

EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION STRATEGIES AND CREATION OF SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT IN SOCIETIES OF POST-SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract: The goal of this study is to identify what motivates employees working in the public sector in a society of post-socialist transformation. The research participants included 455 employees of different educational and professional backgrounds in Serbia, a country which is going through the process of the post-socialist transformation. A survey method was used. According to the findings, employees working in the public sector in the society of post-socialist transformation are mostly motivated by extrinsic rewards. Among 15 motivators, the majority of respondents said that the most important motivator is high salary. In the second position, they placed promotion and in the third they placed “better health insurance”. The study also indicated that demographic characteristics like gender, educational level, managerial level, etc. influence work motivation of Serbian employees. The results of this study should provide useful guidelines to managers while creating motivation strategies for employees in public sector in the society of post-socialist transformation.

Key words: strategies of motivation, post-socialist transformation society, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, public sector

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Introduction

Since employees are the most valuable asset of every company, one of the most important challenges that every organization faces is how to retain them. If our employees are satisfied and motivated in the proper way, there is a higher chance that they will stay in the organization. Satisfied and motivated employees are more productive, more efficient and contribute more to the fulfillment of organizational goals. Bearing in mind that different things motivate people and that they have different needs, it is crucial for managers in organizations to identify what motivates every single employee and, in accordance with that, to develop the proper system of rewards. The paper authors are convinced that an economic situation of a country also makes a huge impact on whether employees are more extrinsically or intrinsically motivated. In the paper, we deal with the motivation of employees in the society of post-socialist transformation in Eastern Europe. The

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authors conducted the research in Serbia, which is currently going through the post-socialist transformation.

The previous two decades in Serbia have been marked by intense and dramatic changes, which have affected all social subsystems and left profound consequences. At the end of the 1980s, there was a sudden crash of socialism as a social, political and economic system. During the 90s, transformations were blocked by four years of civil war, international isolation, sanctions and massive impoverishment of a majority of the population. After 2000, a process of post-socialist transformation started with systematic changes in the society (Lazić, 2005). The economic crisis that has begun at the end of 2008 slowed down the process of transformation and led to the rapid fall in industrial production. According to the official statistical data, the rate of industrial production in 2012 was only 38.4% of the rate of industrial production in 1989. Such a deindustrialization has not been seen in any European country after the Second World War (Sojić, 2014). In the last 12 years, the employment in the industry of Serbia has been halved and the unemployment rate in 2016 was 19.7% (Survey on Income and Living Conditions, 2016). All these factors affected the fall of the living standards of the citizens of Serbia and the rise of poverty rate (Arandarenko, 2011). The poverty rate in 2012 was 24.6% (Poverty and Social Inequality in Republic of Serbia, 2014) and 2016 that percent increased to 26%, while the poverty risk rate was 41.3% (Survey on Income and Living Conditions, 2016).

Bearing in mind an economic situation and living conditions in Serbia, which is an excellent example of the society of post-socialist transformation, the research problem is to identify the strategies of motivation that would contribute to the increase of employees' satisfaction in public-sector organizations in the society of post-socialist transformation.

The objectives of this study are the following:

- to examine the attitudes of employees toward various motivational mechanisms in the society of post-socialist transformation,
- to determine, based on the results, whether there is a difference in motivational mechanisms across categories of gender, education and managerial levels.

Literature Review

Griffin et al., (2017) says that the main difference between highly effective and productive organizations and less effective ones usually is found in the motivation of its employees. Thus, one of the most intriguing and studying topics in organizational behavior and human resource management is motivation. Various motivational theories exist, and most of these theories try to explain what drive people to work harder. All these theories have some drawbacks and advantages; thus, it is crucial to pay attention to the context and situation when one tries to decide which theoretical approach is going to be the most effective.

When we talk about employees' motivation, we usually try to identify whether employees are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Osterloh et al., (2002) says that extrinsic motivation appears when employees can satisfy their needs indirectly, through monetary compensation. On the other hand, Rayan and Deci (2000) believes that intrinsic motivation occurs when persons' behavior is oriented towards the satisfaction of inbred psychological needs rather than to achieve material rewards.

The vast majority of research about motivation does not concentrate on the motivation of employees in the societies of post-socialist transformation. Most of research deals with work motivation among private sector employees (Dixit, 2002; Perry and Poter, 1982), while there is not much research that relates to motivation among public sector employees (Manolopoulos, 2007). However, there is plenty of research that compare the work motivation in public and private sector (Ambrose and Kulik, 1999; Buelens and Van den Broeck, 2007; Crewson, 1997; Houston, 2000; Rainey and Bozeman, 2000; Wittmer, 1991; Wright, 2001).

Wright (2001) in his study did not prove that public-sector employees' characteristics are different to those of private-sector employees. Moreover, Wright (2001) did not discover that those characteristics have big impact on work motivation. A lot of other research identified that material rewards are more significant to employees in private sector than to those in public sector (Crewson, 1997; Houston, 2000; Karl and Sutton, 1998; Newstrom et al., 1976; Rainey, 1982; Solomon, 1986; Wittmer, 1991). On the other hand, a few research found the differences in the opposite direction. Maidani (1991) concluded in his study that public sector employees consider extrinsic rewards as more important than do private-sector employees. Lewis and Frank (2002) discovered that employees who value high income prefer to work in the public sector, although they do not work in the public sector. Manolopoulos (2007) in his study discovered that public administrators in Greece public sector try to motivate their employees with extrinsic rewards with emphasis on fair salaries and higher job security. However, he concluded that this method will not probably be effective and that it will not increase the productivity in the years to come (Manolopoulos, 2007). Buelens and Van den Broeck's (2007) study confirmed these findings showing that hierarchical level influences patterns of motivation among employees in public organizations. Public sector employees that have higher-level position in an organization have similar motivational patterns to employees in private sector (Buelens and Van den Broeck, 2007).

Not all study findings that could be applicable to the employees working in more economically advanced countries may be valid to the workers from the societies of post-socialist transformation.

Research Methodology

In this paper, we tested four hypotheses. We proposed the following hypothesis:

- H1: High salary is the most important motivational mechanism in organizations in public sector in the society of post-socialist transformation
- H2: There is a significant difference in motivational mechanisms across gender
- H3: There is a significant difference in motivational mechanisms across categories of education levels
- H4: There is a significant difference in motivational mechanisms across categories of managerial levels

The research was being conducted from January to May 2016. The study included 455 respondents, 46.2% males and 53.8% females. The sample consisted of employees of different educational and professional backgrounds, working in four large organizations in the public sector in Serbia. 15.8% of respondents have high-school degree, 31.9% undergraduate degree and 52.3% of the respondents have a graduate or PhD degree. Finally, 12.1% of the respondents are top managers and 87.9% are middle-level managers.

The dependent variables, motivational mechanisms, are measured by the questionnaire containing 15 items. The authors anchored each of the 15 items to a five-point Likert-type scale: with 5 – strongly agree and 1 – strongly disagree. Demographic variables were measured with a series of questions relating to gender, a level of education and managerial levels. Data obtained in this study was processed within statistical package SPSS.

Research Results Discussion

The evidence provided in Table 1 shows that majority of our respondents are motivated by extrinsic rewards, i.e. the majority of the respondents agreed that high salary is the most important motivational mechanism (AR of 4.68). The respondents placed “opportunity for hierarchical advancement” (AR of 4.14) in the second position and “opportunity for better health insurance for my children and me” (AR of 3.90) in the third among 15 motivating factors. Moreover, the studies conducted in the USA 1992 (Wiley, 1997) and Malaysia 2004 (Ismail, 2008) showed that salary is a strong motivator for US and Malaysian employees. Monetary rewards are vital motivating factors for Malaysian employees. Like Serbian employees, they assigned high ranks to high salary and promotion. On the other hand, American employees placed “appreciation from the management” in the second position among motivating factors. Ismail (2008) concluded that reason for these differences could lie in the fact that US employees have better salaries. Thus, they are more interested in getting recognition from the management. Our results provide support for H1 “High salary is the most important motivational mechanism in organizations in the public sector in the society of post-socialist transformation”.

Table 1. Evaluation of motivators (average responses, n=455)

Motivators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
High salary	4.68	.683	1
Opportunity for hierarchical advancement	4.14	.948	2
Better health insurance for my family	3.90	1.055	3
Opportunity for my children to get employed	3.88	.982	4
Employee stock options	3.88	1.100	5
Opportunity to get an apartment	3.88	1.136	6
Unfair performance appraisal demotivates me	3.84	1.218	7
Full appreciation of work done	3.62	1.176	8
Opportunity to occasionally work at home	3.48	1.403	9
Job responsibility and creative tasks	3.48	1.147	10
Cooperative work environment	3.36	1.241	11
Opportunities for personal development	3.26	1.306	12
Flexible working hours	3.12	1.480	13
Good communication among colleagues	2.86	1.400	14
Perks such as a company car, etc.	2.66	1.465	15

The independent samples t-test was used to examine the hypothesized gender differences across 15 motivators. Results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Independent samples t-tests exploring mean differences between genders across motivators (statistically significant results)

	Equal variances	Levene stat.		T test for E. of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	M. diff.	Std. Err. Diff.
Full appreciation of work done	ass.	2.389	.123	-2.390	453	.017	-.276	.115
	not ass.			-2.363	415.007	.019	-.276	.117
Opportunities for personal development	ass.	25.223	.000	-2.563	453	.011	-.333	.130
	not ass.			-2.517	395.001	.012	-.333	.132
Job responsibility and creative tasks	ass.	13.435	.000	-3.428	453	.001	-.443	.129
	not ass.			-3.404	427.233	.001	-.443	.130
Unfair performance appraisal demotivates me	ass.	2.658	.104	2.455	453	.014	.154	.063
	not ass.			2.465	448.108	.014	.154	.062

Results indicate several significant differences between males and females. Female demand more appreciation from the managers than males. The significant difference identified across items is in significantly higher mean for the item: "Full appreciation of work done motivates me to work harder" among females than males. Moreover, opportunities for personal development are more important to female respondents than to male. Finally, female public sector employees are

more motivated with getting larger responsibility at the job and doing creative tasks than male. Our results are in accordance with studies that showed that a number of female entrepreneurs are increasing and that intrinsic factors motivate them to start a business (Sarri and Trihopoulou, 2005). On the other hand, males are more demotivated when they see that their colleagues are paid more for doing the same job. The results of our research are in correspondence with a study conducted in a manufacturing sector in India. According to this study, employees involved in manufacturing process are demotivated when they see that their counterparts in other departments take most of the credit (Mishra et al, 2016). The results in this part of the research provide support for H2 “There is a significant difference in motivational mechanisms across gender”.

Table 3. Independent samples t-tests exploring mean differences between managerial levels across motivators (statistically significant results)

	Equal variances	Levene stat.		T test for E. of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	M. diff.	Std. Err. Diff.
High salary	ass.	25.933	.000	-8.868	453	.000	-.809	.091
	not ass.			-5.679	58.386	.000	-.809	.142
Job responsibility and creative tasks	ass.	2.390	.123	3.014	453	.003	.453	.150
	not ass.			2.776	66.508	.007	.453	.163

We also used the independent samples t-test to explore mean differences between respondent who are in top management positions and middle-level positions across 15 motivators (Table 3). The first significant difference identified across items is in significantly higher mean for the item: “High salary is the most important reward” among middle-level managers than top managers. The respondents who are in top management positions compared to the respondents in middle level positions do not think that salary is the most important motivator. The second significant difference identified across items is in significantly higher mean for the item: “Having more job responsibility and doing creative tasks motivates me to work harder” among top managers than middle-level managers. Our results are in compliance with other studies which show that executives prefer opportunities to grow, do creative work, get recognition, etc. (Manolopoulos, 2007; Ismail, 2008) These results provide support for H3 “There is a significant difference in motivational mechanisms across categories of managerial levels”.

For a demographic factor education, which has more than two levels, we performed a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) (Table 4). A Tukey HSD multiple comparison test where the differences occurred between the groups (Table 5).

Table 4. ANOVA results for differences in motivators between education level (statistically significant results)

		TSS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Opportunity to get an apartment	Between g.	9.062	2	4.531	10.000	.000
	Within g.	204.798	452	.453		
	Tot.	213.859	454			
Opportunities for personal development	Between g.	62.865	2	31.432	41.306	.000
	Within g.	343.957	452	.761		
	Tot.	406.822	454			
Better health insurance	Between g.	58.487	2	29.243	35.785	.000
	Within g.	369.373	452	.817		
	Tot.	427.859	454			
Opportunity for my children to get employed	Between g.	103.712	2	51.856	53.896	.000
	Within g.	434.894	452	.962		
	Tot.	538.607	454			

Table 5. Tukey HSD group comparison between educational levels for motivators (statistically significant results)

	(A) Edu. level	(B) Edu. level	M. D. (A-B)	Std. Error	Sig.
Opportunity to get an apartment	HSDG	Bachelor	.379	.097	.000
		Master & PhD	.391	.091	.000
	Bachelor	HSDG	-.379	.097	.000
		Master & PhD	.011	.071	.986
	Master & PhD	HSDG	-.391	.091	.000
		Bachelor	-.011	.071	.986
Opportunities for personal development	HSDG	Bachelor	.371	.126	.009
		Master & PhD	.952	.117	.000
	Bachelor	HSDG	-.371	.126	.009
		Master & PhD	.581	.092	.000
	Master & PhD	HSDG	-.952	.117	.000
		Bachelor	-.581	.092	.000
Better health insurance	HSDG	Bachelor	.196	.130	.291
		Master & PhD	.837	.122	.000
	Bachelor	HSDG	-.196	.130	.291
		Master & PhD	.641	.095	.000
	Master & PhD	HSDG	-.837	.122	.000
		Bachelor	-.641	.095	.000
Opportunity for my children to get employed	HSDG	Bachelor	.640	.141	.000
		Master & PhD	1.288	.132	.000
	Bachelor	HSDG	-.640	.141	.000
		Master & PhD	.648	.103	.000
	Master & PhD	HSDG	-1.288	.132	.000
		Bachelor	-.648	.103	.000

The findings showed that employees with higher education in public sector were more intrinsically motivated. Opportunities for personal development are the most important to employees with a graduate and PhD degree. Our findings give support to Eskildsen et al. (2004) study that found that respondents with higher education had a higher level of intrinsic work motivation. However, the research has shown that respondents with a high school degree and undergraduate degree are more motivated if they and their children receive better health insurance than employees with a graduate and PhD degree are. In the socialist period, the government offered free health care. However, wars in the 90s and increased poverty led to the deterioration of the health sector, and today it is hard to get proper health care in public hospitals and, more often than not, people in Serbia have to pay out-of-pocket to get treatment in private hospitals. Thus, it is important, especially for less educated employees who receive lower salary, to have good health insurance, which will cover wide range of medical services in both private and public hospitals. The results indicate that employees with a high school degree and undergraduate degree would be more motivated to work for lower salary if, once they retire, they could provide to their children the opportunity to work in the same company than those with a graduate and PhD degree. These findings show us that the legacy of Socialism still exists in Serbia. During Socialism, a usual practice was that once employees retired their children would start working in their organization. Finally, the participants who have a high school degree are more motivated to work harder if a company would provide them an apartment than those respondents who have an undergraduate, graduate and PhD degree. These results provide support for H4: "There is a significant difference in motivational mechanisms across categories of education levels".

Managerial Implications

How can we motivate employees and create supportive work environment? These are the questions that are frequently asked by the managers not only in Serbia, but also all over the world.

Firstly, the results of our research have shown that the monetary incentives and promotions have a crucial role in motivating employees in Serbian. Therefore, managers need to incorporate them in the recognition system of their organization. By doing this, they would create not only more supportive work environment for their employees, but it would also increase the satisfaction of employees in public sector in the society of post-socialist transformation. The similar conclusions were drawn in a study conducted in Indonesia. The authors of the study concluded that when managers and company provide the better system of compensation to employees, the level of employees' satisfaction arises (Tobing, 2016).

Secondly, the research results have indicated that the respondents complained about some employees unfairly receiving higher salaries. Hence, one of HR tools that managers should redesign involves improving the performance appraisal

system. The organizations should introduce performance related pay plans. In this way, employees in the public companies in Serbia would be less demotivated.

Conclusion

Majority of studies gives evidence on motivation of employees in advance and intermediate-level economies. The aim of the paper is to investigate the strategies of employees' motivation in economies of post-socialist transformation.

Most research has discovered that employees who work in public sector are more intrinsically and less extrinsically motivated (Crewson, 1997; Houston, 2000; Karl and Sutton, 1998; Newstrom et al., 1976; Rainey 1982). As Rainey (1982) stated public sector employees often want to deliver a worthwhile service to the society. They want to have an influence on public affairs. Furthermore, they want to serve to the public interest and they want to contribute to achieving social justice (Naff and Crum, 1999; Perry, 1996; Perry and Wise, 1990). However, employees in the public sector in Serbia cannot be motivated by a sense of serving to the community since corruption is still present in Serbian institutions. The transparency index of Serbia is 72 out of 176 (Transparency International, 2016).

As we expected, the results show that salary is the most important motivational mechanism in the society of post-socialist transformation. Serbian society in the period from 2000 until today, during the years of strong post-socialist transformation processes, has been characterized by the decline of social product per capita, an increase of unemployment rate, an increase of poverty and a low standard of living and the poor general welfare of the citizens. Therefore, the majority of respondents are extrinsically motivated. Struggling with poverty, job uncertainty, bad economic situation, people in Serbia do not have the luxury of seeking for other kinds of motivation. When one barely makes ends meet, it is highly likely that money will be the only motivator.

Future research on this topic should include an assessment of both the public and private sector. Moreover, a greater number of societies that are experiencing post-socialist transformation can be included in future research so that we can achieve not only more comprehensive but also a cross-cultural study.

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STRATEGIE MOTYWACYJNE PRACODAWCÓW I TWORZENIE WSPIERAJĄCEGO ŚRODOWISKA PRACY W SPOŁECZEŃSTWACH POST- SOCJALISTYCZNEJ TRANSFORMACJI

Streszczenie: Celem tego badania jest określenie, co motywuje pracowników pracujących w sektorze publicznym w społeczeństwie post-socjalistycznej transformacji. Uczestnikami badania było 455 pracowników różnego pochodzenia edukacyjnego i zawodowego w Serbii, kraju, który przechodzi proces post-socjalistycznej transformacji. Do badań wykorzystano metodę ankietową. Według ustaleń pracownicy sektora publicznego w społeczeństwie post-socjalistycznej transformacji są głównie motywowani dodatkowymi nagrodami. Wśród 15 motywatorów większość respondentów stwierdziła, że najważniejszym motywatorem jest wysoki poziom wynagrodzenia. Na drugiej pozycji umieścili promocję, a na trzeciej umieścili "lepsze ubezpieczenie zdrowotne". Badanie wykazało również, że cechy demograficzne, takie jak płeć, poziom wykształcenia, poziom zarządzania etc. wpływają na motywację serbskich pracowników. Wyniki niniejszego opracowania powinny dostarczyć wskazówek dla menedżerów podczas tworzenia strategii motywacyjnych dla pracowników sektora publicznego w społeczeństwie post-socjalistycznej transformacji.

Słowa kluczowe: strategie motywacyjne, społeczeństwo post-socjalistycznej transformacji, motywacja wewnętrzna, motywacja zewnętrzna, sektor publiczny

員工活動策略和創造社會主義轉型社會中的支持性工作環境

摘要：本研究的目的是確定什麼促使在社會主義改造社會中在公共部門工作的員工。研究參與者包括在塞爾維亞擁有不同教育和職業背景的455名員工，這個正在經歷社會主義轉型進程的國家。採用調查方法。根據調查結果，在社會主義轉型社會中在公共部門工作的員工主要是外在的回報。15個激勵因素中，大多數受訪者表示，如果高薪，最重要的動機。在第二位置，他們進行了晉升，第三名則放置了“更好的健康保險”。研究還表明，性別，文化水平，管理水平等人口特徵影響到塞爾維亞員工的工作動力。本研究的結果應為管理者提供有用的指導方針，同時為社會主義改造社會公共部門的員工製定動機策略。

關鍵詞：動機策略，後社會主義轉型社會，內在動機，外在動機，公共部門