

## **INFLUENCE OF THE HIERARHY POSITON AND EDUCATION DEGREE ON THE PREFERENCES OF MOTIVATORS IN THE MODERN ENTERPRISE**

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### ***Abstract***

*The theory of motivation provides numerous of examples of various of influences upon the motivating aspects of worker's life. Among them are age, gender, social aspects, caring of children and many more. Authors have tried to examine every possible link of motivation and different aspects of the working life in the modern society. Therefore, our main goal in the following research paper is to examine the possible influence of educational degree and the position of workers in organizational hierarchy upon their motivational preferences. For doing so, we conducted a study upon 595 workers from various kinds of industries in Bulgaria. The study was in the form of a survey, asking people which the most important aspects of possible gains in the workplace are. Firstly, we will examine the theoretical aspects of motivation, providing examples of various empirical studies examining motivation on the workplace. Afterwards, we will examine the results, and make conclusions upon them. We expect to prove the influence of the two examined variables on motivation of employees.*

**Keywords:** *motivation; workplace motivation; motivators*

**JEL Codes:** *M12; M54*

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### **1. Introduction**

Ever since the work of Henry Murray, scholars have been interested in the influences on motivation on the workplace. This interest ascends even back to the Roman-Greek culture, where many philosophers pointed different aspects of the directed behavior of people, proof of which we can find in the different philosophy tendencies true out the ages, which are characterized with a certain behavior in society. The reasons for the chosen

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behavior are, somewhat, crucial for understanding the human nature. When it comes to workplace motivation, influences of various aspects of both social and work life, affect the behavior in work. As we mentioned, numerous of categories of factors are examined from scholars all over the world. Despite this, scholars have put a lot of interest in many other aspects of employees' motivation – from traits in the character of employees, to aspects from the environment. Our main goal in the current paper is to examine the link between the position in the hierarchy in the company, educational degree and the most and least preferred motivators. For the purposes of the study we gathered various aspects of the motivation, divided them into six modules, and based on this, conducted the survey, asking the respondents to evaluate their preferences regarding the different aspects of motivation. Based on the subjective assessments of our respondents, we calculate the mean average value for each module. Afterwards, we examined the results in the divided section given from the perspective of the position in the organization and degree of education. Firstly, we will examine the theory aspects of human motivation, provide some examples of empirical research for linkages between motivation and other aspects from the environment and behavior of people. Secondly, we will examine the results from the study. Lastly, we will make conclusions based on the results.

Our main hypothesis is that the position in the hierarchy of the organization and educational degree will affect workers, mostly in the aspects of self-development, self-determination, intrinsic motivation and higher identification with the organization. For testing the hypothesis, we will conduct a correlation analysis between the assessments of the preference of the motivators, educational degree and the position in the hierarchy.

## **2. Defining motivation**

The most widely spread view for motivation is within his characteristics as a process. Or as Deckers (2010) describes it, a process initiating, directing and maintaining goal-directed behavior (p. 6). When it comes to the motivation to work, motivation can be described as a set of energetically powers, initiating the work behavior and determining its power, direction, intensity and duration (Pinder 2008, p.13). Corporate culture has a great influence on motivation. (Filipova 2021, p. 129) Therefore, motivation can be defined as a complex process, within the person's behavior, which affects the direction, duration and persistency of the chosen behavior. Yaneva claims that an integral part of the strategic decision-making process in the organization is the study of the indicators related to the employees' development and motivation (2021, p.170). Therefore, to achieve higher efficiency should be know the factors that determine human behavior in the labor process and find ways for impact on the individual or the group in this process (Yaneva, 2006, p.57). This process is highly affected by the environment, therefore Latham and Pinder

(2005), conclude that motivation is a psychological process, resultant by the interaction of the human with the environment (p.486). Besides, we can complete the author's thoughts and state that the motivation is often a physiological process. Individuals can be highly motivated from their physiological necessities. Therefore, in certain occasions, motivation can take place in within the physiology of the human, without ignoring the psychological processes involved in the behavior. Almost in every occasion, motivation is identified to the future behavior of the individual. The goal of the manager is to motivate the employees so that they perform the work in the best way in order to achieve the goals of the company. (Filipova 2011, p. 137) Alternatively, as stated by Prichard and Payne (2003) – motivation is directed to the future concept within people are expecting the level of satisfaction of their needs, once the results of the chosen behavior are available (p.224). Therefore, individuals act upon their expectations for the future self-being. Although, there are exceptions (for which we will talk later in the paper), normally people tend to direct their behavior based on the future gains they expect. One makes his choice in a clear, internally consistent value system, which presupposes individual benefit. (Zlateva, 2019, p.70)

Consequently, based on the given views on motivation, we can define it 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.

Needs on one hand are described stated of irritation and psychological deficiency. Numerous of authors examine various kinds of needs in their work. 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 Waremfelts (2003), described – biological, needs for acceptance and approval, status, power and control over resources, predictability and order (p. 77). On the other hand, Deci and Ryan (2000) describe the needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy (p.231). Herzberg (1968) describes 2 groups – motivational and hygiene factors, which within them have certain set of needs (p. 56-57) Outthought, Deci and Ryan reject the concept of gains within the motivation process, they state that only with fulfilling these needs, individuals tend to motivate themselves. We can list more and more classifications of needs, but the common upon them all is that the need is described as a state of irritation. Therefore, once the need is realized, the individual will direct his behavior in the direction, which he believes that will help him fulfil it. Needs are the route of the so called “Needs theories of motivation”. In these theories, people are described as constantly needing individuals. Examples are the work for – Murray; Maslow; Herzberg; MacClelland and many more. The common upon them all is defining of given sets of needs,

which motivate people to direct their behavior. In addition, in almost every need theory, the process of motivation is starting with the consciously realization of the unfulfillment of the need.

On the other hand, various theories of motivation partly or fully reject the needs within the process of motivating workers. These theories of motivation are called process theories, and the main postulate within them is for the motivation as a complex process of constant interaction between the individual and the environment, not an act of direct behavior towards a given lack of a need. Some examples for process theories are – Expectancy theory of Vroom and later of Porter and Lower (1967) , they state that motivation is not only a process of fulfilling the needs, but also the hope of acquiring the certain gain, in other words, the expectancy of success in a given task (p.23). Another example is equity theory formulated of Adams (1965), he states that all individuals tend to reach for equity in their jobs, he formulates this in a simple equation where inputs of the persons, has to equal their outcomes (p. 280). There are more process theories of motivation, but within the goals of our research, we will not examine in more details. The common upon all process theories is that they postulate from the point of interaction of the individual with the environment.

More important within our research is to define and give examples of what influence motivation on the workplace, which we will examine in the second part of the paper.

### **3. Influences on motivation**

Motivation is the basis of employee behavior and performance. (Filipova, 2016, p. 80) As we mentioned, numerous factors and aspects influence motivation on the workplace. Except the described by process and need theories, motivation can be influences by a wide variety of different kind of aspects of life. In this section, we will examine some of them and give empirical examples for such influences.

In a study, based on the work of Deci and Rayan (Self-determination theory), Gillet at all (2017) concluded, that autonomy of the individual on the workplace, influences the necessity of organizational support within the organization (p. 1167). Therefore, imposed decision will negatively influence the motivation for fulfilling the task if the autonomy demands are high. Imposed decision are appropriate only if the tasks are simple. Nonetheless, it is crucial to involve people in taking the decision if they will be the ones fulfilling the task.

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) As mentioned above, process theories consider motivation as a constant process of interaction between the individual and the environment. Indisputably, within the workplace, part of

this interaction is the interaction with the leaders in the organization. Based on this view, Keating, Harper and David (2013) state that the emotional intelligence of leaders, described as a certain set of emotional traits, can highly influence the motivation of workers (p. 34-35). Therefore, the interaction between the leaders and the workers is crucial in the aspect of workplace motivation. Leaders have the power to empower or to debar worker's development. An interesting research states that empowering leadership in the form of emotional and social support from the leader can highly contribute creativity of workers, mostly within the aspects of intrinsic motivation (Zhang, Bartol, 2010, p. 117). When the intrinsic motivation is highly decreased, the spiritual satisfaction and the feeling of being important and valued disappears. Workers turn into immediate performers of a given set of functions (Angelova, 2019, p. 20). The qualities of the leader are important in this process. (Filipova, 2015, p. 3)

Feedback is also an important aspect of the interaction between the leaders and the workers. Belschak and Hartog (2009) found out that positive feedback, given publicly or privately, positively influences the emotional state of the individuals. Respectively, once the feedback is negative, the effects are negative and stronger if the feedback is given publicly (p. 286). Therefore, once a person has made a mistake in the workplace, feedback should be given, but if possible, privately. Respectively, the positive feedback should be given publicly, in order to enforce the positive emotional state of the individual, which often predisposes high levels of motivation on the workplace.

As we stated, culture has a very strong influence on motivation. 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). The factors, which are rooted within the national culture and subculture are various and crucial once it comes to motivating the employees. A study conducted among Bulgarian, Hungarian and Netherlandish workers, proved difference between the countries when it comes to antecedents and consequences of job enrolment and organizational commitment, with a given motivational aspects applied to the their jobs. Moreover, authors were able to build different motivational models within the groups from each country (Roe, Zinovieva, Dienes, Horn, 2000, p. 675-677). Therefore, the authors proved the influence of culture on motivation.

Beside the above-mentioned influences, researches have proven a high influence of the personality traits. Bipp (2010) was able to link neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness and motivation (p. 29). Based on the certain levels of the mentioned traits, preferred motivational aspect can differ. Personality traits are one of the behavioral aspects that can influence motivation in the strongest aspect.

Undisputedly, they can form the behavior in a way that can cause a high influence upon the motivation to work. Therefore, same motivational techniques can have different influence on people in the same organization.

With the given examples of different influences on motivation, we wanted to emphasize the complex process of motivating people within the modern working environment. Motivating the staff in the workplace can be crucial to the success of every organization, no matter of the economic sector. Motivation can be directly linked to creativity, initiative, satisfaction, propensity of leaving the company, commitment, identification with the organization and many more. Therefore, understanding the complexity of this process is crucial for every organization.

#### **4. Methodology**

The research was conducted in the form of an online survey in the period between June 2020 and August 2020. The bigger part of the response group is part of a governmentally owned railway company in Bulgaria (n= 448), the other part of the response group is from a wide variety of economic sectors in Bulgaria (n=138), in total respondents n.586. We believe that the number of respondents is enough to let us make conclusions on the researched aspect of human motivation.

In order to examine the workplace motivators, we gathered 38 examples from different theoretical authors 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. Hierarchy position and education was a part of the examination and was part of the demographic profile of the respondents. We evaluated the most and least important motivators, by calculating the mean value for each motivator and for the modules overall. On

this foundation, we examined the most and least preferred motivators, compared the results and made conclusions.

## 5. Results

We will examine the results for the 2 groups, divided by hierarchy position and education degree. As we mentioned, the examining of the motivation was defined fully on the subjective evaluation of the respondents. Dividing them into categories on the given demographic trait enabled us to make some conclusions on their influence on motivation. Firstly, we will examine the influence of education.

Education is undisputable influencer on human behavior. It can provide a various points of view on various aspects of life. In our opinion, highly educated people tend to want more from their jobs, mostly because they can better understand the process behind motivation in the workplace. We present the results of our study in Table 1

*Table no. 1 – Module attestation and correlation with education*

Education degree	<b>WE</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>PD</b>	<b>ASP</b>	<b>RS; IC; AL</b>
Secondary	3,49	3,11	3,45	3,19	3,97	3,55
Bachelor	3,58	3,49	3,61	3,55	3,88	3,59
Master	3,75	3,35	3,68	3,71	3,88	3,70
<b>Correlation</b>	0,99	0,64	0,98	0,98	-0,85	0,96

*Source:* Own research

As we can see on the table, education is highly influencing motivation in our group. Within each module the influence is significant. For more clarity, we will examine the modules separately.

**Work environment**, is influenced very strongly by the education degree. As we can see, the tendency is progressively increasing and the coefficient of correlation is close to one. Therefore, as the level of education rises, preference for this module rises with the almost same degree. This can be the effect of a better understanding on the environment, higher demands based on the higher education, or simply the higher knowledge leads to higher demands on the work environment, based on education.

**Remuneration** is again highly influenced by the degree of education but to a lesser extent. As we can see in Table 1, preference for this module raises in the bachelor degree but again lowers in the masters. Nonetheless, we can state that education also influence the preference for this module in a significant way and with the higher levels of education, the significance of this module rises.

The tendency within **safety** module is again progressively increasing. Correlation coefficient is close to one. Therefore, there is a high positive influence of education on the

significance of this this module. People tend to seek more safety within their work when they have higher education. This can be caused by an aspiration for integrity and stability in both work and social life of our respondents.

As educational degree rises, preference for the motivators in **personal development**, raise as well. As we can see, the correlation coefficient is positive and close to one. Therefore, there is a strong connection of education and seeking personal development within the workplace. This is completely confirmed by the work of Maslow, who stated that the higher education normally leads to the striving for higher set of needs, of which personal development is a part. As we mentioned, this module is partly linked to intrinsic motivation to work. Therefore, as the education rises, the tendency for inner motivation raises as well.

**Affiliation and social aspects** is the only module with a negative correlation with education. As we can see on Table 1, education negatively and strongly influences the preference for this module. This can be caused by several aspects, in our opinion this can be the effect of the strongly expressed goals within the rest of the modules. Therefore, the modules, which described the social contact within the work place, are not so significant with people with higher education.

The **most complex module** within the six is again highly influenced by the educational degree of our respondents. As we stated above, this module had the goal to describe the higher set of needs within the workplace and inner motivation. The correlation coefficient is again close to one and positively affecting the respondents. Results can be explained by the higher levels of mastery, caused by the higher education, which leads to higher levels of autonomy and mostly higher levels of respect upon the colleagues.

Next, we will examine the results within the separated group respondents based of their position in the hierarchy. Again, we will show the results in a table, as follows:

*Table no. 2– Module attestation and correlation with position in the hierarchy*

Position	WE	R	S	PD	ASP	RS; IC; AL
Non-guiding	3,60	3,31	3,58	3,32	3,84	3,48
Group manager	3,67	3,61	3,65	3,83	3,86	3,73
Intermediate level	3,74	3,48	3,64	3,75	3,95	3,73
Senior management	3,83	3,43	3,53	4,03	3,85	3,93
<b>Correlation</b>	1,00	0,26	-0,33	0,89	0,28	0,95

*Source:* Own research



As we can see on Table 2, the strongest correlation between the position of the individual and the preferred modules is for **work environment**. Rounded to the second digit after the decimal number, the correlation coefficient is one. Therefore, once the hierarchy position changes, the importance of this module changes almost in the same way. Our results show that higher-level employees tend to be motivated from the work environment in a higher level.

**Remuneration** is also affected by the hierarchy position, although in a much less significant way. The weak correlation between this module and the position in the company could be explained by the higher level of presents of the intrinsic motivation, caused by the higher levels of mastery, autonomy and in often cases, relatedness. Therefore, the material stimulation will not affect the motivation of executive staff in a significant way. Nonetheless, we can examine an increase in the average attestation for this module within the group managers. Nevertheless, the attestation again drops when it comes to examining intermediate and senior managers.

The only negatively correlated module is **safety**. This can be the result of a higher level of safety in work, once the person is “climbing” the corporate ladder. For example, a blue-collar worker, often can be working in an endangering environment, despite the good condition in the workplace, work can be threatening to the workers well-being. Once he is a group manager or an intermediate manager, he does not have to perform the same tasks, therefore, he is not feeling threatened in his job any more. The need for safety is fulfilled and the employee does not give the importance as at the beginning. Another reason for the negative correlation, could be the higher level of work knowledge and management skills. In these conditions, the employee becomes more valuable for the company, therefore, the company tend to try to keep him. On this foundation, the employee feels more secure, when it comes to keeping his work. Therefore, the need for safety and security in the work is fulfilled and no more motivates the employee.

One of the highly interacting module with the hierarchy position is **personal development**. The tendency on the average attestation is increasing. Therefore, the correlation coefficient is close to one. Consequently, we can conclude that the interaction between the two variables is strong. This may be the cause of the higher levels of strive of the people in higher position for personal development. As we described above, often people in the higher levels in the organization, tend to motivate themselves with inner motivation. Consequently, personal development as a part of the mastery in work, can highly effect people, once they obtain higher-level position.

**Affiliation and social aspects** is again not influenced in much significant way by the hierarchy position. This can be the cause of traits describing the higher-level positions.

Often, people that were colleagues in the past, now are in a relationship of a manager and a subordinate. Therefore, the necessity of human interaction on the workplace may be suppressed.

Our **most complex module** is again highly influenced by the position in the organization. As we mentioned, this module was designed to describe the higher-level need and the intrinsic motivation for work. Therefore, once the position is higher, the motivating aspect of this module rises. The strive for a higher position is often linked with seeking of challenge and higher level of interest in the job, which are related to the necessity of mastery in work. The autonomy and leadership are again bounded with the intrinsic motivation for work. In addition, the motivators, linked with respect, are the reflection of the higher-level needs in the workplace environment. Therefore, employees in higher position in the hierarchy of the organization can be motivated by higher-level needs in a more significant way. Furthermore, the managers tend to self-motivate themselves and identify with the organization at a higher level.

## **6. Concluding remarks and discussion**

Motivation is a very complexed process within human psychology, which highly effects the behavior of the employees on the workplace. The huge interest in motivation after the evolution of human management theory, indicate the high importance of the problematic on the theory of managing people. Motivation can effect at significant levels the work results throughout many indirect canals of influence. The importance in this theory is constantly growing, especially within the global crisis we are in at the current time. Motivating people have become a very difficult task. Many of the employers have realized that the safety of the workers is often the most important aspect of their motivation. Therefore, the effect of the global pandemic on motivation can be traced mostly within the increasing levels of safety necessity within the work place. Although our study was conducted before the worsening of the crisis, we can conclude that the pandemic can influence the motivation on the workplace in a much significant way.

Despite the temporarily influencing factors, motivation can be highly affected by decision-making, leadership, feedback, culture, personality traits and many others, as well as education of employees and their hierarchy position as it was proved by the conducted research.

Our study conducted a survey research to prove the influence of the two examined variables within the workplace. We achieved this by examining the preference for certain motivators within our respondents work. As we concluded, the motivation of workers is affected by the education and the position in the organization in a significant way. The

preference of certain modules can vary within the groups with different education and different position in the hierarchy of the organization.

As concluding remarks we lay emphasis on the following:

**First**, motivation is a very complexed process within the workplace. It can influence performance in the company in a highly significant way.

**Secondly**, within the theory of motivation there are two main groups of theories – need and process theories. Each providing valuable postulates for the managing of people in the modern enterprise.

**Thirdly**, various aspects of both social and work life can influence motivation. We examined just a brief few in the current paper.

**Fourthly**, the preference for work environment motivators is significantly influenced by educational degree. This can be stated for every of the sixed examined modules of motivators in the paper. Affiliation and social aspects are negatively correlated with the level of education of the employees.

**Fifthly**, work environment is with almost proportional correlation with the position in the hierarchy. Personal development, Respect, and self-respect. Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership are again highly influenced by the position in the hierarchy. Remuneration, affiliation, and social aspects are in not so significant way influenced by the position in the organization. Safety on the other hand is negatively correlated with position in the company.

Therefore, based on the results of the research we can conclude that education and hierarchy position influence motivation in variety of occasions and can play a vital role within the process of staff motivation.

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