

## **DYNAMICS OF HUMANIZATION OF LABOR IN RUSSIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

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### **Abstract**

As it is known, one of the goals of the labor organization is its humanization. The article presents the results of the study of the dynamics of the humanization of labor in Russia and the Czech Republic on the basis of three waves of International Social Survey Programme (ISSP<sup>1</sup>) (2,3,4 waves – 1997, 2005, 2015). Self-assessment of working conditions by employees on the following indicators is used as indicators of humanization of work: performance of hard physical work, presence of constant stress in the workplace, interesting work. At the same time there were recorded sex, age of the employee, number of working hours. It was assumed that in both countries over time subjective assessment of the performance of hard physical work will decrease, and the presence of stress and interesting work will increase. There were used descriptive statistics, ordinal regression and cluster analysis to analyze the information. There were obtained contradictory results. So in both countries, workers have over time become more likely to note that their work is interesting. However, the characteristics of hard physical work and work under stress for each country have its own dynamics.

**Key words:** humanization of labor, job satisfaction, self-assessment of working conditions, Czech Republic, Russia.

**JEL Code:** M12, M14, M54

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### **Introduction**

Issues of labor humanization are relevant at all times due to the fact that the consequence of humanization is higher productivity. Despite the fact that the content and nature of work are changing, the problem of meeting human needs for work remains relevant. The humanization of labor is considered as «a common system of all rules and practical activities which lead to such a shaping of work system that human work is more productive but also adjusted to his psychophysical possibilities and needs of a certain human» (Kawecka-Endler & Mrugalska,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://w.issp.org/menu-top/home/>

2014). On the one hand, the needs of workers have long been studied and presented in well-known motivational theories, for example, in the Maslow's theory. On the other hand, it is known that needs are limitless and content is constantly changing. In this regard, it is interesting to study to what extent the sphere of work adapts to the needs of workers, how the results of this adaptation change over time and in different countries. The problem of humanization of labor was previously identified by researchers in the framework of ideological issues (Zimbalist, 1975; Wrenn, 1982). But, in our opinion, the condition of labor humanization in the company is caused by the technologies of personnel management used in the organization. And since the technology of HRM is aimed at increasing productivity, it can be assumed that the result of the use of such technologies will be the growth of humanization of labor (Ionescu & Negrusa, 2008).

The scientific literature presents the results of studies of the impact of individual technologies of personnel management on the humanization of labor. Thus, in the work (Godard, 2001) there is analyzed the influence of non-standard employment on productivity growth through reduction of stress and growth of job satisfaction. There are many works that are devoted to the study of the influence of the type of management on the humanization of labor. For example, (Shimizu, 2004; Cooper & Kuniya, 1978) examine the impact of Japanese management on the humanization of labor. Also today there is actively developing the direction associated with the assessment of the impact of personnel involvement on the performance of the whole organization (Atwater & Carmeli, 2009; Volmer, Spurk & Niessen, 2012).

## **1 Research**

Three waves of International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) (2,3,4 waves – 1997, 2005, 2015) acted as an information base of the research. All calculations were carried out only for the Czech Republic and Russia.

The study tested the following hypotheses.

Firstly, there should be an increase in positive answers to the question about the interesting content of the work over time. This hypothesis is based on the following facts. First, the modern economy is characterized by a wide variety of professions and functions, so it is easier for an employee to find a job that suits his interests. Second, the development of career guidance systems leads to the fact that the employee chooses the place and content of work more consciously, and, therefore, should be more satisfied with the content of labor.

Third, human resource management today pays more attention to issues of personnel involvement, and interest in the content of the work is one of the factors of personnel involvement (Volmer, Spurk & Niessen, 2012).

The second hypothesis is that over time the physical component of the work should be reduced and therefore the assessment of this characteristic of the work should be reduced. This hypothesis is formulated taking into account the trend of reducing physical activity and increasing mental workload of workers in the world (Schwab, 2017).

The third hypothesis is devoted to the dynamics of stress in the workplace. In our opinion, in the situation of VUCA-world, the level of stress in the workplace should grow, even though management pays much attention to reducing it (Tsutsumi & Kawakami, 2004).

Fourth, the dynamics of indicators of humanization of labor will vary for workers in the Czech Republic and Russia. This assumption is based on studies that have revealed differences in the humanization of workers in different countries (Westover & Taylor, 2010; Clark, 2005).

## 2 Results

To test the first hypothesis, we compared the average estimates of the interestingness of the work in each country (variables «v38» (1997), «v32» (2005), «v25» (2015)) (table 1). Thus, for Russia, this hypothesis was confirmed – from 1997 to 2015 the average estimate is significantly reduced, what indicates the growth of subjective interestingness of the work. At the same time for the Czech Republic it is impossible to say clearly that the hypothesis is confirmed, as in 2005, the average subjective evaluation of interestingness of the work was the lowest. That is, if we consider the period 1997-2015 without an intermediate value of 2005, the hypothesis is confirmed.

**Tab. 1: Dynamics of average estimates of the interestingness of the work<sup>2</sup>**

Country	1997	2005	2015	F-criterion <sup>3</sup>	p
Russia	2.67 <sup>4</sup>	2.48	2.30	22.756	0.000
Czech Republic	2.34	2.42	2.26	5.536	0.004

Source: authors

<sup>2</sup> There was asked a question “Apply to the job - my job is interesting”

<sup>3</sup>  $F - criterion = \frac{\text{intergroup averagesquare}}{\text{intra - group averagesquare}}$

<sup>4</sup> 1- Strongly agree, 5 - Strongly disagree

To test the second hypothesis, there were compared the average subjective estimates of physical work in the workplace (to do hard physical work) (variables «v43» (1997), «v38» (2005), «v30» (2015)) (table 2).

**Tab. 2: Dynamics of average estimates of the frequency of physical work in the workplace<sup>5</sup>**

Country	1997	2005	2015	F-criterion	p
Russia	3.41 <sup>6</sup>	3.52	3.57	3.588	0.028
Czech Republic	3.68	3.61	3.48	4.684	0.009

Source: authors

The results in table 2 show the opposite trend. For example, if hypothesis 2 is confirmed for Russia – the subjective assessment of the use of physical labor moves in the direction of "very rarely", then for the Czech Republic similar estimates are statistically significantly shifted towards the increase in use of physical labor in the workplace in the period from 1997 to 2015.

The third hypothesis is devoted to the assessment of stress in the workplace. The results of this evaluation are presented in table 3 (variables «v44» (1997), «v39» (2005), «v31» (2015)).

**Tab. 3: Dynamics of average estimates of the frequency of stress in the workplace<sup>7</sup>**

Country	1997	2005	2015	F-criterion	p
Russia	2.99 <sup>8</sup>	2.82	2.76	9.833	0.000
Czech Republic	3.25	3.24	2.99	13.422	0.000

Source: authors

In both countries, subjective estimates of stress in the workplace increase significantly over time. At the same time in the Czech Republic the level of stress increases faster than in Russia.

To find the causes of changes in subjective interestingness, stress and physical work in the workplace, there was carried out an analysis of the impact of socio-demographic data of workers on these characteristics. There was analyzed the influence of gender, age, number of

<sup>5</sup> There was asked a question "How often applies: to do hard physical work"

<sup>6</sup> 1 – Always, 5 - Never

<sup>7</sup> There was asked a question „How often applies: find the work stressful“

<sup>8</sup> 1 – Always, 5 - Never

working hours. The analysis was performed using the ordinal regression of the logit function (table 4).

**Tab. 4: The results of the assessment of the impact of socio-demographic characteristics on the humanization of labor in the workplace in the Czech Republic and Russia**

Socio-demographic characteristics	Indicators of labor humanization in the workplace					
	Interesting work		Physical work		Stress	
	Czech Republic	Russia	Czech Republic	Russia	Czech Republic	Russia
Gender (1- male, 2-female)	-	-	-0.672***	-1.062***	0.210**	-
Age	-	0.011***	-	0.005*	-	-
Hours of work	-0.011***	-	-0.006**	-0.003*	-0.009***	-0.011***
Pseudo R-Square Nagelkerke	0.012	0.006	0.042	0.090	0.010	0.014

Source: authors

As it can be seen from table 4, gender affects only the subjective assessment of the presence of physical work in the workplace. It is expected for men that the presence of physical work in the workplace is on average higher than for women. The effect of gender is statistically significant only for Russia. Thus, with the growth of age, the interestingness of work decreases and the assessment of the presence of physical work in the workplace increases. The increase in working hours is negatively associated with such indicators of humanization of labor as the assessment of the presence of physical work and stress. But it has a positive effect on the evaluation of the work as interesting.

Next, there was carried out a cluster analysis, which allowed to identify groups of workers according to their workplace estimates (table 5).

It should be noted that the content of clusters for Russia and the Czech Republic is different. But at the same time in both countries there were clusters, which are characterized by the humanization of labor – cluster 3. Both in the Czech Republic and in Russia, workers from this cluster find their work interesting and note the absence or almost absence of stress and hard physical work in their workplaces. The share of workers characterized by humanization of labor was 27% and 28 %, respectively.

**Tab. 5: Results of cluster analysis of the characteristics of humanization of labor in the workplace in the Czech Republic and Russia**

Indicators of labor humanization in the workplace	Czech Republic			
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Apply to the job - my job is interesting	Disagree	Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
How often applies: to do hard physical work	Hardly ever	Hardly ever	Never	Often
How often applies: find the work stressful	Hardly ever	Often	Hardly ever	Sometimes
Number of people in the cluster	382	469	561	644
Hours of work	43.62***	47.99***	45.41***	47.65***
	Russia			
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Apply to the job - my job is interesting	Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree
How often applies: to do hard physical work	Never	Often	Hardly ever	Sometimes
How often applies: find the work stressful	Often	Often	Hardly ever	Sometimes
Number of people in the cluster	619	679	741	577
Hours of work	46.36***	49.18***	42.62***	45.15***

Source: authors

## Conclusion

The study was the basis for the following results.

First, all indicators of humanization of labor showed different state and dynamics for workers from the Czech Republic and Russia. This situation is caused by several circumstances. On the one hand, the applied technologies of personnel management "come" to Russia later. Currently, the management is dominated by American technologies, which were distributed in European countries earlier than in Russia. And this may explain the better performance of the labor humanization in the Czech Republic (for example, evaluation of the interestingness and stress of the work). On the other hand, the precarization of employment in the Czech Republic began earlier than in Russia, what can cause a decrease in humanization rates for Czech workers.

Second, the indicator "to do hard physical work" showed a multidirectional dynamics for employees of the Czech Republic and Russia. In case of Russian workers subjective

assessment of the presence of heavy physical activity was reduced in the period from 1997 to 2015, but for Czech workers it was growing.

Third, both countries have identified a group of workers who are characterized by the humanization of work – about one in four workers belongs to this group.

Fourth, the analysis of the impact of socio-demographic factors on the labor humanization revealed that the increase in the number of working hours has a negative impact on the indicators of humanization of labor. For example, for Russia, workers who are "included" in the group, which is characterized by humanization, work less than other groups of workers.

Thus, the results of the study indicate the presence of both positive and negative trends in the field of humanization of labor.

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