
An Innovative Approach to Generational Motivation

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Abstract:

Purpose: The study aims to determine whether the achievement of the cardinal objective of employment is motivated by more sophisticated preferences for the broad aspect of working conditions articulated by labor market adepts. The study aims to indicate what factors influence the achievement of a given general objective. The publication also assesses whether a given factor stimulates a person to formulate a goal or a de-stimulant.

Approach/Methodology/Design: The subject of the analysis results from a survey carried out on a group of 400 people aspiring to, or partially present on the labor market. Respondents have the status of a student or will obtain higher education in a short time. The survey was carried out on representatives of various faculties and universities in Poland. The survey included 73 Likert scale questions concerning such aspects: expected features of the future direct superior, selected elements of the respondent's self-assessment, and key motivators to take up employment.

Findings: As the analysis of the collected statistical material shows, three dimensions of the broad phenomenon form an orthogonal system: uncorrelated. They bring some unique knowledge about the analyzed group of respondents. The structure of 73 detailed questions creates an overly complicated picture of the issue.

Practical Implications: The analysis of survey results indicated no measurable relationship between the expectations profile of a young person and the fact that he or she wants to earn satisfactorily. This objective applies to all respondents equally, regardless of their expectations or preferences. However, it is different in the case of promotion and professional development.

Originality/Value: Research originality focuses on narrowing research to a specific group of workers with a broad view of the problem. The study of one of the most important management functions, which is motivation from various aspects and the pursuit of cause and effect relationships, will always be important for further developing the management discipline.

Keywords: Motivation, motivators, analysis, work, labor market.

JEL classification: F6, K2, O3.

Paper Type: Research study.

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1. Introduction

Motivation or motivators are diverse in the 21st century on the labor market. Each of us is motivated by something different; there are also hidden motives. The diversity in the process of motivation is probably in the aspect of people who are just entering the labor market and those who are already working (Spence and Rutherford, 2001; Wojtaszek and Miciuła, 2019). A young employee usually considers a significant remuneration. In the longer-term perspective, he begins to see the importance of professional advancement and the essence of professional development (Gadenne *et al.*, 2009; Waite and Berryman, 1986).

Young people are accused of coming to work as to school; they do not want to give anything from themselves, and they lack humility (Lee, 2011; Martens, 2020). It is generally accepted in the media that young workers are not overly attached to the workplace to which they go. Cases have been described where they lack humility in the first place. They do not have much experience, often lie in application documents, and then fail to handle the basic instruments. They have to be taught everything from the beginning, and not only do they not show gratitude for it, but they even think they are too good to work in a given place (Bot *et al.*, 2001; Turan, Kocatepe, Okan Altan and Gökner, 2015.). There are different motivational tendencies; each one of us can be motivated by something different. It is necessary to individualize the motivation of a person (Srivastava and Bhatnagar, 2010). It turns out that remuneration motivates young people and professional promotion or professional development (Leonard, 1988; Shaw and Fairhurst, 2008). Thus, it should be stressed that it is not only finances that count; employees are willing to sacrifice the level of income for improvement or prestige related to promotion; all these activities are civilized and have a different dimension for everyone. Moreover, candidates' preferences for work may also change (Katarzyna Eng and Olha, 2014).

The survey was undertaken based on a questionnaire, setting the survey's aim as determining whether the realization of the cardinal goal of taking up a job is motivated by more sophisticated preferences concerning a broad aspect of working conditions articulated by labor market adepts. The aim of the analysis is also to indicate what factors influence a given general objective's achievement. The analysis subject is the results of a study conducted on a group of 400 people aspiring to or partially present on the labor market. Respondents have the status of a student or will obtain higher education in a short time. The survey was conducted on representatives of various faculties and universities in Poland. The survey included 73 Likert scale questions concerning such aspects: expected features of the future direct superior, selected elements of the respondent's self-assessment, and key motivations to take up employment. Therefore, these questions concerned mutual relations, personality traits, financial and non-financial motivations, the respondent's self-esteem, working conditions, etc.

2. Generational Characteristics

A generation is a selectively identifiable group of people who share a similar time of birth and certain events at critical stages of development, which can now be identified as four active generations of employees, such as:

- the Silent Generation (1922-1944),
- Baby Boomers (1945-1964),
- X (1965-1980),
- Y (millennials) (1981-1994),
- Z (after 1995).

The authors stress that generational changes and economic factors significantly transform the labor market. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find and retain employees with appropriate competencies and a high motivation level (Shaw and Fairhurst, 2008; Stanley and Miikkulainen, 2001). For this study, the different generations of employees are presented.

2.1 The Silent Generation

The Silent Generation (Traditionalists) was born and grew up during the Great Depression and the Second World War, so their sense of security was of utmost importance. For this generation, work was and is a value. This generation's people are characterized by great commitment and attachment to the organization, a great sense of duty and responsibility for the tasks entrusted to them; they also attach great importance to ethics and moral principles. This generation is already leaving companies and is now visible in organizations rather at the senior level - experts who advise the younger ones (Garrison, 1985; Shaw and Fairhurst, 2008).

2.2 The Baby Boomers

The generation of Baby Boomers, born after World War II, grew up during the political and socio-economic transformation. They entered professional life at the turn of the 70s and 80s. It was a time of workers' protests, "Solidarity," and martial law. For some 50-year-olds, the free market economy's intensive development was a serious source of difficulties they faced in the labor market. The free market often preferred younger people. Apart from an increase in the standard of living in the intensive development of information technology, the possibility of owning various material goods brought about new qualitative phenomena, such as mass layoffs and privatization of the hitherto state-owned enterprises. This generation can now be described as the generation that values commitment to work, is extremely loyal to the employer, prefers individual work or cooperation to competition. This generation is also characterized by high stability of behavior, recognition of authorities, patience, and balance of words. People of the Baby-Boomers generation are more likely to accept the rules imposed by the organization. They usually need support in making

changes in the organization and show a need for recognition, but the most important thing for them is the employer's good and what they can give from themselves (Shaw and Fairhurst, 2008).

2.3 Generation Y

Generation Y is a group of people who reach out quickly to information, create communities, like to communicate quickly, have a great need to be surrounded by electronics. Representatives of this generation need independence, but they are looking for someone to mentor them. They are more flexible and open to change than their predecessors, ready to learn, and reluctant to make long-term commitments. They are willing to invest in themselves, develop their passion, and learn. What makes them different from their predecessors is that they focus more on themselves, their needs, and their benefits. They are much less loyal to their employers, but they can work if it meets their expectations and needs. Their main values are ambition, creativity, innovation, and development. Their weaknesses include low work ethics, lack of patience, and self-discipline, as well as weaker decision-making, claiming, and difficulty in direct contact (Shaw and Fairhurst, 2008).

2.4 Generation Z

Generation Z is just starting to enter the labor market - most of them are studying and taking their first professional steps, usually as apprentices or trainees. Therefore, all conclusions about this generation's characteristics in the workplace should be treated more as a forecast than an observation. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to look at this group, which in a moment will cooperate with earlier generations. Generation Z, often also referred to as Generation C, the virtual and real worlds are the same reality. They cannot function without the Internet and electronic media because they are ordinary and every day. They would like to achieve a staggering career immediately, effortlessly. It is difficult for them to come to terms with the vision of building a long-term professional career with small steps. They are looking for a job in Poland or their immediate vicinity but all over the world, as they are characterized by mobility and foreign language skills. What is a threat to the older generations, to the representatives of generation Z, is an object of fascination and a field for experimentation. They do not care about stability at work, they look for diversity, they run away from routine. They are eager to communicate with other cultures, go on foreign internships, constantly change, and improve established processes, and try new working methods. They value group work more than independent work. They can do many things at once and find it difficult to focus on one activity (Shaw and Fairhurst, 2008; Stanley and Miikkulainen, 2001).

3. Motivation in Terms of Generational Difference

Growing awareness of companies sees the need to manage a diverse work environment. Generational differences have been visible for years and have been

present in organizations, but recently there has been a growing interest in this area as one of the important aspects of human resources management. Traditional practices used when selecting an employee for work, evaluating, or motivating him/her slowly begin to be ineffective (Kuźmiński *et al.*, 2020).

Surveys of many authors and experiences and opinions of employers indicate that the labor market's current situation is strongly influenced by the difference between generations and the simultaneous functioning of several generations of employees. Therefore, multi-generational management is an important element in human resources management.

It turns out that more and more often different generations meet in companies: older Baby Boomers, these are mainly leaders, exercising power and generation X, i.e., the so-called success generation, which learned the market after 1989, and generation Y, in a moment also generation Z will join them. These generations have shaped social, cultural, economic, and political events.

Differences between employees are visible in many areas of life, career, or experience. The authors point to large differences in such values as family, work, attitude to authorities, attitude to change, level of commitment, loyalty to the employer or co-workers, and commitment level. It is worth noting that this is a great challenge for human resources departments to skillfully manage this area (Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008.; Cofer *et al.*, 1964.; Gu, 2009).

Generation Y employees are self-development oriented and speak foreign languages better than their older colleagues from generation X or Baby Boomers. They are better able to deal with new technologies and constantly improve their qualifications. Employees of this generation prefer individual tasks and are usually involved in what they do. They ignore traditions and rituals like the Baby Boomers; they have high expectations of the company and need control and support in solving problems. They are not loyal to the company and are not independent in solving problems as generation X colleagues are taught.

The representatives of the Baby Boomers generation are characterized by, among other things, low professional and geographical mobility; they are in favor of a traditional career, preferably pursued in one company, have considerable difficulties in defining their expectations, and do not fully accept social media. For generation X, work is a value itself; they can patiently wait for a promotion or raise. They also know that changing jobs is a necessity, and training allows for employment stabilization. Generation Y, on the other hand, is often described as claiming and overestimating their skills. He highly values work, which is for him to realize his passions and interests and enables further development, as well as his private life and maintaining a work-life balance. Generation Y representatives are attributed with a high need to see their work's meaning and great sensitivity to their own decisions' social and ecological consequences. The balance between work and other spheres of life and the

values that the representatives of generation Y attach to family and loved ones and the realization of their own passions are essential for them. The last two of these characteristics clearly distinguish the described group from the representatives of generation X, whom the literature presents as focused on career development, prone to the competition of individualists (Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008; Meng, 2005; Srivastava and Bhatnagar, 2010; Waite and Berryman, 1986).

4. Aims of the Research

The study aims to verify a certain level of awareness of educated or learning labor market adepts and, if possible, to propose a certain classification of such persons. Persons planning to take up their first full-time job usually distinguish three main objectives of choosing a specific position: satisfactory level of earnings, the possibility of promotion, and the possibility of self-improvement. It is obvious that most people indicate these goals, but everyone attaches slightly different importance to them. This is so because these goals are achieved by people with specific preferences regarding working conditions (financial and non-financial) and conditions of cooperation, especially about their immediate superior. One can, therefore, guess that a claim for high promotion will be formulated by people with slightly different personality traits and preferences than a claim for self-perfection. Therefore, the study aims to determine whether the realization of the cardinal goal of taking up employment is motivated by more sophisticated preferences concerning the broad aspect of working conditions, articulated by labor market adepts. The aim of the analysis is also to indicate what factors influence a given general objective's achievement. The publication also assesses whether a given factor stimulates the person to formulate a goal or a de-stimulant. Moreover, finally, whether there are clear differences in particular subsets. Therefore, the research hypothesis is: *"Persons formulating one of the three cardinal goals of undertaking their first job differ both in their preferences and how these preferences affect the achievement of the goal."*

5. Method

The analysis subject is the results of a survey conducted on a group of 400 people aspiring to, or partially present on the labor market. The respondents have the status of a student or will obtain a university degree in a short time. Representatives of various faculties and universities in Poland were surveyed. The survey included 73 Likert scale questions concerning such aspects: expected features of the future direct superior, selected elements of the respondent's self-assessment, and key motivators to take up employment. Therefore, these questions dealt with mutual relations, personality traits, financial and non-financial motivators, the respondent's self-esteem, working conditions, etc. The questionnaire sheet also contained questions on a dichotomous scale, defining the basic, key objectives that the respondents take into account when entering the labor market in the light of the survey results. These are most often indicated:

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- Satisfactory remuneration (59% of respondents);
 - Possibility of promotion and making career (33%);
 - Gaining experience and possibility of professional development (26%).

As the collected statistical material analysis shows, these three dimensions of the broad phenomenon form an orthogonal system: they are uncorrelated. Therefore, they bring some unique knowledge about the analyzed group of respondents. The structure of 73 detailed questions creates a very complicated picture of the issue. Basically, these questions describe three key spheres:

- What motivates the respondent to take up employment? (34 questions)
- What are the characteristics of a good superior in his opinion? (29 questions)
- Respondent's expectations of work. (10 questions)

Such a large number of observable variables require reduction and identification of the questions that most contribute to the issue's statistical description. In this study, to reduce the number of variables, Exploratory Factor Analysis (Harman, 1976) was used. This method is based on the assumption that certain subgroups of mutually correlated variables in the numerous set of variables. This, in turn, entitles to construct a certain hidden variable, which is a linear combination of variables in a given subgroup. Thus, instead of the model taking into account numerous correlated variables, a model of hidden variables representing whole subgroups is constructed. An important element of the EFA concept is eliminating uncorrelated or negligible variables explaining the variability of the whole set. Hidden variables are called factors. Once the factors have been identified, new variables have been created, which are the sum of the values of the ratings assigned to the survey questions. The assessment of these factors' impact on cardinal goals, formulated by the respondents, was made using the logit model (Hosmer and Lemeshow, 2000). This statistical tool is a regression model in which the explained (dependent) variable is a dichotomous variable. This model allows us to achieve two research objectives: determining whether factors affect the cardinal target. This model also allows classifying respondents according to their preferences. The logit model has an advantage over correlation coefficients as it considers multidimensional relationships between variables and gives their strength and direction (in terms of the whole system of factors).

6. Results

The first stage of the study was to reduce the number of variables describing the contender's preferences for the labor market. 76 questions described three spheres: employee's motivators, characteristics describing good superior, and respondent's job preferences. These questions, creating some correlated subsets, present a peculiar image of the respondents in implementing job search objectives: satisfactory remuneration, promotion prospects, and professional development. The study uses factor analysis with orthogonal rotation. This means that the factors that were searched

for were as little as possible correlated with each other, i.e., bringing to the problem description some unique information absent in other subsets. The selection of observable variables was also guided by the reliability level (α -Cronbach) (Cronbach *et al.*, 2004). Each of the factors has a value of this parameter above 0.6. Finally, factor analysis allowed identifying ten main factors that determine the respondents' preferences (Table 1).

Table 1. Factors identified using the EFA and their interpretation.

FACTOR	DESCRIPTION
Relationship and Performance	This factor describes the issues related to the need to successfully achieve the objectives, meet professional challenges, build good relations with the superior, the need to participate in the successes of the duties.
The residence of a superior	Destimulant. Respondents indicate that modesty and forbearance are not treated by them as features of a good superior.
Need for commitment	A stimulant describing the need to involve the respondent in planning tasks. It is a variable describing the need for freedom and co-decision making, the possibility to develop and acquire knowledge, the need for involvement and co-decision making.
Confrontation	A stimulant describing the need to control the tasks performed by the superior, monitoring the effects of the respondent's work, competition in the team.
Gratifications	Frequent increases and financial rewards.
Creative supervisor	Variable describing the expectations of the superior's respondents: openness to new ideas, strategic thinking, creativity in action.
Superior's working style	Respect for colleagues and good organisation of their work.
Superior charisma	Consistency in action, charisma, superiority.
Rival superior	A supervisor focused on competition, competition, dynamic and impulsive person. Enterprising.
Determination in job satisfaction	A variable describing the determination to change jobs when the respondent does not experience the respect of colleagues, is dissatisfied with working conditions or does not achieve satisfactory income. "I want to be respected, satisfied and earn well, that is the most important thing for me".

Source: Own creation.

The factors listed in Table 1 form a 10-dimensional vector of the assessment of a specific respondent. The publication assesses whether this vector allows us to classify the respondent, to assign him/her to one of three types: those guided by the perspective of earnings, promotion, or professional development. Dichotomous variables describe these three groups, and questions about these aspects opened the survey. The logit model's use made it possible to show whether there is a significant relationship between the declared factors and the direction of this relationship. The most frequently indicated cardinal goal by the respondents was the satisfactory level of earnings. The selection of variables for the model was made using Wald's backward elimination method. The starting point is the assumption that all factors significantly

affect the way the respondent was classified. This method excludes further insignificant variables like ANOVA (Bordens and Abbott, 2002).

Some interactions between variables are taken into account. The model's estimated form is verified in this study by analyzing the ROC curve and the AUC field under the curve. If the AUC is significantly higher than 0,5, the model with the relevant parameters can be considered as a better classifier of respondents than a simple random classification. Values close to or higher than 0,7 are assumed to give good classification. Values above 0.9 give very good classifiers.

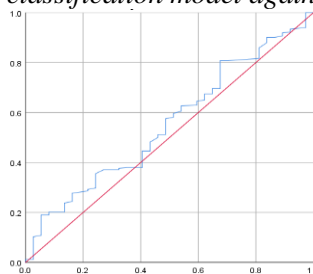
The analysis started with the most frequently indicated objective: Satisfactory earnings. The results of the modeling are presented in Table 2. The logistic regression model showed a significant dependence on labor market contenders' main goal: the preference of satisfactory earnings (statistical significance 0,05). Additionally, about 64% of cases are subject to the model classification. However, the decisive factor is the quality assessment of the estimated classifier. It is the percentage of correct classifications, which should be considered moderately low, and the AUC field which does not statistically differ from the value of 0.5. This means that the estimated classifier is as accurate as a random assignment, without considering the previously identified factors. Such a result of the analysis makes it possible to conclude that no preferences of labor market contenders define the goal of satisfactory earnings. The respondents characterize this objective in an even degree: "Everyone wants to earn well."

Table 2. Classification of respondents in relation to preferences for satisfactory remuneration

Percentage of correct classification		
64%		
VARIABLES IN THE MODEL	Relevance of the p-value logistic model parameter	
Relationship and Performance	0.023	
The residence of a superior	0.000	
Need for commitment	0.020	
Area AUC	Standard error	Asymptotic significance
0.553	0.048	0.287

Source: Own creation.

Figure 1. ROC curve for the classification model against good pay preferences



Source: Own creation.

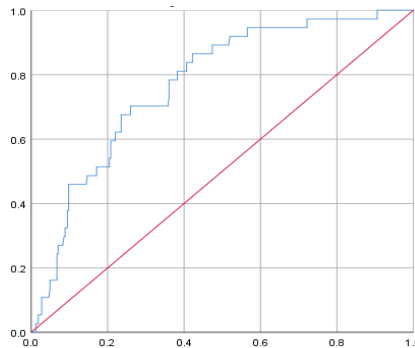
The situation is different for the general objective of professional promotion. The estimated model describes almost 90% of the respondents, which gives an excellent classification efficiency, and at the same time, the AUC is 0.77. The model, therefore, describes the analyzed phenomenon to a good or excellent degree. The respondents' key preferences are familiarity with the superior, confrontation, additional gratuities, and the need for satisfaction. Analyzing these factors in detail (Table 1), it is possible to describe a certain type of the respondent's personality, whose main purpose for taking up his first job is the possibility of promotion.

Table 3. Classification of respondents for promotion.

Percentage of correct classification		
89,8%		
VARIABLES IN THE MODEL	Relevance of the p-value logistic model parameter	
The residence of a superior	0.050	
Confrontation	0.030	
Gratifications	0.009	
Determination in job satisfaction	0.017	
Permanent	0.000	
Area AUC	Standard error	Asymptotic significance
0.771	0.037	0.000

Source: Own creation.

Figure 2. The ROC curve for the model of classification against promotion preferences.



Source: Own creation.

Those looking for promotion do not appreciate superior's modesty and forbearance very much, but they have no other expectations of him. They are not afraid of verifying their work; they are not afraid of progress monitoring; they compete. These factors stimulate these people to work (Table 5). While it cannot be said that the level of earnings guides the people in this group, they expect increases and financial rewards. This seems to be a natural conclusion since promotion is usually associated with a raise. From the employer's point of view, an important feature is the determination of the people described here to achieve their goals. This group of future employees does

not hesitate to change their employer if they do not experience any respect, financial satisfaction, or appreciation for their work.

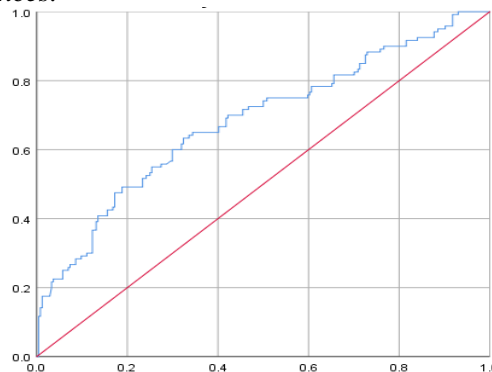
The third type of respondent selects the first employer, guided by the need for self-development. The estimated model accurately describes over 70% of respondents, which should be considered a satisfactory result. Simultaneously, the AUC is almost 0.7, which can be considered a good and sufficient value for adopting the model as a classifier.

Table 4. Classification of respondents in terms of their ability to gain professional experience.

Percentage of correct classification		
70,5%		
VARIABLES IN THE MODEL	Relevance of the p-value logistic model parameter	
Confrontation	0.005	
Superior charisma	0.016	
Rival superior	0.013	
The need for satisfaction	0.000	
Area AUC	Standard error	Asymptotic significance
0.683	0.031	0.000

Source: Own creation.

Figure 1. ROC curve for the classification model in relation to professional development preferences.



Source: Own creation.

For this group of respondents, it is also possible to describe certain personality traits. Similarly, as in the case of people aiming at promotion, the respondent's analyses here consider the confrontation of their work with the employer's expectations and are guided by the factor of seeking a satisfactory job. However, in contrast to the previously described group, these people have completely different attitudes towards these factors. Some of them are stimuli; others are negative. The model of logistic regression allows us to assess this type of phenomenon. The direction of relations is

indicated by the model parameters (Table 5). As it turns out, people who care about their professional development treat the need for satisfaction or confrontation as a destimulant. They are rather aware that they want to learn; they accept possible errors and mistakes, hence their unwillingness to control their work results. Moreover, they are willing to make sacrifices: in the name of development, they do not decide to change their job because of their earnings or their sense of satisfaction. Those who care about development also do not appreciate a competing, impulsive, and enterprising supervisor. However, forgiving or modest superior is not a significant preference for such employees. They definitely value people who are charismatic, consistent, and feisty. In contrast to those oriented towards promotion, those looking for development opportunities pay no attention to gratuities and financial aspects. These are not important in achieving their goal.

Table 5. Stimulants (green) and de-stimulant (red) in the group of persons heading for the first job with the possibility of promotion or professional development.

FACTOR	MAIN OBJECTIVE OF TAKING UP YOUR FIRST JOB	
	Professional promotion	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
The residence of a superior	0.767	-
Confrontation	1.147	0,889
Gratifications	1.493	-
The need for satisfaction	1.212	0,878
Superior charisma	-	1.252
Rival superior	-	0.807

Source: Own creation.

7. Conclusion

Whatever the generation of employees, Silent Generation Baby Boomers, X, Y, and Z, generational changes and economic factors significantly change the labor market. It turns out that it is becoming more and more difficult to find and maintain employees with appropriate competencies and a high level of motivation.

A person entering the labor market sets himself or herself certain cardinal goals, of which the most often indicated are satisfactory remuneration, promotion prospects, and the possibility of professional development. Of course, there are other objectives which are followed by future employees: the compatibility of qualifications with the work performed or a good atmosphere in the workplace, but they are rarely indicated. Apart from achieving these goals, young people have certain perspectives, expectations, an idealized image of both the workplace and the supervisor, or the conditions of remuneration for work.

Therefore, it is interesting to see whether these preferences are related to the main purpose of the job. As the analysis of survey results has shown, there is no measurable relationship between the profile of young people's expectations and the fact that they want to earn satisfactorily. This objective applies to all respondents equally, regardless

of their expectations or preferences. However, it is different in the case of promotion and professional development. As the survey has shown, there is a clear difference between those seeking promotion and those seeking improvement. In the first group, some high-value additional gratuities articulate the need for satisfaction and are not afraid to verify the results. In the group of people seeking professional improvement, gratification does not matter, and the nonesuch people perceive the need for satisfaction or the confrontation of work effects stimulants. However, they value the charisma of the superior.

It is certainly an added value to look at the improvement of motivation systems towards non-wage motivation factors. The authors note that there is a definite lack of development of concrete actions in this respect. There are only premises that young people are only interested in high remuneration, which is untrue, and this result is paid off and generalized. The development of research in this area would certainly allow us to adjust the motivational factors. The authors conclude that there is a strong need to individualize the motivation. Each of us is different and has different motivational stimuli, and it seems that even for a person course of the motivation process should be adapted depending on employee preferences.

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