



Analysis of Motivational Strategies in Rural Areas of Romania

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ABSTRACT

The fundamental objective of the work is to identify, analyze and interpret the motivational mechanisms in rural areas, as well as the determining factors, in order to provide a solid basis for interventions and strategies to improve the motivation of employees working in the field of agriculture and rural development. Research studies on motivation are essential for understanding the factors that influence human behavior, performance and personal satisfaction at work. The presentation of this research can conclude that being motivated at work is the key to developing organizational behavior and increasing performance in the organization. A motivated employee will have a higher level of goal achievement, which will increase the productivity of the organization. The conclusion is that high performance is achieved through optimal motivation in rural areas, basically a balance between the energetic value and the purpose of motivation is needed.

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1. Introduction

The importance of a scientific approach to the aspects related to motivational management in rural areas within the organization lies in the fact that motivational management in rural areas represents a fundamental field of economic and behavioral sciences with a significant impact on organizational performance (Benzo, 2013; Bugdol & Jedynek, 2022). Contemporary studies highlight the need for a scientific approach, based on empirically validated theories, to maximize the efficiency of motivational strategies in rural areas. This paper analyzes the fundamental concepts of motivational management in rural areas, the relevance in the organizational environment and the importance of applying theoretical models (Lee, 2020; Park et al., 2019).

Motivational management in rural areas represents a multidisciplinary field, located at the intersection of psychology, economics and strategic management. Its importance has been recognized over time, being studied in depth by authors such as Maslow, Herzberg, McClelland or Deci and Ryan. Basically, the paper analyzes the theoretical aspects of motivational management in rural areas and highlights them through an approach based on scientific evidence.

Motivational strategies can be classified into two main categories: financial and non-financial. Financial strategies include competitive salaries, performance bonuses, and other monetary benefits. Although financial rewards may stimulate performance in the short term, the relationship between salary studies and job satisfaction is weak, contributing less than 2% to overall satisfaction.

Non-financial strategies include recognition of merit as well as opportunities for professional development.

Because satisfaction with autonomy, competence, and relationships tends to catalyze intrinsic pleasure and/or value and satisfaction in the activities themselves, satisfaction of these needs is understood to be essential for internalizing motivation

From a theoretical point of view, motivational management in rural areas is based on both classical and modern theoretical models.

Classical theoretical models that address aspects related to motivational management in rural areas within organizations, each of which offers a different perspective on the factors that influence employee motivation, are:

- Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Adziima, 2022; Feigenbaum & Smith, 2020; McLeod, 2018; Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017)
- Dual Factor Theory (Malik & Naeem, 2013; Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017; Yashak et al., 2020)
- Needs Theory (Mourão & Locatelli, 2020; Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017; Ridha, 2020; Susanto & Lestari, 2018)

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- Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Miller et al., 1988)
- Expectancy Theory (Abdul Rehman et al., 2019; Husniyawati & Wulandari, 2016; Mohd, 2021)

Recent developments in motivational management in rural areas include approaches based on positive psychology, neuroscience and behavioral analysis and are expressed through modern, contemporary models that emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation and employee involvement.

The application of empirical methods and advanced statistical analysis techniques allows the identification of factors that influence motivational performance in rural areas. The use of validated tools (psychometric questionnaires, longitudinal studies, experimental methods) is essential for the development of effective strategies.

The need for a scientific approach to motivational management in rural areas is justified by the complexity of the factors involved and the direct impact of motivation on organizational performance, which is constantly evolving in terms of labor market dynamics.

I believe that a scientific approach to motivational management in rural areas is absolutely essential for the development of a high-performance work environment. From my perspective, the integration of new discoveries in psychology and neuroscience into motivational strategies in rural areas can lead to better personalization of stimuli, thus increasing employee efficiency and satisfaction. I believe that traditional approaches need to be reevaluated in the current context, characterized by digitalization and rapid changes in labor market dynamics. The implementation of evidence-based methods and organizational adaptability are key factors in the long-term success of motivational management in rural areas.

2. Methodology

The analysis includes the responses of 595 respondents, collected between May 2023 and February 2024. There was a dominance of the female gender, 58.49% of the responses belonging to women (n=348), respectively 41.51% to men (n=247) (Table 1).

Respondents were aged between 18 and 78 years, with a mean age of 37.06 years (standard deviation 11.73, CI: [36.11, 38.00]) and a median age of 37 years, with no significant differences between genders (mean age: women – 37.59 years, men – 36.31 years).

Depending on the age group, the respondents were:

- 20 years old or younger – in 10.42% of cases (n=61),
- Between 21 and 30 years old – in 23.19% of cases (n=138),
- Between 31 and 40 years old – in 23.19% of cases (n=138),
- Between 41 and 50 years old – in 30.42% of cases (n=181),
- Between 51 and 60 years old – in 11.76% of cases (n=70),
- Over 60 years old – in 1.01% of cases (n=6) (Table 2).

3. Results

Employee motivation is a topic of major interest in the field of human resource management, as it directly influences productivity, job satisfaction and staff retention through two essential aspects: knowledge and rewards. Knowledge offers employees the opportunity to develop their professional skills, increase their efficiency and better adapt to the demands of the labor market. According to the self-determination theory, employees are more motivated when they benefit from autonomy, competence and constructive social relationships.

Furthermore, access to information and continuous training allows employees to feel more involved and valuable within the organization. Organizations that invest in continuous education of employees obtain multiple benefits, including greater loyalty and higher performance.

There are also many studies according to the same self-comparison is a productive way to address disturbing thoughts and emotions that generate mental and physical well-being and cancel out claims according to the same form of self-comparison weakness and undermines motivation).

The concept of training motivation is a more sophisticated term and refers to individual attitudes and the desire to learn during the activities, with a significant impact in significant in the training process.

Associated rewards another important factor that influences employee motivation. These can be financial (salaries, bonuses, premiums) or non-financial (recognition, promotions, development opportunities).

The term "recompense" has a more restricted use in Romania, being sometimes confused with "compensation" or other elements associated with this concept. In English, "compensation" can mean compensation, compensation, payment, reward, indemnity or salary. In this paper, the term "reward" was chosen, considering that it most faithfully reflects the content of the analyzed notions.

The main results obtained in the development of the research study highlight significant connections between the implemented strategies and the results obtained among employees. First of all, motivational management in rural areas significantly influences employee satisfaction, involvement and performance, with performance recognition and professional development strategies being associated with a high level of organizational involvement.

The size of the organization also determines how these strategies are applied: large companies emphasize continuous training, while small ones prefer flexible working hours. Clarity in communicating motivational strategies and regular managerial feedback are essential factors, positively influencing employees' perception of the organization's efficiency and their level of commitment.

Educational level plays an important role, with people with higher education being more receptive to development and recognition opportunities. Organizational culture, especially transparency policies and an inclusive work climate, contribute significantly to satisfaction and involvement. Autonomy in decision-making and individual accountability are positively correlated with employee motivation and performance.

The number of hours worked varies depending on educational level and position, with employees with advanced education and those in management positions being prone to exceeding standard norms. Promoting a culture of feedback and expressing opinions are critical for retention, and work-life balance has a major influence on employee motivation and loyalty.

Motivation strategies have differentiated effects depending on age, experience and educational level, and regular discussions and clarity of goals contribute to increased job satisfaction. The development of collaboration and communication skills is found in all organizational dimensions, and the ordinal regression model confirms that performance recognition, organizational culture and clarity of goals are determining factors of motivation and involvement.

Finally, internal promotion and professional development opportunities are essential for motivating employees, underlining the importance of a clear and well-structured system of advancement within the organization. These results highlight the importance of adapted and well-founded motivational management in rural areas for creating a transparent, motivating work climate based on communication and mutual respect.

Table 1. Distribution of cases by gender

Sex		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Feminin	348	58.49	58.5	58.5
	Masculin	247	41.51	41.5	100.0
	Total	595	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Distribution of cases by age group

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 20 years old	62	10.42	10.4	10.4
	21 - 30 years old	138	23.19	23.2	33.6
	31 - 40 years old	138	23.19	23.2	56.8
	41 - 50 years old	181	30.42	30.4	87.2
	51 - 60 years old	70	11.76	11.8	99.0
	Over 60 years old	6	1.01	1.0	100.0
	Total	595	100.0	100.0	

Respondents from the health and agriculture fields predominated, with the other fields each accounting for less than 10% of respondents, as follows:

- 22.02% of respondents worked in agriculture (n=131, more than 1 in 5 respondents, 35.11% of respondents were women, 64.89% were men),
- 22.02% in health (n=131, more than 1 in 5 respondents, 85.50% women, 14.50% men),
- 9.92% in education (n=59, 1 in 10 respondents, 81.36% women, 18.64% men),
- 7.73% in engineering (n=46, less than 1 in 10 respondents, 28.26% women, 71.74% men),
- 6.89% in public administration and defense (n=41, less than 1 in 10 respondents, 46.34% women, 53.66% men),
- 6.22% in trade (n=37, less than 1 in 10 respondents, 62.16% women, 37.84% men),
- 5.71% in transportation (n=34, more than 1 in 20 respondents, 44.12% women, 55.88% men),
- 4.20% in finance (n=25, less than 1 in 20 respondents, 76% women, 24% men),
- 3.03% in IT (n=18, less than 1 in 25 respondents, 33.33% women, 66.67% men),
- 2.86% high collective, social and personal service activities (n=17, less than 1 in 25 respondents, 82.35% women, 17.65% men),
- 2.86% in construction (n=17, less than 1 in 25 respondents, 35.29% women, 64.71% men),

- 1.18% in HoReCa (n=7, less than 1 in 50 respondents, 57.14% women, 42.86% men),
- 1.18% in the pharmaceutical industry (n=7, less than 1 in 50 respondents, 85.71% women, 14.29% men),
- 0.84% in the legal field (n=5, less than 1 in 100 respondents, 40% women, 60% men),
- 0.34% in the energy field (n=2, less than 1 in 100 respondents, 100% men),
- 3.03% high fields (n=18, such as: research, accounting, telecom, psychology, sales, human resources, sports, meteorology, service provision, marketing, etc., 83.33% women, 16.67% men), (Table3)

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by field of activity

Field of Activity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agriculture	131	22.02
Health	131	22.02
Education	59	9.92
Engineering	46	7.73
Public Administration & Defense	41	6.89
Commerce	37	6.22
Transport	34	5.71
Financial	25	4.20
IT	18	3.03
Other Collective, Social & Personal Services	17	2.86
Construction	17	2.86
HoReCa (Hotel, Restaurant, Café)	7	1.18
Pharmaceutical Industry	7	1.18
Legal	5	0.84
Energy	2	0.34
Others	18	3.03
Total	595	100.0

Multiple employee motivation strategies were implemented within organizations, as follows:

- Performance recognition through awards or financial bonuses – in 33.11% of cases (n=197, in 1 out of 3 companies),
- Professional development through training and development programs – in 24.20% of cases (n=144, in approximately 1 out of 4 companies),
- Flexibility of work schedule and work environment – in 23.36% of cases (n=139, in more than 1 out of 5 companies),
- Regular feedback on performance – in 15.29% of cases (n=91, in more than 1 out of 6 companies)

Exceptionally, some companies opted for all or more of the mentioned strategies (with an emphasis on the combination of bonuses + professional development), but these represented only 1.34% of companies (n=8).

Also exceptionally, according to the respondents, there were companies in which no employee motivation strategy was used, representing 2.69% of cases (n=16, less than 1 in 40 companies) (Table 4).

Table 4: Distribution of responses according to employee motivation strategies implemented in the organization

What employee motivation strategies are implemented in your organization?			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No motivation strategy	16	2.69
	Recognition of performance through awards or financial bonuses	197	33.11
	Professional development through training and development programs	144	24.20
	Regular feedback on performance	91	15.29
	Flexibility of work schedule and work environment	139	23.36
	All or more of the above strategies	8	1.34
	Total	595	100.0

The application of a Chi-square test indicated that there is a statistically significant association between employee motivation strategies and company size $\chi^2=21.976$, $p=0.015$, and the Phi coefficients

($\phi=0.192$) and Cramer's V (0.136) reveal this strategy between companies and their intense (0.136) weak motivation ($p=0.015$) (Table 5).

Thus, company size has a slight influence on the choice of employee motivation strategies.

Table 5. Chi-square test and Phi and Cramer's V coefficients (company size and motivation strategies)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.976 ^a	10	.015
Likelihood Ratio	22.807	10	.011
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.610	1	.106
N of Valid Cases	595		
a. 4 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.04.			
Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.192	.015
	Cramer's V	.136	.015
N of Valid Cases		595	

The statistical analysis of motivational management in rural areas demonstrates the existence of significant correlations between the motivation strategies implemented within organizations and the level of satisfaction, involvement and performance of employees, highlighting the importance of recognizing meritocracy, clarity of objectives and promoting an inclusive and transparent organizational work culture as determining factors of a climate for determining employee motivation.

Motivational management in rural areas significantly influences employee satisfaction and productivity, performance recognition and professional development strategies are associated with a high degree of organizational involvement.

The size of the organization determines variations in the application of motivation strategies, with large companies placing greater emphasis on continuous training, and small ones on work schedule flexibility. There is a statistically significant relationship between the clarity of communication of motivation strategies and effectiveness, with employees having a more positive perception of organizations that promote transparent and direct communication.

Regular managerial feedback and performance recognition are significant predictors of professional commitment, highlighting the need for structured evaluation and reward systems.

5. Conclusions

The **ordinal regression model** further reinforced that **performance recognition, organizational culture, and clarity of goals** are the strongest predictors of employee motivation and involvement.

In conclusion, these findings emphasize the necessity of a **context-sensitive, well-structured motivational strategy**, especially in rural organizations. Promoting **internal advancement, professional growth**, and fostering a **transparent, communicative, and respect-based work environment** is essential to enhancing both individual and organizational performance.

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