

LABOUR VALUES OF EMPLOYEES IN BULGARIAN ORGANIZATIONS (1995-2014)

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Abstract: This paper is an initial attempt to provide a generalized reflection on the research results of the longitudinal research project NATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES (1995-2014). The analysis is focused on determining the significance of 14 factors of organizational situation (labor goals / labor values). Drawing upon comparisons among the average value of each variable and their ranking the stability and dynamics of the studied labor values is determined. The paper provides a discussion of future possibilities to use the research results of the present investigation in a new research project. The research results have implications for understanding the situation in Bulgarian organizations – for managers, human resource management experts, etc.

Key words: Labor goals, labor values, stability / dynamics, value “pyramid”.

Introduction

Four consecutive surveys of national and organizational cultures in Bulgaria conducted in 1995, 2001, 2008, and 2014 contained a panel of indicators related to labor goals (values).¹ These studies provide an opportunity to determine the significance of a group of factors describing organizational situation and to investigate the stability and dynamics of value orientations of employees, which represent an important clue for understanding organizational behaviour.²

It is important to put an emphasis on values because values, the way of thinking, management style, approaches to solving problems, etc., define the fundamental basis of organizational culture.³ The behaviour of people in an

¹ These indicators have been used in comparative studies of national cultures by G. Hofstede [Hofstede, 2001a], [Hofstede, 2001b].

² Other publications that analyze the dynamics (stability / change) of values in organizational context include [Ilieva, 1998], [Ilieva, 2009], [Davidkov, 2009], [Davidkov, 2010-a], [Davidkov, 2010], [Davidkov et al., 2015].

³ See [Cameron & Quin, 2012: 26].

organization may be described, explained, and forecasted by analysis of their values. The results, “translated” into the corresponding professional language, can be useful for managers, human resource management experts, employees, etc. The results exhibit particular significance for researchers.

The survey and subsequent interpretations of empirical findings are based on the following initial premises:

- In different contexts the synonyms of the term value include importance, significance, sense, preference.⁴ The term *value* is clarified by investigating the relationships between the subject and the object in the light of: needs, interests, motives, goals, norms, roles, expectations, pretentions, etc. Each of these aspects is conditioned at both individual and social levels. Each of the above mentioned aspects is an independent (and specific) point of view regarding the relationships between the subject and the object. This emphasizes the relationships (similarities/differences) between *value* and *needs, interests, motives, goals, norms, roles, expectations, pretentions, etc.*⁵

- Debating about “mind programming”, G. Hofstede examines values as “... a general inclination to exhibit a preference for certain state of affairs”. Values are feelings with certain purposefulness – there is a negative and a positive pole.⁶ G. Hofstede notices that it is necessary to interpret carefully the empirical findings obtained from the research on values taking into account the differences between desirable (in principle it should be like this) and desired (what we want for ourselves).⁷ Since G. Hofstede considers culture to be specific for a group or a category of people, the author has reasons to consider values as “a general inclination to have a preference for certain state of affairs”.⁸

- “Values are appropriate for explaining labor behavior because they may be investigated and specified at three levels of analysis: individual, organizational, and social or national.⁹ There are strong arguments in favor of researching value preferences in the context of labor and organization because “a significant part of human life is spent at work and particularly at work for an organization...”.¹⁰ The understanding of the link among value preferences at individual,

⁴ Values have been defined also as „Ideas of groups of people about what is desirable, appropriate, good or evil“ [Giddens, 2004]. For a more detailed discussion on different aspects of the values problematics see [Baichinska, 1994], [Gradev, 1984], [Djonev, 2000], [Ivanova, 2000], [Ilieva, 1998], [Larsen & Krumov, 2010], [Mendras, 2002], [Sotirova, 2014], [Stoicova, 1998], [Furnam, 2013], [Hofstede, 2001b], etc.

⁵ See [Davidkov, 2012]. Other researchers also emphasize on this relationship. K. Baichinska wrote: “In other words, both the goal and the value are aspects of the result or the way of living activity... From the presented definitions it is obvious that the distinction between goals and values is relative in nature.” [Baichinska, 1994: 11]. “The value is an object in his/her positive attitude toward certain human needs.” [Djonev, 2000: 393] “When we tell a child that he/she behaves badly... in fact we impress on him/ her the values and norms of society and teach him/ her to respect manners ...” [Mendras, 2002: 88] “Expressing attitudes toward ourselves, individuals always reveal an aspect of their role behavior.” [Gradev, 1984: 58]

⁶ See [Hofstede, 2001a: 10].

⁷ See [Hofstede, 2001a: 10, 11].

⁸ See [Hofstede, 2001a: 10].

⁹ See [Ilieva, 2009: 52]. See also [Ivanova, 2000].

¹⁰ See [Ilieva, 2009: 52].

group and organizational levels is an important condition for well-grounded interpretation of empirical findings from the research on values.

• The functions of values at individual, group, organizational, professional, national/ social levels deserve a particular attention.¹¹ Each of these levels of analysis should be taken into consideration when researching values in the organizational / professional context.

Research methodology

This study examines main characteristics of the organizational situation in Bulgarian organizations in the light of 14 labor values. The survey investigates employees in Bulgarian organizations. The subject of the research is the significance of a group of factors describing the organizational situation (labor goals / labor values).¹² In another sense, the subject of this research is *the organizational situation in Bulgarian organizations investigated in the light of labor goals/ values*.

Description of research samples. The survey conducted in 1995 includes 377 respondents; in 2001 – 1200 respondents; in 2008 – 1200 respondents; and in 2014 the empirical findings are based on a sample of 900 respondents. More detailed data about respondents are presented in Annex 1. The structure of the 4 samples used in this paper (in terms of respondent's sex, respondent's education, respondent's type of residence, field of operation of the organization; organizational size) justifies the comparability of the data from the 4 different points in time.¹³

Description of indicators. The empirical indicators employed in the study are the following: TO WHAT EXTENT IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU THE JOB YOU TAKE UP TO OFFER YOU: **Challenges** – to let you achieve a personal sense of accomplishment; Opportunity to live with your family at a **desirable place**; **High earnings**; Opportunity to work with people who **cooperate well**; Opportunity for **training** or improving your skills and acquiring new ones; Good **social insurance**; Deserved **appreciation** for any work well done; Good **physical working conditions**: enough space, appropriate furniture, lighting, etc.; Opportunities for being **independent**; **Certainty** that you will be able to work for this organization as long as you want to; Opportunities for **advancement and promotion**; Good business **relations with your boss**; Opportunities to use your **skills** and abilities on the job as much as possible; Sufficient **time for private life**.¹⁴ The set of the listed labor goals represents a significant part of the important characteristics of the organizational situation (from the standpoint

¹¹ For more details see [Bichinska, 1994], [Paunov, 2009], [Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1995], [Ilieva, 2009], [Maslow, 2010], [Encyclopedia, 2008], [Mullins, 1993], [Aronson, 2009], etc.

¹² According to the context, the studied factors of the labor situation are interpreted either as labor values and/or as labour goals.

¹³ This applies to a greater extent to the comparability of the data obtained in 2001, 2008, and 2014 due to the greater sizes of the samples.

¹⁴ The possible answers are: 1 – very important; 2 – important; 3 – neutral; 4 – slightly important; 5 – not at all important.

of employees).¹⁵ The relative comprehensiveness of the studied factors supports the claims that the described pattern of the organizational situation coincides significantly with the actual pattern of the organizational situation in Bulgarian organizations.

The significance of the labor goals in the studied sample is characterized by analyzing *the average value* of the indicators. The average value of each indicator represents the answers of all respondents with the respective weights which justifies the choice of using the analysis of the average value of the indicators. In other words, the average value is an inseparable characteristic of the indicators.¹⁶ Further calculations of rankings and groupings are used as a basis for content analyses and interpretations.

Drawing upon the empirical results we may discuss mainly the actual state of the organizational situation in organizations operating in Bulgaria (in the respective points in time) as well as some tendencies (increase in significance, decrease in significance, stability / change, etc.) on the basis of the created dynamic series. This is mainly a descriptive characteristic of the organizational situation. At the same time, there is an attempt to analyze the results in the context of some relationships which may help to formulate new research questions and/or hypotheses.

Empirical results

Table 1 presents the average values of the studied indicators by year.

Table 1

Average values of indicators (1995, 2001, 2008, 2014)

TO WHAT EXTENT IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU THE JOB YOU TAKE UP TO OFFER YOU: (please, indicate your opinion in relation to <u>each question</u> by marking one number)	1995 (377 respondents)	2001 (1200 respondents)	2008 (1200 respondents)	2014 (900 respondents)
	Average value of variables			
• Challenges – to let you achieve a personal sense of accomplishment	1,8280	1,8126	1,6935	1,7637
• Opportunity to live with your family at a desirable place	2,0695	2,0093	1,8962	1,9329
• High earnings	1,6853	1,6235	1,5117	1,6085

¹⁵ This is supported by the fact that these characteristics of labour situation explain a significant part of the variance of the overall satisfaction / dissatisfaction of employees in Bulgarian organizations; in 2001 their explanatory power was 50% (according to the R Square value of a linear regression); in 2008 – 48%; in 2014 – 53%. See [Furnam, 2013: 431 and next.]; [Ilieva, 2009]; [Ivanova, 2000]; [Paunov, 2009]; [Hristova, 1997] for more about the factors of labour situation.

¹⁶ See [Saikova & Atanasov & Chengelova, 2014]; [Saikova & Stoikova-Kanalieva & Saikova, 2002]; [Haralampiev, 2007]; [Stetinski, 2005], etc. If necessary, the labour goals may

• Opportunity to work with people who cooperate well	1,6160	1,5943	1,5114	1,6207
• Opportunity for training or improving your skills and acquiring new ones	1,7353	1,7650	1,6667	1,7200
• Good social insurance	1,9223	1,9275	1,7360	1,8083
• Deserved appreciation for any work well done	2,0427	1,8989	1,7339	1,7840
• Good physical working conditions : enough space, appropriate furniture, lighting, etc.	2,1200	1,9848	1,8655	1,9405
• Opportunities for being independent	1,8824	1,9713	2,0017	2,1488
• Certainty that you will be able to work for this organization as long as you want to	1,9787	1,9259	1,9170	1,9910
• Opportunities for advancement and promotion	2,0187	1,9932	1,8247	1,8507
• Good business relations with your boss	1,8262	1,6785	1,5506	1,6434
• Opportunities to use your skills and abilities on the job as much as possible	1,5710	1,5971	1,5811	1,6940
• Sufficient time for private life	2,5027	2,2743	2,1313	2,0541

If the significance of each factor is estimated through the average value of the indicator, it should be noted that the average value of each indicator can take values between 1,00 and 5,00. Average values of indicators close to 1,00 reveal that the studied factors are highly significant, while average values of indicators close to 5,00 demonstrate that the studied factors are highly insignificant. The mean of the evaluation scale is 3,00. Without a procedure for normalization (in relation to the studied population), an average value in the interval from 1,00 to 3,00 indicates rather high significance, while an average value from 3,01 to 5,00 indicates high insignificance.

In the outlined coordinate system all factors in all studied points in time are rather significant.¹⁷ In the light of this evaluation, the factor with the highest significance is *cooperation* measured in 2008 (with average value 1,5114), while the factor with the highest insignificance is *time for private life* measured in 1995 (with average value 2,5027). The interval [1,5114-2,5027] sets the limits of all average values presented in Table 1. This interval (0,9913) represents less than 25% of the length of the evaluation scale.

be evaluated / interpreted based on different criteria – for example “very important”, “very important” + “important”, “neutral”, etc. Also, they may be evaluated / interpreted based on their ranking place, etc.

¹⁷ This fact also confirms that the adopted set of characteristics of labor situation provides the opportunity for thorough investigation of the value status of labor situation.

Table 1-1 presents the *aggregate average value of the indicators*, measured as the mean of the averaged values in the four studied points in time. The indicators are arranged in descending order in terms of aggregate significance on the basis of their aggregated average value.¹⁸

Table 1-1

Aggregate average value of indicators (ranking scale in descending order)

TO WHAT EXTENT IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU THE JOB YOU TAKE UP TO OFFER YOU:	Aggregate average value of the indicators	Ranking for the studied period	Ranking positions in 1995, 2001, 2008, 2014
• Opportunity to work with people who cooperate well	1,5856	1	2, 1, 1, 2
• High earnings	1,6072	2	3, 3, 2, 1
• Opportunities to use your skills and abilities on the job as much as possible	1,6108	3	1, 2, 4, 4
• Good business relations with your boss	1,6747	4	5, 4, 3, 3
• Opportunity for training or improving your skills and acquiring new ones	1,7218	5	4, 5, 5, 5
• Challenges – to let you achieve a personal sense of accomplishment	1,7744	6	6, 6, 6, 6
• Good social insurance	1,8485	7	8, 9, 8, 8
• Deserved appreciation for any work well done	1,8649	8	11, 7, 7, 7
• Opportunities for advancement and promotion	1,9218	9	10, 12, 9, 9
• Certainty that you will be able to work for this organization as long as you want to	1,9532	10	9, 8, 12, 12
• Opportunity to live with your family at a desirable place	1,9770	11	12, 13, 11, 10
• Good physical working conditions : enough space, appropriate furniture, lighting, etc.	1,9777	12	13, 11, 10, 11
• Opportunities for being independent	2,0010	13	7, 10, 13, 14
• Sufficient time for private life	2,2406	14	14, 14, 14, 13

¹⁸ For comparison, the last column in Table 1-1 contains the ranking positions of the indicators in the different time points – 1995, 2001, 2008, and 2014.

The interval which contains all aggregated average values represents about 16% of the evaluation scale. There is a relatively concentrated evaluation of the significance of the investigated factors of the organizational situation.

The presented general picture can be used as a point of variation for generating other data configurations convenient for analysis.

Derived data configurations

Drawing upon various transformations based on the data in Table 1, it is possible to construct more tables and to calculate more results as a reference point and a ground for interpretations of the content of the organizational situation.

Example 1. Table 2 presents the aggregate average value of the investigated factors of the organizational situation by years.

Table 2

Aggregate average value of investigated factors of the organizational situation (by year)

TO WHAT EXTENT IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU THE JOB YOU TAKE UP TO OFFER YOU:	1995 (377 respondents)	2001 (1200 respondents)	2008 (1200 respondents)	2014 (900 respondents)
Aggregate average value of all factors ¹⁹	1,9142	1,8612	1,7587	1,8258

- The aggregate significance of the studied factors of the organizational situation *increase* during the period 1995-2008; in 2014 this significance is lower in comparison with 2008 (but higher than 2001 and 1995). A common explanation of the observed differences may be *the level of inclusion* of the studied individuals in the labor / organizational reality.²⁰

- Another coordinate system for understanding the empirical findings is the nature of the relationship between the *labor life* and *personal life* and their relative significance. In the case of the type of the relationship characterized with “more attention to the personal sphere at the expense of the professional life”, the increased interest to personal life probably decreases the level of inclusion in the professional life. If the better satisfaction of needs in the personal sphere requires stronger professional activity, the aspiration to the better satisfaction of needs in the personal sphere may stimulate greater interest (and inclusion) of the individual in the labor conditions in the organizations.

¹⁹ The aggregate average value of all factors is calculated as a mean of the average values included in Table 1 by year.

²⁰ The concept of inclusion may be better understood in a system of (opposite) definitions: presence / absence of interest; presence / absence of curiosity; “I care“ / “I do not care“; level of “alertness” for phenomena in organization, etc. The hypothesis that the attitude toward the factors of the labour situation is a complex function of the overall economic state of society and the specific organization may be tested. See also [Ilieva, 1998: 78], [Ilieva, 2009: 127], [Sotirova & Georgieva, 2013].

- The level of inclusion depends probably on the structure of the income of the respondent – the dependence on only one employer or on incomes from more than one employer. The logic behind this reasoning is the following. If the income is from only one employer the employee will be more dependent on that employer and will exhibit a greater interest in what is going on at the workplace. If the employee disposes with incomes from several employers²¹, his/ her dependence on each employer may be low (which may decrease his / her interest in the particular organizational situation).

Example 2. Table 3 presents the dispersion of the values of the studied factors of the organizational situation by year.

Table 3

Dispersion of the values of the studied factor of the organizational situation (by year)

TO WHAT EXTENT IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU THE JOB YOU TAKE UP TO OFFER YOU:	1995 (377 respondents)	2001 (1200 respondents)	2008 (1200 respondents)	2014 (900 respondents)
Difference between the average values of the most significant factor and the most insignificant factor	0,9317	0,6800	0,6199	0,5403
% of the length of the evaluation scale	23%	17%	15%	14%

Table 3 demonstrates that the dispersion tends to *decrease*. The values generated in every subsequent measurement are concentrated in a smaller interval. This finding may be explained in several different ways. From the methodological point of view, the demonstrated tendency raises the question for the reasons to interpret the investigated labor values either independently or in groups (because of their similar values).

Example 3. Table 4 shows the relative dynamics of the ranking of each one of the studied characteristics of the organizational situation.²²

²¹ This is typical of individuals with a second / third job and for individuals with additional income from other activities which are different from their main activity.

²² Table 5 presents the ranking order of the studied factors by year which is established by comparing the average values of the indicators (by year).

Table 4

Ranking dynamics of the studied characteristics of the organizational situation

Labor goals	1995	2001	2008	2014
	Relative ranking			
• Skills	1	2	4	4
• Cooperation	2	1	1	2
• High earnings	3	3	2	1
• Training	4	5	5	5
• Relations with your boss	5	4	3	3
• Challenges	6	6	6	6
• Independence	7	10	13	14
• Social insurance	8	9	8	8
• Certainty	9	8	12	12
• Advancement and promotion	10	12	9	9
• Appreciation	11	7	7	7
• Desirable place	12	13	11	10
• Physical working conditions	13	11	10	11
• Time for private life	14	14	14	13

According to the registered tendencies²³ (stability, increase in the level of significance, and decrease in the level of significance) the investigated factors of the organizational situation may be categorized in three different groups: a) (relatively) stable; b) with increasing significance; c) with decreasing significance.

• If factors that have not changed their ranking with more than one place during the studied period (2005-2014) are defined as stable, then the factors *cooperation* (ranking places 2, 1, 1, 2), *training* (4, 5, 5, 5), *challenges* (6, 6, 6, 6), *social insurance* (8, 9, 8, 8), *time for private life* (14, 14, 14, 13) belong to the group of the stable factors. These values belonging to the different levels of the *value pyramid* can be considered as the most stable “building construction”, which guarantees the stability of the value pyramid in time.

• The factors *high earnings* (3, 3, 2, 1), *relations with your boss* (5, 4, 3, 3), and *appreciation* (11, 7, 7, 7) belong to the group of factors with increasing significance. This group contains also the factors *advancement and promotion* (10, 12, 9, 9), *desirable place* (12, 13, 11, 10) and *physical working conditions* (13, 11, 10, 11).²⁴

²³ And by necessity - with a certain conventionality.

²⁴ The “labels” used are appropriate when analyzing the ranking status of the studied factors for the whole period (1995, 2001, 2008, 2014). If the period is shorter (2001, 2008, 2014) a part of the studied factors may be placed in another group.

The *factor appreciation* exhibits the highest increase in its significance - with 4 ranking places.

• The factors *skills* (1, 2, 4, 4), *independence* (7, 10, 13, 14), and *social insurance* (9, 8, 12, 12) belong to the group of factors with decreasing significance. The factor *independence* registers the highest decrease in its significance (with 7 ranking places during the studied period) The factor *social insurance* exhibits a decrease with 4 ranking places in the value pyramid, while the factor *skills* – with 3 ranking places.

The summarized results regarding the advancement / drop in the ranking position of the studied factors (taking 1995 as a starting point and 2005 as an end point) are included in Table 4-1.²⁵

Table 4-1

Advancement / drop in the ranking of the labor goals (1995-2014)

	Change in the ranking (2014 compared to 1995)
• Appreciation	+4
• High earnings	+2
• Relations with your boss	+2
• Desirable place	+2
• Physical working conditions	+2
• Time for private life	+1
• Advancement and promotion	+1
• Challenges	0
• Cooperation	0
• Social insurance	0
• Training	-1
• Skills	-3
• Certainty	-3
• Independence	-7

²⁵ The size of the ranking advancement / drop which is calculated according the above mentioned procedure may be different from the difference between the highest and the lowest rank because the procedure takes into account the ranking positions at the beginning and the end of the investigated period.

In the hierarchy in Table 4-1 the labor goals *independence, social insurance and skills* exhibit the highest drop in the ranking position. It should be noted that the comparisons of labor goals between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs (Davidkov, 2010: 345) reveal that these labor goals have greater significance for entrepreneurs than non-entrepreneurs. This may be interpreted as a decrease in the importance of typical entrepreneurial goals/values.²⁶

The understanding of the stability and change of the importance of the studied factors of the labor situation may be useful for understanding the system of motivation factors and the mechanisms of their activity as well as the choice of working managerial approaches for achieving the desired organizational goals. The described pattern (at the level of goals/ values) may take on a new meaning and heuristics if the hypothesis that the configuration of labor values is another side of the contemporary combination of economic events perceived/ lived/ interpreted in a certain way. Another type of information and heuristics may be generated if we dispose with a proven reliable scheme for understanding the phenomenon of *value choice (value attribution)*.²⁷

Example 4. An area of specific interest is the analysis of the significance of the studied factors measured in absolute values. Table 5 contains the differences between the highest and the lowest average value for each of the attributes in a hierarchical order.²⁸

Table 5

Difference between the highest and the lowest average value of each attribute (in a descending hierarchical order)

TO WHAT EXTENT IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU THE JOB YOU TAKE UP TO OFFER YOU: (please, indicate your opinion in relation to <u>each question</u> by marking one number)	Difference between the highest and the lowest value	Ranking of absolute stability
• Certainty that you will be able to work for this organization as long as you want to	0,0807	1
• Opportunity for training or improving your skills and acquiring new ones	0,0983	2
• Opportunity to work with people who cooperate well	0,1121	3
• Opportunities to use your skills and abilities on the job as much as possible	0,1253	4
• Challenges – to let you achieve a personal sense of accomplishment	0,1345	5

²⁶ Does it mean that the entrepreneurial spirit of the nation “is fading away”?

²⁷ Sometimes, it is claimed that the view that valuable refers to something that is insufficient (in deficit), difficult to achieve, etc. can be used as an interpretation scheme. In fact the process of attributing significance is much more complex.

²⁸ For each of the studied indicators we dispose with information about its average value in 4 different points in time – 1995, 2001, 2008, 2014.

• Opportunity to live with your family at a desirable place	0,1733	6
• High earnings	0,1736	7
• Good social insurance	0,1915	8
• Opportunities for advancement and promotion	0,1940	9
• Good physical working conditions : enough space, appropriate furniture, lighting, etc.	0,2545	10
• Opportunities for being independent	0,2605	11
• Good business relations with your boss	0,2756	12
• Deserved appreciation for any work well done	0,3088	13
• Sufficient time for private life	0,4501	14

The smaller differences (in the upper part of the hierarchy) indicate the factors of the organizational situation with the highest stability (in absolute terms). The larger differences (at the bottom of the hierarchy) indicate the labor goals with the most variable significance (in absolute terms).

Example 5. If the value pyramid is divided in “levels” so that each level comprises a group of similar ranks (Table 6), some interesting results may be generated:

Table 6
The value pyramid of key factors of the organizational situation in Bulgarian organizations

Rank	1995	2001	2008	2014
1	Skills	Cooperation	Cooperation	High earnings
2	Cooperation	Skills	High earnings	Cooperation
3	High earnings	High earnings	Relations with your boss	Relations with your boss
4	Training	Relations with your boss	Skills	Skills
5	Relations with your boss	Training	Training	Training
6	Challenges	Challenges	Challenges	Challenges
7	Independence	Appreciation	Appreciation	Appreciation
8	Social insurance	Certainty	Social insurance	Social insurance
9	Certainty	Social insurance	Advancement and promotion	Advancement and promotion

10	Advancement and promotion	Independence	Physical working conditions	Desirable place
11	Appreciation	Physical working conditions	Desirable place	Physical working conditions
12	Desirable place	Advancement and promotion	Certainty	Certainty
13	Physical working conditions	Desirable place	Independence	Time for private life
14	Time for private life	Time for private life	Time for private life	Independence

- The first level of the value pyramid (ranks 1, 2, and 3) comprises permanently such labor goals as *cooperation* and *high earnings* while the dynamic (the presence of “incoming” / “outgoing”) may be attributed to the factors *skills* and *relations with your boss*.

- The second level (ranks 4, 5, 6) includes permanently the factors *training* and *challenges*; the dynamics (“incoming”/“outgoing”) can be attributed to the factors *relations with your boss* and *skills*. During the whole studied period (1995 – 2014) some factors move between these two levels but external factors do not “enter” these levels.²⁹

- The stability at the third level (ranks 7, 8, 9), forth level (ranks 10, 11, 12) and fifth level (ranks 13, 14) is more fragile, while the dynamics – visibly more significant. There is only one permanent factor at the third level – *social insurance*. At the forth level there is no permanent factor. At the fifth level the only permanent factor is time for private life. Between the third and forth levels there is an exchange, which assures their unity and includes the goals appreciation, *advancement and promotion*, and *certainty*. There is also a fragile unity between the forth and the fifth level – through the internal exchange of *physical working conditions* and *desirable place*.

In the light of the defined value/rank levels, new “labels” may be attributed to labor goals:

- Values, which permanently belong only to a certain level – cooperation, training, challenges, social insurance, time for private life³⁰;

- Values which contribute to the dynamic unity and balance between adjacent levels – skills, relations with your boss (1–2 level); appreciation, advancement and promotion, certainty (3-4 level); physical working conditions, desirable place (4-5 level).

²⁹ If for specific needs it is necessary to describe the situation on the working place with few labor goals / values which are important for employees, it is justified to use a pyramid of 6 labor values instead of a pyramid of 14 labor values.

³⁰ Another definition of the “levels” in this pyramid may change the described situation.

- Dynamic values, which have occupied more than two levels during the studied period – *independence*.

In essence, the value pyramid of the labor goals is composed of two different groups of ranking positions (1-6/7-14) and between these two groups there is no exchange/transfers.

Main conclusions

The investigation of the labor values of employees in organizations generates important information for both researchers and managers and human resource experts. The generated knowledge provides guidelines for understanding the situation in the organizations and organizational behavior; creates opportunities to justify motivation strategies; draws our attention to the possibilities for a new type of research of economic phenomena – based on their value description at the level of the labor goals.

The nature of the research which is longitudinal (1995, 2001, 2008, 2014) provides the possibility to explore the stability and dynamics of 14 factors of the organizational situation for a period of 20 years. These factors include cooperation, earnings, skills, relationships with your boss, training, challenges, certainty, social insurance, appreciation, advancement and promotion, desirable place, physical working conditions, independence, and time for private life. In total, they are account for a significant part of the overall satisfaction of the people in an organization (53% in 2014).

The ranking of the studied indicators which is based on *the aggregate average value of each indicator* (see **Table 1-1**) provides the opportunity to determine the pattern of the hierarchy of the studied factors for the whole period of the study (1995-2014). According to the level of significance, we may differentiate four distinctive groups: a) group 1 (the most significant factors: levels of significance from 1,5856 to 1,6747) – *cooperation, earnings, skills, relationships with your boss*; б) group 2 (1,7218-1,8649): *training, challenges, social insurance, appreciation*; в) group 3 (1,9218-2,0010): *advancement and promotion, certainty, desirable place, physical working conditions, independence*; г) group 4 (2,2406): *time for private life*.

The aggregate significance of all studied factors increases during the period 1995-2001-2008 (see **Table 2**) and decreases during the period 2008-2014 (at the same time the significance is higher in 2014 than in 1995 and 2001). This may be attributed to the different degrees of inclusion of the studied individuals in organizational life. The nature and the degree of inclusion are determined by individual, group, and organizational factors as well as by factors of the external environment. With time the dispersion of the values of significance decreases (see **Table 2**). In 1995 the size of dispersion interval is 0,9317; in 2001 – 0,6800; in 2008 – 0,6199; and in 2014 – 0,5403. The explanation of this trend requires the verification of various hypotheses.

Based on comparisons of the values of significance of each indicator in the studied time points (1995, 2001, 2008, 2014), the different indicators may be categorized in terms of stability / variability (see **Table 2**).

- *The most stable* are the ratings of *certainty* and *training* (for them the difference between the lowest and the highest value does not exceed 0,1).

- *The most dynamic* are the ratings of *appreciation* and *time for private life* (for them the difference between the lowest and the highest value is within the interval 0,31-0,43).

- The differences in the ratings of the *other 10 factors* in the studied time points (*cooperation, skills, challenges, desirable place, earnings, social insurance, advancement and promotion, physical working conditions, independence, relations with your boss*) are within the interval 0,11-0,28 (see **Table 5**).

The comparisons of the indicators based on their relative ranks (see **Table 4, 4-1**) permit to categorize the factors of the organizational situation in three groups: (*relative*) *ranking stability, ranking progress, and ranking drop*.

- If factors that have not changed their ranking with more than one place during the investigated period are defined as stable, then the group of stable factors contains the following factors: *cooperation* (ranking places 2, 1, 1, 2), *training* (4, 5, 5, 5), *challenges* (6, 6, 6, 6), *social insurance* (8, 9, 8, 8), *time or private life* (14, 14, 14, 13). These values belonging to the different levels of the *value pyramid* can be considered as the most stable “building construction”, which guarantees the stability of the value pyramid in time.

- The following factors belong to the group of factors with *increasing significance*: *high earnings* (3, 3, 2, 1), *relations with your boss* (5, 4, 3, 3), *appreciation* (11, 7, 7, 7). This group of factors comprises also *advancement and promotion* (10, 12, 9, 9), *desirable place* (12, 13, 11, 10) and *physical working conditions* (13, 11, 10, 11).³¹ The highest increase has registered the factor *appreciation* – with 4 ranking places.

- The following factors pertain to the group of factors with *decreasing significance*: *skills* (1, 2, 4, 4), *independence* (7, 10, 13, 14), *certainty* (9, 8, 12, 12). The highest decrease in their significance exhibit the factor *independence* (with 7 ranking positions during the studied period); the factor drops in the ranking pyramid with 4 places; the factor *skills* – with 3 ranking places.

The division of the value pyramid in several structural “levels” (see **Table 6**) and the analysis of the movement of the studied values between these structural levels reveal the following:

- The first level of the value pyramid (ranks 1, 2, and 3) comprises permanently such labor goals as *cooperation* and *high earnings*, while the dynamic - the presence of “incoming” / “outgoing” - may be attributed to the factors *relations with your boss* and *skills*.

- The second level (ranks 4, 5, 6) includes permanently the factors *training* and *challenges*; here the dynamics („incoming“ / „outgoing“) can also be attributed to the factors *relations with your boss* and *skills*. During the whole studied period (1995 – 2014) some factors move between these two structural levels but external factors do not “enter” these structural levels.³²

³¹ The “labels” used are appropriate when analyzing the ranking status of the studied factors for the whole period (1995, 2001, 2008, 2014). If the period is shorter (2001, 2008, 2014) a part of the studied factors may be placed in another group.

³² If for specific needs it is necessary to describe the situation on the working place with few labor goals / values which are important for employees, it is justified to use a pyramid of 6 labor values instead of a pyramid of 14 labor values.

- The stability at the third level (ranking places 7, 8, 9), fourth level (ranking places 10, 11, 12) and fifth level (ranking 13, 14) is more fragile, while the dynamics – visibly more significant. There is only one permanent factor at the third level – *social insurance*. At the fourth level there is no permanent factor. At the fifth level the only permanent factor is time for private life. Between the third and fourth levels there is an exchange, which assures their unity and includes the goals *appreciation, advancement and promotion*, and *certainty*. There is also a fragile unity between the fourth and the fifth level – through the internal exchange of *physical working conditions* and *desirable place*.

In the light of the defined *value levels*, new “labels” may be attributed to labor goals:

- Values, which permanently belong only to a certain level – cooperation, training, challenges, social insurance, time for private life³³;

- Values which contribute to the dynamic unity and balance between adjacent levels – skills, relations with your boss (1–2 level); appreciation, advancement and promotion, certainty (3–4 level); physical working conditions, desirable place (4–5 level).

- Dynamic values, which have occupied more than two levels during the studied period – *independence*.

In essence, the value pyramid of the labor goals is composed of two different groups of ranking positions (1–6 / 7–14) and between these two groups there is no exchange / transfers.

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³³ Another definition of the “levels” in this pyramid may change the described situation.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS
(1995, 2001, 2008, 2014)

Distribution of the respondents by **sex**

	1995	2001	2008	2014
	Percentage share of respondents who have answered			
• Male	44	40	39	40
• Female	56	60	61	60
Общо	100	100	100	100

Distribution of the respondents by level of **education**

	1995	2001	2008	2014
	Percentage share of respondents who have answered			
• Primary education	0	0	0	0
• Basic education	0	1	1	1
• Secondary education	26	28	19	21
• Semi-higher education	5	7	5	6
• Higher education	55	55	71	68
• Higher than Master's (incl. any specializations or Ph.D.)	14	9	4	4
Total	100	100	100	100

Distribution of the respondents by **working experience**

	1995	2001	2008	2014
	Percentage share of respondents who have answered			
• 1 year	3	3	2	5
• 2–3 years	8	8	9	5
• 4–5 years	4	9	10	7
• 6–10 years	18	14	20	20
• 11–20 years	38	31	28	31
• 21 and more years	29	35	31	32
Total	100	100	100	100

Distribution of the respondents by organizational **field of operation**

The organization operates in the field of	1995	2001	2008	2014
	Percentage share of respondents who have answered			
• Production	48	32	30	16
• Trade & retail	11	6	10	18
• Services	34	45	44	54
• Government administration	7	17	16	12
• Total	100	100	100	100

Distribution of respondents by **size of organization**

	1995	2001	2008	2014
	Percentage share of respondents who have answered			
• Less than 5 people / employed	5	6	2	3
• From 6 to 10 people / employed	3	7	5	6
• From 11 to 15 people / employed	4	6	4	5
• From 16 to 25 people / employed	3	7	7	10
• From 26 to 30 people / employed	3	4	7	6
• From 31 to 50 people / employed	8	14	11	8
• From 51 to 75 people / employed	10	8	7	8
• From 76 to 150 people / employed	9	9	14	14
• From 151 to 300 people / employed	13	7	15	10
• From 301 to 500 people / employed	4	7	5	9
• More than 500 people / employed	38	25	23	21
Total	100	100	100	100

Distribution of the respondents by **place of residence**

1995		2001		2008		2014	
Place of residence	Percentage share of respondents who have answered	Place of residence	Percentage share of respondents who have answered	Place of residence	Percentage share of respondents who have answered	Place of residence	Percentage share of respondents who have answered
Sofia	25	Sofia	57	Sofia	41	Sofia	40
Big town (more than 100 000 inhabitants)	39	Big town (more than 100 000 inhabitants)	11	Plovdiv	13	Plovdiv	8
Small or middle-sized town (less than 100 000 inhabitants)	35	Small or middle-sized town (less than 100 000 inhabitants)	31	Varna	4	Varna	2
Village	1	Village	1	Bourgas	2	Bourgas	8
Total	100	Total	100	Big town (district centre)	24	Big town (district centre)	21
				Small town	11	Small town	18
				Village	5	Village	3
				Total	100	Total	100