Students' Motives to Work: Intercultural Study

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Abstract. The aim of the study was to determinate students' intercultural differences in their viewpoint to their motives satisfaction's need in organization according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The following survey was provided in Lithuania, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and Iran. Intercultural differences were highlighted from this survey. Paper presents results' comparison according to respondents' country and gender. To conclude, we can say that students basically are motivated by satisfaction of safety needs.

Keywords: Students, Intercultural Differences, Motivation, Lithuania, Turkey, Spain, Iran, Portugal.

1. Introduction

Professors try to give for students the best knowledge and to teach them to be good specialists for the future (Kumpikaite and Alas, 2009). However, they deal with the problem that students do not want to learn, to work every day and to get more knowledge (Brophy (1998), Csikszentmihalyi (1990), Lumsden (1994), Bye et al. (2007), Debnat et al. (2007), Ruban et al. (2003) and Griffin et al (2008)). Necessity to have good work performers in complicated economic situation and question how to motivate and prepare them in the best way gave an idea to explore students' attitudes to their motivation and work in intercultural context.

Similar researches were already provided in Lithuania and presented in papers by Kumpikaite (2009) Ciarniene et al. (2010), Kumpikaite and Duoba (2011) and Estonia (Kumpikaite and Alas, 2009). Later it was decided to go deeper in to cultural context. Authors look for those evaluation's differences in two older European Union country – Spain and Portugal, one of the newest European Union country's Lithuania, candidate to European Union, situated in Europe and Asia – Turkey, and then Iran – the Middle East. It was selected because countries are from different cultures, religions and situated from the West of Europe (Spain, Portugal and Lithuania) to the East (Turkey situated in Europe and Asia – the Near East, then Iran – the Middle East) in Asia. Some results of following research were presented by Kumpikaite et al. (2011) and Kumpikaite et al. (2012).

This paper reveals students' attitudes to their motives they want to satisfy in organization. The paper reports the findings of university students' from Lithuania, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and Iran.

2. Theoretical Background

Employee performance is frequently described as a joint function of ability and motivation, and one of the primary tasks facing a manager is motivating employees to perform to the best of their ability (Moorhead and Griffin, 1998).

Most of the scientific literature defines motivation as the direction, persistence, and amount of effort expended by an individual to achieve a specified outcome. In other words, the following aspects reflect the person's motivation (Ciarniene et al., 2010):

- What need(s) the person is trying to satisfy?
- The type of activity the person does not satisfy the need.
- How long the person keeps doing it.
- How hard the person works at it.

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Maslow's motivation theory is the best known in entire world. In 1943 Abraham Maslow, one of the founding fathers of humanist approaches to management, wrote an influential paper that set out five fundamental human needs and their hierarchical nature. They are quoted and taught so widely now that many people perceive this model as the definitive set of needs and do not look further. Maslow (1967) suggested these five main needs:

- Physiological needs are to do with the maintenance of the human body. If we are unwell, then little else matters until we recover.
- Safety needs are about putting a roof over our heads and keeping us from harm. If we are rich, strong and powerful, or have good friends, we can make ourselves safe.
- Social (belonging) needs introduce our tribal nature. If we are helpful and kind to others they will want us as friends.
- Esteem needs are for a higher position within a group. If people respect us, we have greater power.
- Self-actualization needs are to 'become what we are capable of becoming', which would our greatest achievement.

Physiological and safety needs were described as lower-order needs; and social, esteem and self actualization needs were described as higher-order-needs. Maslow's (1970) theory of human motivation is based on a distinction between higher and lower motives. He was convinced that there are "real psychological and operational differences between those needs called higher' and those called 'lower'" (Maslow, 1970: 97). Compared with lower motives higher motives have a later evolutionary development, a later age of onset, are less relevant to biological survival, and are closer to self-actualization. Maslow did not specify typical age ranges for the five levels of his hierarchy of motivation. Instead, he recognized wide individual differences in the rate of progression through the hierarchy. Maslow's hierarchy implies that human growth is associated with adult maturity, a decrease in the prepotency of "lower" motives and an increase in the prepotency of "higher" motives Reiss and Havercamp (2005). Maslow believed, however, that older adults were generally more likely than younger adults to be concerned with higher motivation.

3. Empirical Research

3.1. Description of research

The goal of this study was to investigate students' motivations from work. The empirical research method was structured questionnaire survey, based on theoretical background. The data were gathered via Internet. The main task of this research was to find out: What needs students want to satisfy from their work? Following needs were formulated:

- Safety needs: salary, work conditions;
- Social security needs: good work atmosphere, understanding supervisor, good interpersonal relations, self-expression, wish to belong to some social group;
- Higher needs: possibility to use skills and knowledge, quick career, prestige, possibilities to be promoted

The scale for evaluations was divided in to 4 levels: 0 – not important at all, 1 – almost not important, 2 – important and 3 – very important. Means and Spearman's correlation were used for analysis in this paper.

Total information according to gender is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents information according gender and country

Count		Country					
		Iran	Lithuania	Portugal	Spain	Turkey	Total
Sex	Missing	3	0	0	0	3	6
	Female	90	138	12	81	68	389
	Male	103	65	23	44	91	326
Total		196	203	35	125	162	721

The study was provided in 2011. 203 respondents from Lithuania, 159 from Turkey, 193 from Iran, 127 from Spain and 35 from Portugal participated in this poll. 45.5% of them were males. All students were studying Social sciences connected with business and economics.

3.2. Results of the Research

Looking at Spearman correlations' between pairs of countries some statistical significant differences were found (see Table 2). We can see that Lithuanian, Turkish and Iranian respondents evaluated all motives as much more important for them as Spanish (significant differences in all cases). It is very interesting and reasons of this case should be analysed deeper what has not done in this study. No statistical significant differences were found between Turkey and Iran. Attractive salary, attractive work conditions and possibilities to be promoted are more important for Lithuanians than for respondents of other countries. However prestige of work place, wish to belong to some social group and quick career are more important for respondents from Turkey and Iran. Speaking about differences between Lithuanians and Turks, good interpersonal relations for Turks are more important as well too. Portuguese sample was not analysed as it was too small for this.

Table 2. Correlations among motives according to countries

	Motives	Lithuania and Spain	Lithuania and Iran	Lithuania and Turkey	Turkey and Spain	Iran and Spain	Turkey and Iran
Safety needs	Atractive salary	-0,584**	-0.153**	-0.161**	-0,555**	-0,569**	0.017
	Atractive work conditions	-0,678**	-0.140**	-0.133*	-0,708**	-0,708**	-0.003
Social needs	Self-expression	-0,415**	0.119*	0.162*	-0,639**	-0,591**	-0.051
	Good work atmosphere	-0,566**	-0.090	-0.101	-0,577**	-0,597**	0.018
	Understanding supervisor	-0,679**	0.043	0.073	-0,77**	-0,761**	-0.046
	Good interpersonal relations	-0,294**	-0.062	-0.034	-0,38**	-0,354**	-0.031
	Whish to belong to some social group	-0,292**	0.152**	0.149**	-0,419**	-0,409**	-0.007
Higher needs	Quick career	-0,151**	0.160**	0.181**	-0,367**	-0,339**	-0.030
	Prestige of workplace	-0,194**	0.185**	0.253*	-0,422**	-0,361**	-0.071
	Possibilities to be promoted	-0,521**	-0.154**	-0.171**	-0,519**	-0,533**	0.028
	Possibility to use your skills and knowledge	-0,401**	-0.121*	-0.096	-0,452**	-0,419**	-0.030

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Analysing differences according to gender by countries it was found that attractive salary is more important for females in Turkey and Iran. Good interpersonal relations and possibility to be promoted are more important for females in Lithuania. Possibility to use skills and knowledge is more important for males than females among Spanish respondents.

Figure 1 gives means of evaluations of motives by gender. The most important motive for all is Wish to belong to some social group and this is less important for females. Good work atmosphere, prestige of workplace, quick career, and self expression, understanding supervisor and good interpersonal relations are more important for males. Just Attractive salary and possibility to be promoted are more important for females than males. It lets us to thing that women still feel discrimination because their gender and think it is harder to be promoted or to get bigger salary.

It is very positive that students showed the most wish to have possibility to use their skills and knowledge (Mean is 2.54). Attractive work conditions are on the second place, followed by good work atmosphere, possibility to be promoted and good interpersonal relations. Means of safety and social needs were the same (Mean is 2.48) and mean of higher needs were lower (Mean is 2.29).
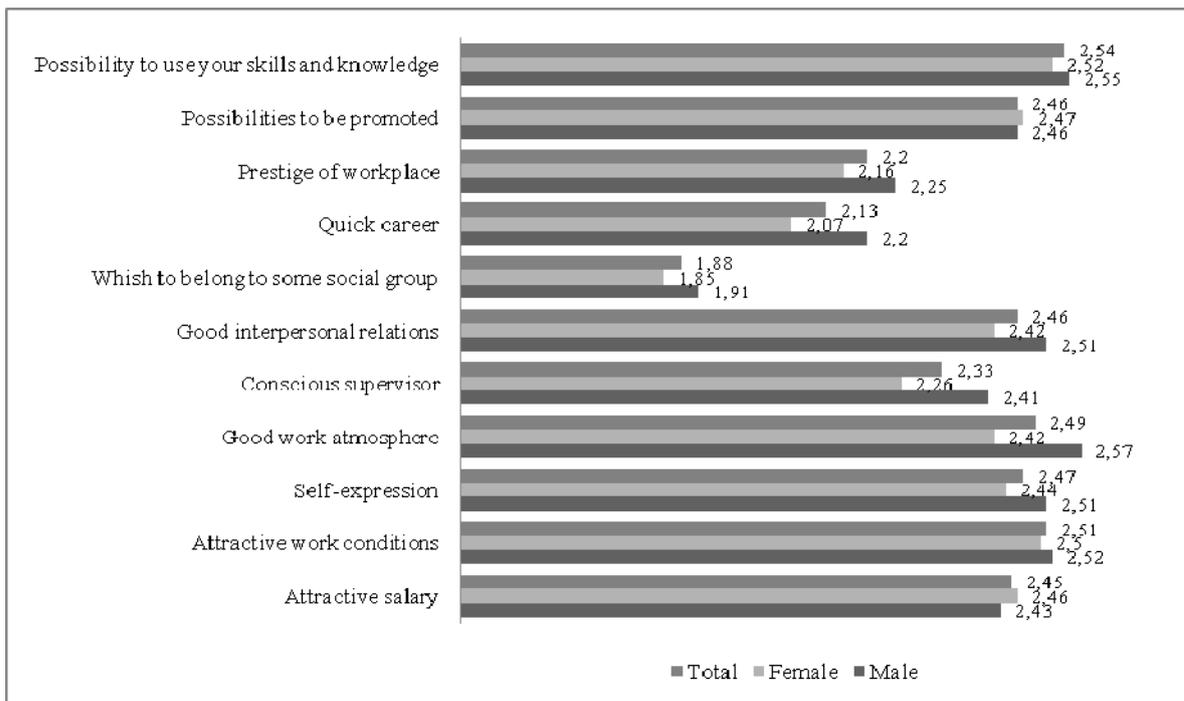
Fig. 1: Motives evaluation by means according to gender.

Prestige of workplace and quick career are the same important for males and females in Turkey. Some differences were found in all other cases. We can see that Spanish respondents evaluated all motives much lower than other groups of respondents (see Fig.2). Moreover we can see that for all groups except for Spain safety motives are the most important at the same time as for Spanish – higher needs. Also we can see that safety needs are the most important for Portuguese students.
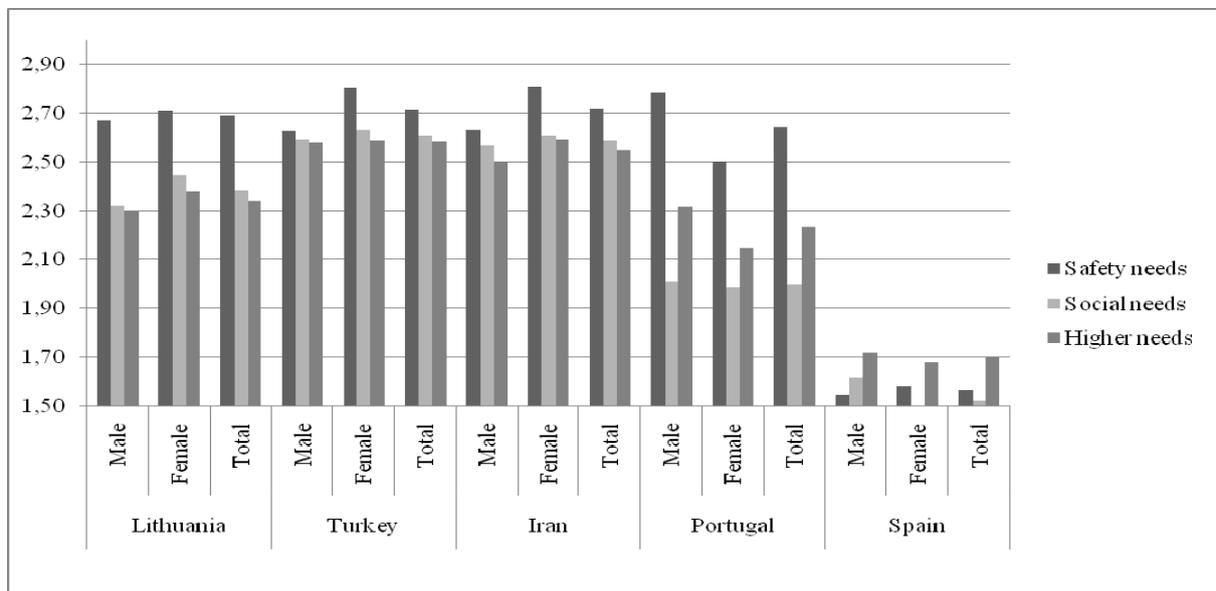

Fig. 2: Motives groups' evaluation by means according to gender and countries.

4. Conclusion

Students are future employees and they study having some motives, which they wish to satisfy from work. Therefore it is important to understand these motives better and to find out intercultural differences among students. Received results could be used working in international groups seeking to understand better their differences.

Results showed that higher needs according Maslow's hierarchy of needs are less important than lower needs. It corresponds to Maslow's idea that while people do not satisfy lower needs they do not need upper

ones. Following findings corresponds with the same idea. Salary and prestige is more important for younger than older students. Presumptive, that these students seek financial independence from their families and parents more than older ones. However Spanish respondents showed that all motives are less important for them as for other respondents. Moreover higher needs but not safety needs are the most important for this group of respondents. Therefore it should be analyzed in more details to find out its reasons. This can be highlighted as the idea for future studies.

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