

Motivation of public sector employees in Israel depending on their status and education level

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Abstract: *This research studies the peculiarities of public sector employee motivation in Israel in relation to their job position and education. This empirical research (585 participants) shows that management personnel are characterized by a strong need for power and the need for a sense of demand. Non-managerial staff has a stronger need for good working conditions, structuring of work, and the need for social contacts. There are significant differences in motivation depending on the level of education of the employee. The need for good working conditions is stronger in the groups among employees with secondary and junior engineering education than among employees with an academic degree. The need for a structuring of work and social contacts is stronger among employees with a junior engineering education compared with the employees who have an academic degree.*

Keywords: Motivation, public sector employees, education, job status.

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Introduction

One of the priority directions of public administration reform is to improve the efficiency of civil servants' labor, which is inextricably linked to changes in the existing motivational system and mechanism of incentives for the staff of state organizations. Public institutions affect the lives of citizens to a much greater extent than private organizations. State service institutions aim to provide services for people of different ages and social groups, at the expense of government, not private business. State service organizations throughout the world have been operating for long periods, and they mainly operate in social spheres of the economy in which the private sector does not have much profit (education, healthcare, etc.). An efficient and effective public sector is an essential support to ensure the existence of a modern democratic society. Thus, a highly productive public sector is a prerequisite for the existence and proper functioning of a democratic political culture.

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The problems of motivation of personnel, including motivation of government employees, have been discussed by many scientists. These studies reflect various aspects of labor motivation, which differ, due to its multifaceted nature, by a significant variety of scientific approaches and paradigms.

The theoretical importance of this study is to develop a methodology for the study of labor motivation of public service employees, by analyzing the peculiarities of labor motivation of civil servants related to their personal characteristics. Practical significance of the research lies in the analysis of the mechanisms of motivation and the development of practical recommendations for the development of motivation of public service employees.

1. Literature review

The efficiency of the functioning of state structures is largely determined by the ratio of the results of the activities of these bodies to the costs of obtaining these results. Motivation can also be defined as satisfying or appealing to the needs of workers to encourage them to perform. A highly performance-driven staff is a crucial factor of a successful organization. High productivity is contingent on the level of employee motivation and effectiveness. Therefore, managers who utilize the most effective motivation tools and techniques will provide a competitive advantage and profits to their organizations (Hitka et al., 2019).

The concept of motivation first appears in psychology and is described as a process of regulation of human activity. This psychological process is associated with important human needs and satisfaction (Androniceanu et al., 2023). According to Maslow (1954) and Alderfer (1969), there are five and three classes of needs, arranged hierarchically from basic, lower-order needs such as physiological needs, to higher-order needs for actualization or growth. In Herzberg's theory, there are only two categories of motives, commonly known as satisfiers and motivators or extrinsic and intrinsic motives, with motivators (i.e., intrinsic motives) considered to be motives of a higher order compared to extrinsic motives. These theories are consistent with the Social Development Theory in certain respects. Using the concept of psychological needs as an example, we hypothesize that satisfaction with these needs will be associated with enhanced performance and happiness. In addition, similar to these earlier theorists, we tend to support participatory approaches that enable individuals to experience the satisfaction of their psychological needs (Yusoff & Kian, 2013).

According to Herzberg's motivation theory (1966), two types of employee motivation can be identified: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic variables, sometimes referred to as employment context factors, are external "benefits" provided by employers rather than the employees, themselves (Yusoff and Kian, 2013). These variables give suggestions to the companies on how to establish a competitive working environment that promotes comfort and productivity of the employees. On the contrary, intrinsic variables are the factors that actively contribute

to the degree of job satisfaction experienced by employees (Robbins and Judge, 2009).

According to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), alterations in work motivation, specifically autonomous one, can appear in response to the shifts in job fulfillment. SDT does not provide a specific delineation of the life phases during which such changes normally take place. Life-span psychologists claim that the final years of work before retirement are regarded as a period of life in which individuals tend to pay less attention to their professional responsibilities and progressively allocate more time and energy towards fulfilling other roles, such as familial relationships (Yusoff and Kian, 2013).

The cognitive evaluation theory, first proposed that external factors such as tangible rewards, deadlines, surveillance, and evaluations, tend to reduce feelings of autonomy, cause a shift from an internal to an external locus of causality, and diminish intrinsic motivation. In contrast, some external factors, such as providing options regarding aspects of task engagement, tend to increase feelings of autonomy, shift the perceived locus of causality from external to internal, and boost intrinsic motivation (Green et al., 2017).

High-scoring individuals are attracted to jobs that excel in extrinsic job factors or emphasize the importance of earning money more than emotionally stable individuals. Based on the Two Factor Theory (Bipp, 2010), which identifies intrinsic (motivators) and extrinsic (hygiene) factors at work and their relationship to job satisfaction, neuroticism was found to be the strongest (negative) correlate of the “Big Five” to work satisfaction. Social-contextual factors that increase feelings of autonomy and competence increase intrinsic motivation, while factors that decrease these feelings decrease intrinsic motivation, leaving people either controlled by contingencies or unmotivated, as postulated by cognitive evaluation theory (Green et al., 2017). Empirical studies confirm a positive correlation between extrinsic and intrinsic factors of work motivation, such as autonomy, the application of skills, and the Growth Need Strength variable (Bipp, 2010).

According to Henning et al. (2022), the development of autonomous work motivation is contingent upon worker satisfaction with fundamental psychological needs, namely autonomy, relatedness, and competence, either through job tasks or through the provision of support from leaders or co-workers. Autonomous motivation comprises two distinct subdimensions. In the context of work, intrinsic motivation is observed when individuals derive enjoyment from the tasks in which they are engaged. On the other hand, identified regulation refers to the phenomenon wherein individuals develop a sense of identification and attach value to the tasks they undertake. Controlled motivation pertains to the motivation that arises from external influences, such as the desire to please others, the pursuit of external rewards, the avoidance of punishment (external regulation), or the avoidance of negative emotions like guilt, bad conscience, or ego-enhancement (introjected regulation) (Henning et al., 2022).

Aarabi et al., contend that motivation is a complex phenomenon, so personal factors such as age, gender, and job experience, as well as job characteristics, influence a

person's job satisfaction. According to Davidov (2023), intrinsic motivation factors, such as structuring of work, social contacts, diversity and change, and the need for self-improvement, growth, and development appear to be stronger among older employees. Since motivation is concerned with factors that energize, direct, and maintain behavior, there are a number of significant variables that can influence an individual's work motivation. These variables fall into three categories: individual characteristics, job characteristics, and work environment characteristics (Aarabi et al., 2013). It can be caused by a variety of factors that influence motivation in various ways. In addition, these factors do not act independently; rather, they create a system of specific, interdependent relationships (Hitka and Baláová, 2015).

In the study of R. Kanfer, P. L. Ackerman it is clearly shown (Kanfer and Ackerman, 2004) that "productive" forces of motivation are higher in 20 year old employees. Consequently, their "response" will be more impulsive, while the elderly need to be motivated by more "strong" motives. It should be noted that motivation means nothing if it is not multifaceted, and each of its elements should be connected with communication, as well as the whole process of management. Davidov (2023) shows that there are differences in the strength of the motivational factors also depending on the seniority of the employee.

Undoubtedly, motivation is considered to be one of the most important functions of management, the essence of which is to motivate personnel to perform activities that contribute to the achievement of goals and objectives. It is of particular importance in those industries in which personnel are the main resource – the spheres of housing and communal services, health care, education, social security, culture and art, science, social security, culture and art, science, trade and public catering, as well as finance and credit. On the other hand, although the role of such industries in the economy in the conditions of deindustrialization is growing, nevertheless, the issues of increasing efficiency in them remain unresolved.

The public sector belongs to the sphere of economy, which results in emergence of similar problematic issues in management, which include, among others, lack of clear and unambiguous indicators of efficiency, and secondly, ambiguity of the social status of employees. These problems, in our opinion, are caused by the special nature of public administration as a labor activity. Social comparisons and social pressures can affect the valence of certain outcomes at different ages. Employees tend to compare themselves and their own goal attainments to those of others and may view the perceived utility of specific outcomes in relation to other people's views.

Studies conducted in the sphere of public sector employee motivation show that material motivation mediates the relationship between the desire to fulfill the need to serve the community and job satisfaction. This directly influences the productivity of public service employees (Liu and Tang, 2014). The empirical studies show that motivation of public service employees' is associated with the attitude toward work as job satisfaction (Bright, 2005), the desire to keep it (Steijn, 2008), and productivity. Moreover, productivity grows when employees feel that results will have a positive impact on society (Van Loon et al., 2018). The positive influence of

public service employee motivation on organizational commitment was also revealed (Jung and Ritz, 2014). Moreover, service motivation is most positively associated with organizational commitment when it is accompanied by intrinsic motivation and ethical leadership (Riba and Ballart, 2016).

The concept of state service motivation can be initially defined as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives based primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations” (Perry and Wise, 1990). In other words, it may be a type of motivation that generally refers to “motives and action in the public domain that are intended to do good for others and shape the well-being of society” (Perry and Hondeghem, 2007).

Kim and Vandenberg (2010) postulate that the difference among instrumental motives, value-based motives, and identification with beneficiaries are the main drivers of public service motivation. Different types of motives are reflected in the research on the measurement of public service motivation using the measurement scale developed by Perry (2014). Perry’s scale comprises four dimensions that include attraction to public policy-making, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. The concept of public service motivation which also pertains more to the notion of reactive helping behavior is of particular relevance in public sector settings (Koehler and Rainey, 2008; Ritz et al., 2016). Both prosocial motivation and public service motivation are often subsumed as types of intrinsic motivation, and, more specifically, of the eudaimonic component thereof (Houston, 2011; Grant, 2008).

Employees can be motivated by anything that activates them and shows them certain direction and goal (Hitka et al., 2019). Recent research in the field (Damij et al. 2015, Kamasheva et al., 2015, Závadský et al., 2015, Dobre, 2013, Fakhruddinova et al., 2013, Kampf et al., 2017) points out a large amount of motivational factors such as wage, promotion, bonuses, and rewards. Dobre (2013) found out that the prevalent methods of motivation include wages, promotions, bonuses, and rewards. Wage represents one of the most distinctive motivation factors affecting employees' work performance according to Androniceanu (2011). However, except for financial rewards, employees can be motivated by non-financial rewards or even by the change in the nature of their work.

The motivation of public sector employees is mainly connected with the organizational setting. From the theoretical point of view, institutional theory may provide further insights into the origins of employee motivation in the public sector. Viewed as organizations, public institutions are shaped in response to their external environment and transcend to the individual level of an employee’s identity, influencing his/her values and motives, which, in turn, define a range of permissible and prohibited behavior (Ritz et al., 2016; Perry, 2000).

Perry and Wise (1990) propose the theory of public service motivation, contending that some individuals are highly attracted to and motivated by public service work. It is argued that the attractiveness of this job is greatly influenced by several motives, which can be organized into rational, normative, and affective categories. This

theory is important because it provides one of the first theoretical frameworks that explain why some individuals work in the public sector.

There are some predictors of high levels of public sector employee motivation. For example, Perry (1997) argues that family socialization is relevant in the process of developing altruistic motivations such as compassion and self-sacrifice.

Ritz A. et al. (2016) define six major groups of public sector motivation, which include performance, work effort and quality of work; commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors; job satisfaction; sectoral choice and person-environment fit; reduced turnover intentions; as well as a group of potentially harmful outcomes such as over-engagement, presenteeism, workaholism, and burnout, which can be seen as the “dark side” of public service motivation (Ritz et al., 2016; Bellé and Cantarelli, 2012; Pandey and Stazyk, 2008; Taylor, 2007).

Kim (2012) shows that public sector motivation is associated with satisfaction both directly, and indirectly through mediation using person-organization suitability, which was measured using three value congruence items. As for the sectoral choice, Christensen and Wright (2011) discovered that individuals featuring high levels of public service motivation prefer jobs emphasizing service to others regardless of organization type, meaning that no clear link was established between public sector employees and organization or sector choice.

According to Perry and Wise (1990), the reason why people are attracted to work in public organizations and public service careers can be organized into three distinct categories: rational, normative, and affective. For example, from a rational basis, individuals can be attracted to public organization because of self-interest, such as advocating for public policies that promote a specific private interest.

From a normative perspective, employees can be attracted to public organizations for ethical reasons, such as maintaining social equity. From an affective perspective, employees are attracted to the public sector because of emotional attachments, such as a conviction about the importance of public service.

Still, little is known about public employees with high levels of public service motivation, such as their characteristics, location in public organizations, and work preferences (Bright, 2005).

According to institutional theory, public sector motivation involves institutional rules and interpretations to be treated as alternatives in a rational choice problem (March and Olsen, 2004). Rational choice theory characterizes public service employees as generally rational individuals (constrained by certain informational and cognitive boundaries) who have a fixed set of preferences and who seek to maximize their utility (Brennan and Buchanan, 1985). The assumption of rationality implies that an individual will choose the alternative that yields the greatest value for him and that is likely to occur (Neumann and Ritz, 2015). There are some benefits for people seeking stability and job security, as well as good career perspectives, relatively high salaries of senior managerial staff, stable salaries overall, as well as a robust salary development scale, all of which can be attractive to certain individuals motivated by such benefits (Buelens and Van den Broeck, 2007; French and Emerson, 2014; Karl and Sutton, 1998).

Ritz A., et al. (2016) claim that public sector institutions offer more favorable working conditions and vacation schemes. Public sector employees are often driven by the desire to behave by motives grounded in an individual's self-interest and extrinsic motives found in the public sector. Thus, certain incentives have a greater influence on public sector personnel (French and Emerson, 2014). In this regard, the relationship between employee and employer reflects a form of psychological contract based on an exchange of loyalty and duty in return for salary and privileges. It is also widely recognized that public sector motivation is closely connected to the specific working conditions within state organizations. Nevertheless, such working conditions also exist in the private sector, although they are far more common in the public sector (Wright, 2001).

Research conducted by Naff and Crum (1998) shows that public service employees who had high levels of work motivation are also characterized by higher levels of job satisfaction, higher performance and less desire to leave the government than do employees with lower levels of public service motivation. Alonso and Lewis (2001), however, find less conclusive results regarding the relationship between public service motivation and the job performance of public employees. The authors conclude that public service motivation has less correlation with the performance of federal employees and may decrease their performance.

Brewer and Selden (1998) investigated whether the motives of public service motivation vary in different combinations from one individual to another. They identify four distinct clusters of public employees with high levels of public service motivation, which they label as Samaritans, communitarians, patriots, and humanitarians.

The results of the research conducted by Bright (2005) reveal that employees with high levels of public service motivation are significantly more likely to be female, to be managers, and to have greater levels of education than public employees with lower levels of public service motivation. In support of Perry and Wise's (1990) hypothesis, this study reveals that public employees with high levels of public service motivation desire monetary incentives significantly less than those with lower levels of public service motivation.

Lorincova S. et. al. (2018) claim that employees at each level of organization perform all functions, however, because of their different competencies, responsibilities, and needs, their motivation varies. This hypothesis was confirmed by the research findings of Kampf et al. (2017) who studied motivation in terms of working position. It was found that senior managers working in small and medium-sized enterprises providing transport services to the forestry sector in Slovakia are motivated by factors such as job security, fair appraisal system, and basic salary. Public sector employees are largely motivated by such factors as the atmosphere in the workplace, good work team, and work environment

2. Research results and discussions

After the theoretical review of the problem of status and educational peculiarities of public sector employee motivation, we undertook empirical research. The key hypotheses of the study were determined, and the structure of the empirical research

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was defined. The main sample of the research consisted of the personnel of state institutions (employees of ministries and departments, municipalities, and other organizations).

The primary sample of the study included the personnel of public institutions. The study involved 585 participants in various occupational fields: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Absorption, the Israel Parliament (Knesset), the National Insurance Institute, the Israel Trade Union, Jerusalem Municipality, and other institutions. All participants lived in the greater Jerusalem, Israel area.

Socio-demographic peculiarities of the sample include:

- Gender – 261 males (44%) and 324 females (56%);
- Age – average age 44 years, median age 42 years.
- Duration of state service: minimum – 1 year, maximum – 44 years; mean – 14.1 years, median – 14 years.
- Education level: secondary school education (S.E.) – 204 people (34.6%), practical engineering (P.E.) – 169 people (28.7%), first academic degree (B.A.) – 148 people (25.1%), second academic degree (M.A.) – 47 people (8%).
- Job-status of employees: managerial staff – 169 people (29%), non-managerial staff – 417 people (71%).

To analyze the degree of influence of motivational factors on the motivation of managerial and non-managerial personnel of the public sector, the data obtained using the questionnaire of 12 labor motivation factors (Ritchi and Martin, 1999) were considered. To determine the individual combination of the most and least relevant needs for a particular person, an individual motivational profile has been compiled, consisting of the following motivational factors: money and tangible rewards, physical condition, structuring, people contact, relationship, recognition, achievement, power, and influence, variety and change, creativity, self-development, interest, and usefulness.

Analysis of average indicators of motivation sources shows a statistically significant difference in the strength of motivation factors (6 out of 12) between managerial and non-managerial personnel (Table 1)

Table 1. Comparison of motivation average means depending on employees' status

Motivation factors	Managerial personnel $\mu(\sigma)$	Non-managerial personnel $\mu(\sigma)$	<i>p</i> -value
Money and tangible rewards	32.50 (12.07)	35.69 (16.13)	0.113
Physical condition	28.46 (10.68)	32.29 (12.88)	0.020*
Structuring	30.45 (12.87)	34.88 (12.81)	0.010*
People contact	30.45 (12.87)	34.88 (12.81)	0.010*
Relationship	25.90 (8.52)	24.65 (7.56)	0.238
Recognition	30.40 (10.02)	32.74 (10.33)	0.088

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Motivation factors	Managerial personnel $\mu(\sigma)$	Non-managerial personnel $\mu(\sigma)$	<i>p</i> -value
Achievement	14.05 (5.37)	13.54 (4.25)	0.411
Power and influence	29.30 (12.18)	24.40 (12.34)	0.003*
Variety and change	27.73 (7.46)	26.83 (7.50)	0.371
Creativity	30.16 (9.48)	27.49 (9.27)	0.033*
Self-development	31.55 (9.53)	29.81 (7.68)	0.118
Interest and usefulness	34.33 (9.82)	31.47 (8.69)	0.019*

* – statistically significant differences

The following results were obtained:

- Among the sample group of managerial personnel, the following motivation factors were stronger compared to the group of non-managerial personnel: the need for influence and power, the need to be a creative, analytical employee open to new ideas, the need for interesting socially useful work;
- Among the sample group of non-managerial personnel the following motivation factors were stronger compared to the group of managerial personnel: the need for good working conditions and a comfortable environment, the need for clear structuring of work, the need for social contacts;

To analyze the degree of influence of motivational factors on the motivation of different educational groups (S.E. – secondary education, P.E. – practical engineering education, B.A. – first academic degree, M.A. – second academic degree) of public sector personnel, the data obtained using the questionnaire of 12 labor motivation factors were considered. The analysis of average values of motivation source indicators showed a statistically significant difference in the strength of motivation factors (7 out of 12) between different educational groups of personnel (Table 2).

Table 2. The results of analysis of variance to compare the strength of motivational factors depending on the employees' education level

Motivation factors	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Money and tangible rewards	1.629	0.167
Physical condition	12.360	p<0.001*
Structuring	6.842	p<0.001*
People contact	6.842	p<0.001*
Relationship	0.533	0.712
Recognition	5.619	p<0.001*
Achievement	2.581	0.038*
Power	4.648	0.001*
Variety and change	3.455	0.009*
Creativity	6.364	p<0.001*
Self-development	4.596	0.001*
Interest and usefulness	6.648	p<0.001*

* - statistically significant differences.

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A more detailed comparison was made using t-tests (Table 3)

Table 3. The results of the t-test for comparing the mean values of motivation factors of personnel with different levels of education

Motivation factors		P.E. μ (p-value)	B.A. μ (p-value)	M.A. μ (p-value)
Physical conditions	S.E.	-4.499 (0.225)	6.966 (0.001)*	12.137 (0.001)*
	P.E.		11.466(0.001)*	16.637 (0.001)*
	B.A.			5.171 (0.617)
Structuring	S.E.	-5.626 (0.091)	4.578 (0.192)	8.371 (0.029)*
	P.E.		10.205 (0.001)*	13.998 (0.001)*
	B.A.			3.793 (1.000)
People contact	S.E.	-5.626 (0.091)	4.508 (0.192)	8.371 (0.029)*
	P.E.		10.205 (0.001)*	13.998 (0.001)*
	B.A.			3.793 (1.000)
Recognition	S.E.	7.896 (0.001)*	2.909 (0.603)	0.716 (1.000)
	P.E.		-4.987 (0.099)	-7.180 (0.043)*
	B.A.			-2.193 (1.000)
Achievement	S.E.	2.201 (0.050)*	0.244 (1.000)	1.452 (1.000)
	P.E.		-1.957 (0.271)	-0.749 (1.000)
	B.A.			1.208 (1.000)
Power	S.E.	-6.516 (0.019)*	-7.014 (0.003)*	-4.031 (1.000)
	P.E.		-0.497 (1.000)	2.484 (1.000)
	B.A.			2.982 (1.000)
Variety and changes	S.E.	2.254 (0.741)	-1.884 (0.999)	-2.320 (1.000)
	P.E.		-4.138 (0.039)*	-4.574 (0.137)
	B.A.			-0.435 (1.000)
Creativity	S.E.	2.754 (0.762)	-1.716 (1.000)	-8.249 (0.001)*
	P.E.		-4.60 (0.113)	-11.003 (0.001)*
	B.A.			-6.543 (0.029)*
Self-development	S.E.	4.535 (0.012)*	-1.252 (1.000)	-2.063 (1.000)
	P.E.		-5.787 (0.003)*	-6.598 (0.013)*
	B.A.			-0.810 (1.000)
Interest and usefulness	S.E.	4.577 (0.026)*	-2.492 (0.688)	-5.370 (0.065)
	P.E.		-7.070 (0.001)*	-9.947 (0.001)*
	B.A.			-2.877 (1.000)

* - statistically significant differences

The following results were obtained:

- the need for good working conditions showed a statistically significant stronger influence on motivation in S.E. and P.E. educational groups compared to B.A. and M.A. educational groups;
- the need for clear work structuring and feedback and the need for social contact with colleagues, partners, and clients showed a significantly stronger influence

- on motivation in the P.E. educational group than in B. A and M.A. educational groups;
- the need to gain recognition from others has a significantly weaker influence on motivation in the P.E. educational group than in the S.E. and M.A. educational groups;
 - the need to set bold, challenging goals for oneself and achieve them has a significantly stronger influence on motivation in the S.E. educational group than in the P.E. educational group;
 - the need for influence and power, and the desire to lead show significantly weaker influence on motivation in the S.E. educational group than in the P.E. and B.A. educational groups;
 - the need for diversity and change shows a significantly stronger influence on motivation in the B.A. educational group than in the P.E. group;
 - the need to be a creative worker, open to new ideas, shows a significantly stronger influence on motivation in the M.A. educational group compared to S.E., P.E and B.A. educational groups;
 - the need for self-improvement, personal growth, and development, and the need for interesting, socially useful work shows a significantly weaker influence on motivation in P.E. educational groups than in S.E., B.A., and M.A. educational groups.

3. Conclusions

This theoretical and empirical research is devoted to the problem of status and education differences in the motivation structure of public sector employees in Israel. Intrinsic and extrinsic factors of human motivation have been considered.

The problem of motivation in the workplace was considered from different perspectives. According to the most widely-known definition, motivation is the process of encouraging a person to perform different actions. Still, many authors agree that motivation is not coercion, but actualization of goals that become important for a motivated person. Managers are advised to consider motivation factors and to focus on specific known individual motivational preferences of people of different status and education.

The empirical research is based on the 12-factor theory of human needs at work. Statistically significant differences exist between employees of different status and education groups. Therefore, our hypothesis about the differences in staff motivation due to an employee's status and education is statistically confirmed.

We believe that the findings obtained can help directors and managers of state institutions in Israel to create motivational programs according to State employee status and education. The effectiveness of motivational programs can be substantially increased. To make reasonable managerial decisions regarding the determination of motivation practices, it is necessary to have a motivational portrait or motivational profile of an employee, which consists of a set of external and internal motivational factors. The strength of motives, stability, and structure are

unique to each person. These factors affect behavior differently. Whatever is effective in motivating one person may be ineffective for another.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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