentioned, motivation could be influenced also from wide variety of temporary factors. This partially rejects the influence of demographics in certain amount, but overall demographics can have a greater influence on motivation than those temporary factors. Despite the temporarily influencing factors, motivation can be highly affected by decision-making, leadership, feedback, culture, personality traits and many others. Therefore, researches such as the one in the current article, can have a significant influence on how motivation is applied in the workplace.

The results of our survey and the regression and correlation analyses, confirmed the following:

Firstly, we proved that with the increasing of the children for which the individuals take care of, the preference of work environment decreases in a small amount.

Secondly, for men, remuneration is more important as a motivator, than to women.

Thirdly, remuneration is more important for people with higher position in their company.

Fourthly, with age increase, the reference of safety tends to increase as well.

Fifthly, with age increase the preference of personal development as a motivational factor strongly decreases.

Sixthly, for people of older age the preference of Respect and self-respect. Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership as a motivator weakly can increase.

Seventhly, with the increase of the experience in the company, the preference of Respect and self-respect. Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership as a motivator weakly can weakly increase.

Lastly, with the climbing of the corporate ladder, individual value more Respect and self-respect. Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership as a motivator.

As a final conclusion, we can say, that motivation can be influence of demographics in a relatively weak, but statistically significant way. And the investigation in such influences is with high importance for the practical implication of motivation in the modern workplace. This is evermore true in highly complexed economic environment such as the current. This will be evermore valid for companies and sectors, which rely on their employees for the company success in greater amount. The last does not excludes sectors in which the workforce is linked more to the physical operation in the company. Therefore, motivation and the factors that could influence it within the workplace are highly important. Hence, researching motivation is crucial for the proper execution of it in practice. The last can be involved in greater work engagement, more effort and better execution of the work task. Consequently, to better overall results of the companies.

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