

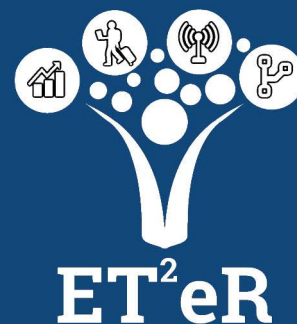


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**vol. VI, br. 2, 2024.**

Veleučilište u Virovitici



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TELEKOMUNIKACIJE I RAČUNARSTVO**

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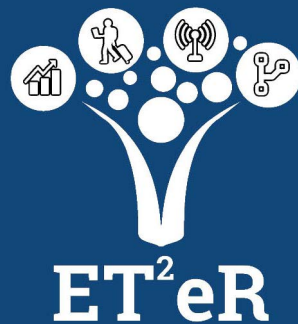


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AND COMPUTER SCIENCE**

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# Predgovor

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Poseban broj časopisa „ET<sup>2</sup>eR – ekonomija, turizam, telekomunikacije i računarstvo” obuhvaća radove prezentirane na **4. međunarodnoj znanstveno-stručnoj konferenciji ReECON - RENEWABLE ECONOMICS**.

Konferencija je održana u Biogradu na Moru, 1. - 2. listopada 2024. godine u organizaciji Veleučilišta Baltazar Zaprešić i Veleučilišta u Virovitici. Na konferenciji je sudjelovalo 90-tak znanstvenika i stručnjaka iz raznih područja poslovne ekonomije, ruralnog i regionalnog razvoja, informacijskih tehnologija i turizma.

Cilj konferencije je bio zadržati proaktivni pristup u primjeni teorijskih i empirijskih dostignuća kojima će se utjecati na poboljšanje poslovnih procesa, promicanje održivog poslovanja u dinamičnom okruženju, stvaranje ozračja etičnog ponašanja, transparentnosti i odgovornosti te jačanje otpornosti gospodarstva u cjelini uz pružanje dugoročnih održivih smjernica za realni sektor.

U ovom posebnom broju ET<sup>2</sup>eR-a objavljeno je 7 znanstvenih i 15 stručnih radova. Teme radova su iz područja poslovnog upravljanja, turizma i hotelijerstva, ruralnog i regionalnog razvoja, digitalne tehnologije, javne politike i održivog gospodarskog razvoja.

Časopis „ET<sup>2</sup>eR“ namijenjen je svima koji žele dati doprinos poticanju i razvijanju primijenjene stručne djelatnosti. Svrha časopisa je upoznavanje šire javnosti s novostima iz navedenih područja i popularizacija struke. Stoga ohrabrujem sve potencijalne autore da prijave svoje radove za objavljivanje.

Časopis je uvršten u bazu Hrčak te ERIH PLUS (European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences) bazu, čime je postao časopis koji se kategorizira u znanstvene radove druge skupine (a2).

Zahvaljujem se svim sudionicima konferencije, autorima, recenzentima, uredništvu časopisa, lektorima te tehničkom i izvršnom uredniku na trudu i znanju uloženom na kreiranje ovog posebnog broja časopisa „ET<sup>2</sup>eR – ekonomija, turizam, telekomunikacije i računarstvo”.

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**Glavni urednik**

doc.dr.sc. Dejan Tubić, prof. struč. stud.

# Foreword

”

The Special Issue of the journal 'ET<sup>2</sup>eR – Economics, Tourism, Telecommunications and Computer Science' comprises papers presented at the **4 International Conference on Renewable Economics - ReECON**.

The conference was held on 1. - 2. November 2024 in Biograd na Moru, Croatia, and was organised by the University of Applied Sciences Baltazar Zuprešić and Virovitica University of Applied Sciences. The conference was attended by more than 90 scientists and experts from different areas of business economics, rural and regional development, information technology and tourism.

The goal of the conference was to maintain a proactive approach to the application of theoretical and empirical achievements which can influence improvement of business processes, promote sustainable business activities in a dynamic environment, create a climate of ethical behaviour, transparency, and responsibility, and strengthen the resilience of economy on the whole while providing sustainable long-term guidelines for the real sector.

Seven scientific and fifteen professional papers are published in this Special Issue of ET<sup>2</sup>eR. Paper topics are related to areas of business management, tourism and hospitality, rural and regional development, digital technology, public policy, and sustainable business development.

The journal "ET<sup>2</sup>eR" is aimed at authors who would like to contribute to the promotion and development of applied professional activity. The purpose of the journal is to familiarize the general public with news from the aforementioned fields and to popularize the profession. Therefore, I would like to invite all potential authors to submit their papers for publication.

The journal is included in the Hrčak database and the ERIH PLUS database (European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences), making it a journal categorized in the second group (a2).

I would like to use this opportunity to thank all the participants in the conference; authors, reviewers, the editorial board of the journal, proofreaders, and the executive and technical editors for their effort and knowledge invested in creating this Special Issue of the journal 'ET<sup>2</sup>eR – Economics, Tourism, Telecommunications and Computer Science'.

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## Perception of motivation among employed students

Ana Skledar Ćorluka<sup>1</sup>, Snježana Kekić<sup>2</sup>, Maja Buljat<sup>3</sup>

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### Abstract

*Understanding what primarily drives and motivates individuals in the workplace is influenced by a myriad of factors. These factors may include individual personality traits, the conceptualization of work, or the organization's culture itself. Often, it is not entirely clear what propels us towards a particular goal – whether it is internal dissatisfaction or external stimulation. Due to the complexity of this issue, the purpose of this study is to provide a closer examination of the factors influencing motivation through both theoretical and practical approaches. The empirical component of the study involved students from Baltazar Zaprešić University of Applied Sciences who are currently employed. These students, who balance both work and study, are a particularly interesting group for research as they allow us to investigate what drives them to engage so intensely to achieve their goals and the secrets to their success. For these students, balancing education and employment does not pose a significant problem; rather, it provides them with satisfaction and a perception of opportunities for career advancement. They successfully navigate the demands of both academic and professional responsibilities, often putting forth substantial effort. The goal of the research was to collect data on the factors that drive and sustain their motivation in order to gain a better understanding of their attitudes and needs. The study was conducted using a survey method via Google Forms. A total of 34 employed students of both genders participated in the survey. The survey assessed their current level of motivation and the factors that either enhance or undermine it. The results indicate that the primary motivators for students in the workplace are salary increases and friendly colleagues. Their current motivation levels are very high. The most significant demotivating factor was identified as an unsupportive employer.*

### Keywords

*Demotivation, Employed Students, Motivation*

## Introduction

Understanding what primarily drives and motivates individuals in the workplace or in life generally depends on numerous factors. These can include the personality of the employee, the organizational environment, or the nature of the work itself. Motivation is universally sought after. De Charms described this concept by stating, "Motivation is a mild form of obsession." It implies that a person harbors significant aspirations but must take action to achieve them (Rheinberg, 2004:13).

Once established, motivation is not eternal, nor is the feeling of being motivated permanent. It must be continuously and consistently nurtured, rather than being something that sporadically propels us forward. Many organizations annually evaluate and assess their performance through various analyses, surveys, and discussions with their employees. They compare the current performance with that of previous years. Motivation can be effective only when the circumstances in which an individual works are appropriate. However, if there are discordant relationships, gossip, or distrust within an organization, motivation will not be effective. Therefore, it is essential to observe the environment and determine whether it is conducive to motivation and how to make it more motivating, aligning employees with the organization's goals.

Achievement motivation attracts many individuals when choosing their career paths, prompting them to dedicate themselves to education, which is a key element of motivational theory and a crucial component in individual performance.

### 1. Work motivation

Motivation, defined as an internal or external stimulus that directs and regulates behavior towards achieving goals, plays a crucial role in the workplace. Its importance lies in enhancing work efficiency, productivity, job satisfaction, and overall organizational success. Motivated employees demonstrate higher levels of performance, innovation, and successful attainment of organizational objectives (Ryan & Deci, 2017:123).

Changes within work organizations indicate that motivational factors vary among individuals. Historically, workers have valued opportunities for advancement, friendly relationships with colleagues, and employer support more than personal incomes

(Rheinberg & Falko, 2004:87). In recent decades, money has become the dominant motivator, as surveys among students show that salary increases are the most important motivational factor. Financial resources enable the fulfillment of basic needs and goals, becoming a symbol of social recognition (Locke & Latham, 2002:234). Employees appreciate rewards and friendly coworkers, which contribute to their motivation and a pleasant work environment (Rijavec & Miljković, 2011:204).

When discussing work motivation, it is important to mention several key theories related to it:

1. Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. B. (1959) - *The Motivation to Work*.

Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation (motivators and hygiene factors) provides a useful framework for understanding job satisfaction and motivational factors.

2. Vroom, V. H. (1964) - *Work and Motivation*.

Vroom's expectancy theory explains how individuals choose behaviors that maximize their rewards, which is useful for analyzing motivation in the context of expected outcomes.

3. Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976) - *Motivation through the Design of Work: Test of a Theory*.

Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model focuses on job design and how different job dimensions can enhance intrinsic motivation.

4. Adams, J. S. (1965) - *Inequity in Social Exchange*.

Adams' equity theory addresses how employees perceive the fairness of their rewards compared to others, which can significantly impact their motivation.

5. Amabile, T. M. (1988) - *A Model of Creativity and Innovation in Organizations*.

Amabile's research links intrinsic motivation with creativity and innovation, which is relevant for motivation in the workplace, particularly for innovative roles.

#### 1.1. Motivation for continuing education while working

Motivation for continuing education while working is closely linked to the desire for career advancement. Historically, work organizations have offered greater benefits for further education. Consequently, employees recognize the importance of education for better task execution and adaptability in the labor market. Education enhances work discipline, responsibility, and self-initiative,

contributing to organizational growth (Marušić, 1988:82).

Education is crucial for the effective performance of tasks and the achievement of better goals. Lifelong education enables adaptation to rapid technological changes and competitiveness in the labor market. The goals of education include acquiring knowledge, developing skills, and fostering communication, collaboration, and creativity. Education also enables self-actualization and the fulfillment of existential needs (Paustović, 1999:154).

### 1.2. Success and engagement – the greatest motivators

Growth and development are crucial for personal advancement. The development process involves enhancing skills, abilities, knowledge, and emotional intelligence, leading to success and happiness. A positive mentor, an optimistic attitude, and confidence in one's abilities aid in overcoming the most challenging tasks. Success fuels further motivation, while rewards and recognition serve as additional incentives. Comparisons with successful individuals can be beneficial, demonstrating that similar goals are attainable. It is essential to monitor one's progress and learn from mistakes (Sharma, 2010:182; Woolfolk, 2016:388; Miljković, 2011:166).

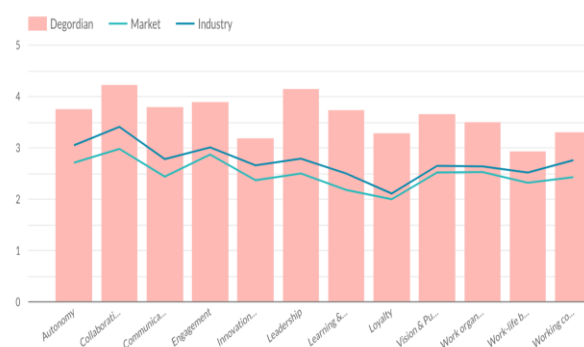
Recognition of success comes through achieving set goals. Consistent practice of positive thinking and honesty with oneself help in identifying what motivates us. Business ethics, regardless of position or salary, contribute to a positive work environment. Satisfaction with work and rewards increases innovation and efficiency in task execution. Degordian, awarded for being the best employer, exemplifies an organization that values a healthy and loyal culture (Somervill, 2005:25). Figure 1. compares Degordian's scores in various workplace-related categories (shown in pink bars) against the market and industry averages (represented by two lines). The categories include factors such as Autonomy, Collaboration, Communication, Engagement, Innovation, Leadership, Learning & Development, Loyalty, Vision & Purpose, Workplace Culture, and Working Conditions.

Degordian generally scores higher than both the market and industry averages across most categories, indicating stronger performance in fostering aspects like autonomy, collaboration, and innovation. Notably, Degordian excels in Engagement and Leadership, where the difference

from the market and industry standards is particularly clear.

This suggests that Degordian provides a work environment that promotes high employee satisfaction, aligning with its recognition as an organization that values a supportive and loyal culture.

FIGURE 1. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION AT



#### DEGORDIAN

Source: <https://degordian.com/blog/the-year-after-an-update-on-our-deep-dive-results-for-2023/>

Employee motivation is crucial for achieving high levels of productivity and job satisfaction. A successful motivation plan involves developing a strategy that includes building a balanced team, fostering personal and professional growth, and creating a strong organizational identity (Basu, 2023:35). Establishing a positive work environment that encourages support, creativity, and decision-making is essential for having satisfied and motivated employees. Rewards for successful performance further enhance productivity and engagement. It is important to ensure that the team possesses the necessary skills and expertise to perform tasks, contributing to the formation of a strong and efficient workforce (West, 2005:66).

Motivation is a fundamental factor that drives individuals to achieve success in various aspects of life, including personal goals and career aspirations. Empirical research on employee motivation, such as surveys and observations, helps identify the factors that most influence their motivation and demotivation. A quality motivational stance can retain existing employees and attract new ones, encouraging them to perform tasks well and develop creative ideas. Monitoring and evaluating work,

along with appropriate rewards, are key to maintaining high levels of motivation (West, 2005:66).

Employee engagement is vital for productivity and innovation within an organization. Research shows that only a small portion of employees (about 29%) exhibit high engagement at work, while the majority are either disengaged or actively disengaged. Engaged employees are less likely to take sick leave, are more productive, and more readily accept changes. In Croatia, 13% of employees are engaged, 72% are disengaged, and 15% are actively disengaged.<sup>1</sup> Surveys and observations are essential tools for monitoring and improving employee engagement.

FIGURE 2. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT WORLDWIDE



Source: <https://www.netokracija.com/gallup-workplace-report-2023-213656>

### 1.3. Employee Rewards

Rewarding employees is an effective motivation method that links work performance with incentivizing rewards. Rewards can include monetary bonuses, promotions, or additional days off. Successful reward systems increase employee engagement and productivity, contributing to an improved organizational reputation (Pink, 2009:124). Non-monetary rewards, such as flexible working hours or the option to work from home, are also crucial for motivation. The role of managers in employee motivation involves providing support, fairly resolving conflicts, and valuing employees' opinions and perspectives. Proper rewarding

enhances the sense of value and encourages maximum employee engagement, aiding in achieving organizational goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000:251).

### 1.4. Demotivation and Motivation Switches

Jurina (2011) emphasizes the importance of combating demotivation in fostering initiative and work enthusiasm among individuals and groups. Demotivation is defined as a psychological phenomenon where there is a mismatch between desired goals we aim to achieve and our current dispositional state. This discrepancy can result in an inability to invest the necessary effort to achieve the set goal.

Jurina (2011:39-41) outlines several activities to mitigate demotivation in the work environment. Firstly, encouraging initiative involves providing conditions for initiating new ideas and solutions, and creating an environment where every suggestion is welcomed. However, setting excessively high goals, such as extremely ambitious sales targets, can have a counterproductive effect and exacerbate feelings of demotivation.

Secondly, individual motivation focuses on encouraging employees based on their untapped potential, emphasizing that their current performance may not reflect their maximum intellectual or work capacities.

Thirdly, group motivation involves fostering group cohesion and a sense of unity to encourage achieving collective goals. It is crucial for motivation to come from leadership, and if the group is demotivated, reconsidering leadership may be necessary.

Fourthly, demotivation prevention includes mutual understanding and effective two-way communication to determine whether problems stem from individuals or groups. Eliminating misunderstandings, misinformation, and fears, and creating a positive work environment are crucial for maintaining motivation and productivity within the organization.

According to Tudor and colleagues (2010), demotivation in the workplace can be alleviated through various strategies. This includes finding the right communication methods within the organization and utilizing appropriate motivators

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.netokracija.com/gallup-workplace-report-2023-213656>, 16.7.2024.

from incentive systems. It is important to foster leadership and job satisfaction, cultivate positive relationships and an encouraging organizational climate, and reward employee achievements and results fairly. Additionally, providing intellectually stimulating and challenging tasks, supportive working conditions, and fostering support and camaraderie among colleagues all play a crucial role in sustaining high levels of motivation in a team environment.

## 2. Empirical Study on Motivational Factors Among Working Students

An empirical study was conducted to understand the motivational factors among employed students, focusing on their attitudes and needs. The survey included 34 respondents via email questionnaires, revealing key motivators and demotivators in the workplace, satisfaction with current motivation levels, the impact of external conditions, and the importance of rewards and opportunities for further education. The participants of the study are third-year undergraduate students selected through random sampling. They are employed in various economic sectors, primarily in the tertiary sector. The survey employed a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

Key Findings:

- **Motivational Factors:**

Salary increases (64.7%) and friendly coworkers (52.9%) are the most significant motivators. Rewards, modern work environments, and good interpersonal relationships also contribute to motivation.

- **Current Motivation:**

Most respondents are at least moderately satisfied with their current motivation (35.3% relatively satisfied, 20.6% very satisfied). Only 5.9% of respondents are completely dissatisfied with their current motivation.

- **Demotivational Factors:**

Unhelpful employers (67.6%) and unfriendly coworkers (58.8%) are the biggest demotivators. Low salary, inflexible working hours, and excessive tasks also significantly demotivate employees.

- **External Conditions:**

Weather conditions, traffic congestion, and personal obligations moderately to significantly affect work motivation for most employees.

- **Rewards and Recognition:**

A significant portion of employees are rarely or never rewarded (20.6% never, 11.8% very rarely). Regular rewarding increases employee motivation and satisfaction.

- **Job Satisfaction:**

Most respondents like their job (41.2% rated it a 4, 32.4% rated it a 5 on a scale of 1 to 5).

- **Further Education and Advancement:**

Most respondents are interested in further education and higher salaries (41.2% definitely want further education, 35.3% are already pursuing education).

- **Initiative and Engagement:**

Most respondents regularly take initiative at work (73.5% constantly engaged). Recognizing additional effort is important for maintaining high motivation.

- **Age of Respondents:**

Respondents are mainly aged between 26 and 35 years (35.3%) and between 36 and 45 years (29.4%).

- **Gender of Respondents:**

The majority of respondents are female (76.5%).

The results of this study provide insights into the key factors of motivation and demotivation among employed students, highlighting the importance of salary increases, friendly coworkers, and recognition of effort. Employers should be aware of these factors to create a positive work environment that fosters motivation, productivity, and employee satisfaction. Additionally, it is important to offer opportunities for further education and development to retain talented employees and ensure organizational growth and success.

### 2.1. Limitations in the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

One limitation is the small and restricted sample of participants, potentially leading to bias as it may not represent a broader population of employees across different age groups, educational backgrounds, and work experiences. Furthermore, self-assessment and subjectivity are concerns; survey questionnaires rely on participants' self-assessment, which may result in subjective responses that do not necessarily reflect the actual level of motivation or its factors. Another limitation is the time constraint; employee motivation can vary over time. Surveys conducted at a specific moment may not account for changes in motivation due to different circumstances and experiences in the future.

Survey questionnaires often provide quantitative data but lack in-depth insights into the reasons and contexts behind specific responses. Qualitative

methods such as interviews or focus groups could provide deeper understanding of motivational factors. Respondents may answer in socially desirable or preferable ways rather than truthfully, which can skew results and provide inaccurate information about actual motivation levels.

Recommendations for future research include expanding the sample size to include a broader and more diverse range of participants, encompassing students from various academic disciplines, sectors of employment, and geographically diverse locations. Additionally, extending the research to different age groups and employees with varied work experiences would be beneficial. Furthermore, conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in employee motivation over time would provide insights into the dynamics of motivation and the impact of different events or circumstances on motivation.

It is also advisable to introduce control variables to better understand the influences of various factors on motivation. For example, controlling for variables such as work experience, job type, academic status, and personal characteristics. Lastly, using different measurement instruments to assess motivation, such as job satisfaction scales, work engagement scales, and questionnaires assessing working conditions, would provide a more comprehensive picture of motivation. A combination of different instruments can offer a holistic understanding of motivation.

## 2.2. Practical contributions

The findings of this study indicate key areas where employers and educational institutions can take actionable steps to enhance motivation among working students. For example, employers can focus on improving working conditions by implementing flexible working hours, which can help students balance their academic and work responsibilities more effectively. Additionally, fostering a supportive work environment, where friendly interactions among coworkers are encouraged, may reduce common demotivators such as unhelpful employers and unfriendly colleagues.

Furthermore, implementing regular, structured reward systems, including non-monetary rewards like recognition for additional effort, can significantly enhance motivation and job satisfaction. Educational institutions, on the other hand, could collaborate with employers to provide targeted programs that support students' career advancement and personal development, which

aligns with their interest in further education and skill-building.

By applying specific strategies like these, employers and educational institutions can not only boost motivation but also support working students in achieving their academic and career goals. Such initiatives would enhance the study's practical relevance and extend its findings to create actionable insights that benefit both employees and organizational outcomes.

## 3. Conclusion

Motivation is a complex concept that provides individuals with energy and drives them to achieve internal goals. It can be intrinsic, arising from internal interests and satisfactions, or extrinsic, involving external rewards such as monetary incentives, recognition, and awards. Various strategies like goal setting, positive thinking, and self-regulation can stimulate and develop motivation. Understanding one's values enables better self-awareness and the realization of full potential, while reflection and analysis of personal experiences reveal strengths that can be enhanced. Motivation is not constant and requires regular renewal, with self-care being crucial for maintaining balance and productivity. Developing one's potential demands dedication, patience, and openness to new opportunities.

Research on motivational factors among students underscores the importance of salary raises, supportive colleagues, rewards, and a positive work environment as key motivators. Most respondents express moderate to high satisfaction with their current motivation, while hostile employers, low wages, and external conditions are significant demotivators. Regular recognition, job satisfaction, and interest in further education and career advancement are critical for sustaining high motivation among employees, alongside the importance of acknowledging additional effort and adapting the work environment to meet specific needs based on age and gender demographics of respondents.

Motivation reduces employee turnover, enhances work quality, fosters a positive work atmosphere, and strengthens an organization's reputation. Engaged employees often become ambassadors for their organization, whose positive attitude can inspire others and contribute to employer satisfaction. In conclusion, motivation is a pivotal

factor for success that should be continually encouraged and developed.

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