

THE MISSMATCH BETWEEN PREFERED AND APPLIED FORMS OF MOTIVATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SOME WORK OUTCOMES

Philip Ivanov¹

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Abstract

In the current research, we aim to prove a significant influence of motivation on work outcomes. For doing so, we formulated various kinds of question, with the goal to examine employee motivation. We divided the motivational elements in to six modules for better understanding of the wholly process of motivating the staff. For examining the overall effectives of the motivation in the company at hand, we formulated a so-called match factor, which described the difference between the preferred and applied types of motivation and calculated it for each module separately. We examine its influence on propensity of staying in the company; psychological tension; pride from working in the company; engagement; satisfaction and initiative. The study was held in the form of a survey among N=423 administrative employees in a railway company in Bulgaria. Our results proved a significant influence by the match factor of the motivational modules on the work related outcomes. Hence, proving the influence of motivation on work outcomes.

Keywords: motivation; work outcomes; effectiveness of motivation

JEL Codes: M52, M54

1. Introduction

The effectiveness of motivation is its most important trait. If managers do not apply favorable for the employee's forms of motivation, they risk demining the effectiveness and therefore, the overall results of the wholly process of motivating the staff. Consequently, when applying certain forms of motivation, managers should acknowledge the most favorable forms, which are subjectively approved by the employees. In the literature it is enough empirical prove, that in work environment, almost no individual is expected to react the same to given motivators. People value different things in their work, based on their personal experience, demographic or psychological traits. Therefore, it is expected different forms of motivation to have

¹ Department of Management and Marketing, Faculty of Economics, SWU "Neofit Rilski" Blagoevgrad, PhD student, e-mail: filip.ivanov.1@abv.bg; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5335-0317>

different overall effect on different employees. The goal in the current study is namely to underline to eventual effect of the mismatch in motivation in certain concrete forms and its influence on employees work outcomes. For doing so, we will examine firstly the wholly problematic of the motivation, we will provide examples of what influences motivation and what could be the effects of ineffective motivation in the workplace. Finally, we will provide our results from the study we conducted.

The line of research we chose is to investigate only the employees when it comes both to preferred and applied forms of motivation in the company. This was chosen, simply because if the employee cannot feel the application of certain motivational form, the last is simply too ineffective and cannot be accepted as a valuable part of the firms motivational scheme. Martin (2004) states, that the main argument for a behavioral approach to HRM is as simple as it is convincing: it is that human labor cannot be detached from the person who is working (p. 203). Therefore, when examining motivation in the workplace, the most favorable approach is by examining the employees. Hence, we can define our approach as favorable for the examination of the effectiveness of the motivation in the workplace.

2. Defining motivation

Motivation studies could be traced back to the great Greek philosophers, where in his famous work “Republic”, Plato describes three separate parts of the soul – reason, spirit and appetite. Hence, even in ancient times, people knew that there is something that drives people to a given direction. Since then, many philosophers examined the reason behind human behavior. Since then, motivation was a part of the psychology and it was formulated in a later stage in the beginning of the 20th century as a separate part of the organizational psychology. Hence, motivation became a part of the science, which examines the behavior of people in organizations. Consequently, it began to interest many scholars, which examine also the problems, linked to management theory. One of the first considerations on motivation within management theory comes from Taylor (1911), who described the tendency of the average worker to work with calm and slow pace. Only after the realization of a possible good deal for the worker, he will be driven to work better and faster (p. 17). Hence, motivation came only up to the material stimuli, which could be applied in the workplace. However, scholars and practitioners found out that there must be something else, more effective in the human motivation. Ever since the Hotorn studies, it was clear that often times the implementation of material stimuli, does not have any significant results in certain conditions. As a conclusion of the studies in the city of Hotorn, the scholars stated that the sense of meaning and importance is far more motivating for people in given circumstances.

Based on the high importance of motivation it has many different definitions. For example, Latham and Pinder (2005) define it as a resource-allocation process where time and energy are allocated to an array of tasks benefits, which have to satisfy

the needs (p. 502). As some authors argue, 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, organisational and social environment of the enterprise (Dimitrova & Sotirova, p. 168). Here the authors accentuate on the directing energy in a way, which will lead to some sort of satisfaction of the individual. Alternately, as Deckers (2010) describes it, as a process initiating, directing and maintaining goal-directed behavior (p. 6). Therefore, it can be stated that, from one side lays the goal or the one thing the individual desires and on the other side it is the individual with his energy and effort, which he can put into a task in order to fulfil his desire. This view is a part of the so-called "Need theories of human motivation", for which the motivational process is not other than a behavior directed only on fulfilling the goals of the individual.

In line of the last, we would like briefly to examine some of the theories of motivation in order better to understand the wholly process of motivating in the workplace. Maybe the first formulated motivational theory as a part of the organizational psychology is the theory of Murray (1938), who based on a research among students in the Oxford university, concluded that there are 20 basic needs in the human psychology. He only makes a list of the last in alphabetical order (p. 144-145). Although, this theory wasn't completely objective and did not provide a full understanding of motivation, it led to the formulation of many other need theories and was the beginning of the increased interest in the topic. Building onto the work of Murray, Maslow (1954) formulated five groups of needs and arranged them in a hierarchical order – Physiological; Safety; Social; Respect and self-respect; Self-actualization (p. 77-97). For Maslow the individual can feel the motivating effect of the needs on the higher level in his hierarchy, only when he fulfilled the lower set of needs. Hence, the only way for the individual to feel good and fulfilled is to satisfy his needs. There are certain exceptions of this rule, but we would not consider them in detail. Based on the work of Maslow, Alderfer (1969) defines three groups of needs – Existence; Relatedness; Growth (p. 142-175). The big difference between the two theories is that Alderfer states that the individual tends to strive to the satisfaction of the more concrete needs, rather than the higher set of needs, once the lower ones are satisfied. This is known as frustrational-regressional process, which means that the individual can focus on lower-level needs if they are more concrete at the moment. Need formulation tends to differ. For example, Hogan and Wageman (2003), described – biological, needs for acceptance and approval, status, power and control over resources, predictability and order (p. 77). The common among all is the view that the only way for the human to direct his behavior is to chase the fulfilment of his needs. MacClenand (1986) on the other hand, acknowledges the urge to achieve in the individuals as a source of motivated behavior (p. 273-281).

One of the first authors, examining specifically the motivation on the work place is Herzberg (1968). For him, motivation can be the consequence of the influence of two group of factors – hygiene and motivational (p. 56). The basic idea in his theory is that hygiene factors cannot lead to satisfaction among workers. He accepts only the motivational factors as a source of satisfaction. Furthermore, he states that factors, which are hygiene for certain professions, could be motivational for others. Hence, material stimulation can lead to satisfaction in some cases, but is expected not to have the same result in other circumstances. Some authors go even further and state, that in some circumstances, material stimulation, could not only have a low effect on motivation, but as well diminish effort and motivation for fulfilling a task. Great example is the work of Deci and Ryan (2000), as a starting point in their views the authors accept the postulate that humans are active, growth-oriented organisms who are naturally inclined toward integration of their psychic elements into a unified sense of self and integration of themselves into larger social structures (p. 229). The foundation in the work of these scholars is that the individual can be motivated by the wholly process of execution of task, rather than the eventual reward for this behavior. In the theory are described Gagne and Deci (2005) describe – the needs for competence and autonomy underlie intrinsic motivation, but also a third basic – the need for relatedness can be also crucial for internalization (p. 337).

Other theorists in motivation on the workplace describe it as a constant interaction of the individual with the environment. And therefore, the goal directed behavior is a consequence of this interaction. Some examples for such theories, are – Expectancy theory, in which the main view is for the expected results and outcomes thanks to the chosen behavior Lower, Porter (1967); Goal setting theory in which the authors acknowledge the interesting and challenging task as the main condition for high motivation, alongside high performance and subsequent feedback Locke and Latham (2002); Latham and Pinder (2005); Job characteristics model, in which domain the characteristics of the job play vital role on the motivation of the workers Oldham and Hackman (1981). Hence, the wholly process of motivation, can be described as a very complex psychological process, which could be influenced by many factors. Such factors are - personality traits (Bipp, 2010, p. 29); autonomy support (Gellet at al., 2017, p. 1167); leadership (Keating, Harper & 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), authority and delegation, recognition and sanctions (Yaneva, 2007, p. 429) could highly influence work outcomes. Alternatively, other authors state that it is essential to keep in mind that the creativity is a prerequisite for stimulating innovative behavior (Kyurova, 2020, p. 363). 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, 2018, p. 130). Therefore, the factors, influencing motivation, can have a significant effect on overall work performance, because it has been proven that motivation can have a strong influence on work performance and employees satisfaction. In turn, this contributes to strengthening the corporate culture and creating an overall positive image of the organization (Yaneva, 2021, p. 107). Employees are the business ambassadors and they strongly influence customers' perceptions, attitudes and satisfaction (Angelova, 2021). In addition, if the motivation is not favorable or it is not applied in the right way can have serious results on workers. A good example is absenteeism, which as cited by Olafsen et al. (2021) the estimates of (Solberg, 2013) for the cost of absenteeism in Norway for between \$1.41 and \$1.64 billion per year, and for approximately \$43.7 billion per year in the United states (Bureau of labor statistics, 2014) (p. 283). Therefore, any factor, which could lead to an eventual absenteeism, can be crucial in some circumstances. Moreover, motivation, can lead to the dissatisfaction and low levels of effort in organization. Therefore, leading to diminished work results. This is even more valid to sectors of the economic that rely on their employees for the success of the company in a greater state. In a resent study for example, Olafsen, Hlavry and Frolund (2021) held a research among two groups from Norway and one group from England, proved a significant and positive relationship between the satisfaction of Autonomy, competence and relatedness and positive work outcomes and negative connection with the need satisfaction with the negative outcomes examined in all the three groups. Moreover, there was a significant and positive link between need frustration and negative work outcomes (p. 9). Hence, if the motivation in the workplace is not favorable, this could lead to negative outcomes in work, which can lead to overall worst results for the company.

In the conditions subsequent the COVID-19 crisis, managers have the difficult task not only to maintain a good and favorable motivational climate, but they must find ways to motivate in the complexed times we are operating at the moment. . Alternatively stated by Collings et al. (2021), HR leaders are uniquely placed to navigate the paradox emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, this has placed them front, and center in organizational responses to the crisis, and how they perform is likely to affect organizational sustainability and lives of workers (p. 11). Hence, not only the economical era is changing, but we are at the beginning of a new era of motivating people. By our opinion, motivating in the current state of the global economy, could significantly differ than from normal times. People could value different aspects of their work more in the expense of others. Consequently, managers must research the needs and motivational preference of employees before they act with a certain formulation of motivational scheme. Moreover, as concluded by Coun et al. (2021), there is a significant correlations between psychological empowerment on the workplace and workplace proactivity; workplace flexibility; professional autonomy; access to knowledge and empowering leadership. Therefore, managers

have a significant role in the formulation of favorable work environment and motivational climate. An interesting review by Wood (2021) managed to prove various kinds of influence, coming from the environment, which had significant influence on work performance and work involvement. As we examined above there are significant influences from numerous of factors of the environment, which are influential on motivation. Hence, as was postulated before, motivation can have a significant influence on work outcomes. Consequently, there should be an expected influence of numerous factors, including the ones, influencing motivation, which will effect overall work outcomes.

The importance of motivation in the workplace are undisputable. As we examined in the current section of the article, there are numerous vies of what motivates people and how exactly this works. The vast interest in the topic continues and scholars all over the world are conducting researches and providing empirical data, proving the influence of motivation on various work outcomes. The aim in most of the current researches is the investigate the concrete influence of need satisfaction, respectively, need frustration in human behavior. The goal in the current research was namely such. Our main goal was to investigate the mechanism of the influence of the ineffective motivation in the workplace.

3. Methodology

The current study was held in a form of a survey. The study was held in a Bulgarian railway company in the administration departments of the subdivision in the whole country. There was N=423 successfully filled up survey carts. For the purpose of examining motivation, we examine different forms of motivation and formulated the question accordingly. We divided the different forms of motivation into 6 modules for the purpose of better understanding and favorable way of analyzing the results. Modules are as follow: 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).

In the first part of the survey, we asked the respondents to valued, using a Five-point Likert scale, the subjective importance for each element in the modules. This helped us to evaluate the average attestation of the respondents when it comes to there preference of the modules. In the second part of the survey, we asked the respondents to evaluate the actual application of the elements of the modules, which we already examined. We chose this approach, because if a certain motivator is applied in the work environment, the employees will sense its presence and they will be able to evaluate it. This helped us to formulate a coefficient for each module, which we called the match factor of motivation. Basically this meant that we evaluated the difference between what people preferred in their work and what they actually was applied in reality.

In the last part of the survey we examined some of the work-related outcomes in the responds group. Namely, they are - propensity for staying in the company (PSW); psychological tension among employees (PSYTENS); pride of working in the current company (PRIDE); engagement (ENGAGE); work satisfaction (SATISF); initiative in work (INIT). Each of the outcomes was evaluated by asking the respondents, questions and inviting them to evaluate each with a scale. The questions for each outcome are as follow:

- Propensity of staying in work – If it is up to you, you will work in your current company after 5 years;
- Psychological tension – Do you have the feeling that you are working in psychologically tens environment;
- Pride of working in the company: It is a pride for you to work in the current company;
- Engagement – In what degree do you feel engaged with the work and overall results of your company;
- Satisfaction – Please evaluate your overall satisfaction from work!
- Initiative – Please express your readiness for engaging in task and overall initiative!

We evaluated the match factors for each module and afterwards we were able to conduct a regression analysis for the examination of statistically significant influences by the match factor on the work outcomes.

Hence we can formulate the following hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 1: The match factor of the work environment module has a significant influence on the work outcomes;

Hypothesis 2: The match factor of remuneration module has a significant influence on work outcomes;

Hypothesis 3: The match factor of safety module has a significant influence on work outcomes;

Hypothesis 4: The match factor of personal development module has a significant influence on work outcomes;

Hypothesis 5: The match factor of affiliation and social aspects has a significant influence on the work outcomes;

Hypothesis 6: The match factor of Respect and self-respect Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership has a significant influence on work outcomes.

In the result and discussion section, we will test the hypothesizes and provide the results of the analyses.

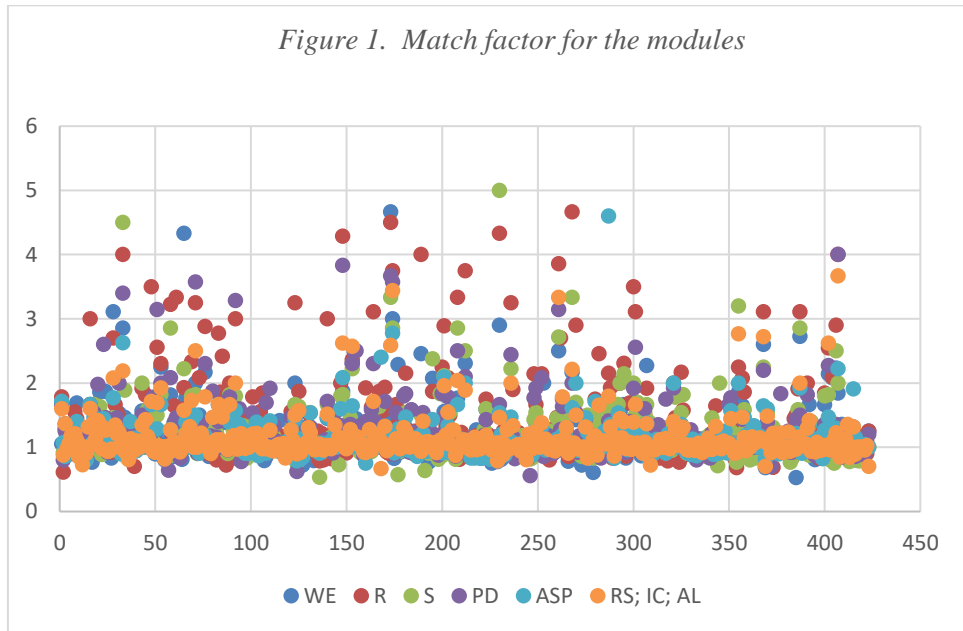
4. Results and discussion

In the current section, we will provide the results for our match factors of the modules. As the way it was formulated and calculated, the closest is to 1, the better the match between preferred and applied form of motivation. Hence, if it is more than

one, we can conclude that the modules is more preferred and less applied in the work place. Controversially, if the match factor is less than one, there are more applied than preferred forms of motivation.

Firstly, we will examine the overall results for the match factor providing results from the calculations, then we will represent the results of our regression analysis.

The results for the match factor for each of the modules for each respondent separately, we present in Figure 1:



Source: Own research

As we can see in Figure 1, there is a high concentration of the match factor around the full match. There are not a few cases of high mismatch among the respondents. Meaning that by the personal opinion of them, the motivation, applied in the company is not favorable for them. As we can see, the mismatch is threefold the perfect match between preferred and applied forms of motivation in numerous cases. Consequently, we can state that the motivation in the company at hand is not fully favorable for the employees.

The results of our regression analysis we represent in Table 1:

Table 1. Regression between match factor of the modules and work outcomes

<i>Outcm. / match</i>	WorkEnv	Remuner	Safety	Pers. Devel.	Af. Soc. As.	RS; IC; AL
PSW	-	-	-	-	-0.31***	
PSYTENS	0.32***	-	-	0.12***	0.24***	0.26*
PRIDE	-	-	-0.26***	-	-	-
ENGAGE	-	-	-	-0.11*	-	-0.29**
SATISF	-0.31***	-	-	-	-	-0.27***
INIT	-	-	-	-	-0.27***	-

Notes: P < 0.05*; P < 0.01**; P < 0.001**

Source: Own research

In the table, we represent the statistically significant and reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.60$) results from the analysis. We will briefly explain them here. The first statistically significant influence is by the match factor of **affiliation and social aspects** onto **propensity of staying in the company**. As we formulated above, the greater the value of the match factor, the bigger is the miss match between the preference of motivational elements and their application. Hence, when the negative correlation between the variables, represents a negative influence by the match factor of the module on the given work outcome. Consequently, if the miss match increases for the affiliation and social aspects, the propensity of staying in the company decreases.

Second work outcome we examine is the **psychological tension**. On which there is a significant and reliable influence by the match factors of four of the modules. Respectively, **work environment** (0.32); **personal development** (0.12); **affiliation and social aspects** (0.24); **respect and self-respect Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership** (0.26). Hence, there is a proven positive influence by the mismatch of motivation for the mentioned modules and the psychological tension. Consequently, if the mismatch increases, the psychological tension increases as well.

The third work outcome, which we examine, is the **pride from working in the company**. On which there is a significant and reliable influence by the match factor of **safety** (-0.26). Hence, if the miss match increases, the pride from working in the company decreases significantly.

The fourth work outcome, examined is the **engagement of employees**. There is a significant influence on it by **personal development** (-0.11) and **respect and self-respect Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership** (-0.29). Again, we can observe a negative correlation between the match factor of the modules and the examined outcome. Consequently, we can conclude that there will be an expected decrease in engagement, if the miss match of the mentioned modules increases.

Satisfaction is the next work outcome, which we examine. There was a significant influence on it by the match factor of **work environment** (-0.31) and **respect and self-respect Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership** (-0.27). Therefore, there is an expected decrease in satisfaction when the mismatch of the motivation in the given modules increases.

The last examined work outcome is the **initiative in work**. It was significantly influenced by the match factor of **affiliation and social aspects** (-0.27) in our responds group. Therefore, we can conclude that there will be an expected decrease in the employee initiative if the miss match for the mentioned module increases.

Hence, we provided prove for partially confirming all of our six hypothesis. Although we proved a partial influence of only from some of the match factors. We provided prove that the match factor of the modules can influence, in some amount, the work related outcomes.

5. Conclusion

In the current article we examined motivation as a main formulator of work outcomes. We underlined its importance in the wholly process of human resources management. It has been examined the vast interest in the topic of motivation, the different aspects and views in the theories, which proved the high importance of the topic for the practice of management. We represented some examples of the influence of motivation on work related outcomes and postulated that the factors, influencing the motivation of the employees, can have a significant influence on work outcomes in organizations.

Based on our results we can conclude that there will be an expected decrease in the propensity of people to stay in the company, if the affiliation and social aspects, used as motivators are not favorable. There will be a significant increase of psychological tension in work, if there will be an unfavorable application of work environment, safety, affiliation and social aspects, as we as respect and self-respect Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership elements, used as motivators in the company. there will be a significant decrease in pride, if the applied forms of safety motivational elements is not favorable in the company. In addition, there will be a significant decrease of engagement of workers, if the forms of motivation, related to personal development and respect and self-respect Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership are not favorable in the work environment. Moreover, satisfaction is expected to decrease significantly, if there is unfavorable application of the elements of work environment and respect and self-respect Interest and challenge, autonomy and leadership in work. And lastly, there will be a significant decrease of initiative of workers, if the elements of affiliation and social aspect are not favorably applied in the workplace.

Motivation can be vital for the success of the company. Often times, it can be the difference between the good and the great companies. Therefore, researches, such

as the current, are valuable not only for the science of organizational psychology and management, but as well for the practice of human resource management. Consequently, managers must investigate what is valuable for their employees and do everything possible to fulfil their valued element in the greatest amount possible. If the motivation is unfavorable, managers risk to demine the overall results of the company trueout, the worst executions of the tasks by the employees.

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