Key factors influencing the motivation of employees

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Abstract

Motivation is very important factor in the process of functioning of companies. A well motivated employee will do his job well, which will translate into greater benefits for company. That is why it is so important to motivate employees in the workplace. Motivation is influenced by various factors and the process of motivating employees is not an easy process and not every manager can properly motivate his or her subordinates. The aim of this article is identifying key factors influencing the motivation of employees who are working in companies in Podlaskie voivodship. In the research process, the research method used was a diagnostic survey with the use of a questionnaire technique. The applied research techniques were CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) and PAPI (Paper & Pen Personal Interview).

Keywords

motivation, motivation system, quality of work, factors

Introduction

The motivation process is important issue for the functioning of company. Motivation is something which encourages and pushes a human to take an action. It is very important element of management system to use abilities and skills of employees in effective way. Without good motivation an employee would not have the will and enthusiasm to do his job properly and also will not see the sense in what he is doing. Well suited motivation system in the company supports efficient usage of human resources. The level of an employee's motivation can be influenced by a variety of factors. The aim of the article is to identify the key factors influencing the employee's motivation in the workplace. In order to identify the factors influencing employee motivation the method which were used was diagnostic survey with the use of a questionnaire technique. Techniques of research were CAWI and PAPI.

1. The concept of motivation in the light of literature analysis

Motivation is a very important element and function in human resources management. The word motivation comes from Latin (moveo, movere) and means "to push", "to set in motion". Motivation as a general concept is contained in the words "desire", "interest", "wish". All these words are some kind of feelings. They release a person's need and willingness to achieve certain specific goals. Motivation occurs in a person when he or she lacks something, he or she is eager for something. It is a state of readiness to take any action that is, for certain reasons, relevant to human beings. Pawłowska defines motivation as a process that induces, directs and sustains certain human behaviors among other alternative forms of behavior in order to achieve certain goals. This process takes place when two conditions are met [Pawłowska, 2019, p. 2]:

- • the probability of the entity achieving the objective must be higher than zero,
- • the achievement of the goal must be seen by man as useful.

Bartkowiak defines motivation as a relatively constant disposition of a person to behave in a way that is oriented towards fulfilling his or her own work, valued and satisfying his or her needs [Bartkowiak, 1995, p. 118]. Griffin proposes a brief definition of motivation, claiming that it is a set of forces that cause people to behave in a certain way [Griffin, 1985, p. 11,31]. Stevenson defined motivation in a very interesting way, believing that motivation is a stimulus, encouragement to act, as well as everything verbally, psychologically or physically induces someone to react with action[Stevenson, 2002, p. 2]. Reykowski considers motivation to be a process of mental regulation in which activities are controlled so that they lead to the achievement of the intended goal [Reykowski, 1975, p. 23]. Motivation as a science in the broad sense includes factors influencing people to behave in a certain way. Three aspects are important: the direction of activity, the effort that a person puts in, and perseverance, the time dimension of effort [Reykowski, 1999, p. 68]. The notion of motivation is mostly associated with something positive, because it mobilizes people and their forces [Sekuła, 2008, p. 10]. Motivation in the workplace is very important. One day a worker can work very solidly and efficiently with maximum effort, and the other day he can only work to a degree that somehow accomplishes a certain task, limiting his effort to a minimum. As mentioned above, motivation is a set of forces that cause a person to behave in a certain way. The results achieved by an employee at a given position depend on three factors: motivation, capabilities, work environment.

Motivation is the desire to do a job. Opportunity is the ability to do the job and the environment is the resources necessary to do the job. Griffin proposed a scheme for a motivational process. This scheme is shown in the Figure 1.

Fig. 1. Scheme for motivational process

Source: R. Griffin, *Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2017, p. 515.

The above process begins with the need. For example, it concerns an employee who gets a low salary and his need is to get a higher salary. In order to achieve the desired goal, i.e. to obtain a higher salary, he starts to look for ways to satisfy this need - for example, he tries to be more efficient at work or to work more. After considering the available solutions, he or she chooses one of the solutions. After pre-selected actions, he assesses the extent to which the need is satisfied. The satisfaction level of the need fulfillment determines the future needs and the choice of how to meet them. In the motivation process there is always a motivator, who is, for example, the supervisor. He implements a set of incentives which objective is to influence the employees. Those incentives are compatible with the objectives and tasks of the organization, which influence the whole motivation process. Figure 2 shows the resources involved in the motivation process.

Fig. 2. Resources involved in the process of motivation

Source: Z. Sekuła, *Motywowanie do pracy. Teorie i instrumenty*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2008, p. 17.

There are many different theories of motivations for work. These theories can be divided into three groups [Sekuła, 2008, p. 17; Szydło, 2017a]:
- theories of needs (e.g. Maslow's theory of needs, McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y);
- theories of process (e.g. Vroom's theory of expectancy, Extended expectations model of Porter and Lawler);
- theories focusing on incentive measures (e.g. Adam's theory of justice, Bremen's theory of resistance).

One of the most popular theories of needs is the theory of needs developed in 1954 by A. Maslow. This classification is presented in the form of a pyramid divided into several areas. At the very bottom of the model are the basic physiological needs of the human being, such as food. At a higher level there are security needs, such as protection against diseases. The third level of the pyramid is the need for belonging, such as the need for acceptance, love, friendship or group membership. The next level is the need for respect and recognition, such as the need for success or respect On the last, highest level of the pyramid there are needs for self-fulfillment, such as the need to nurture one's talents, to develop or to confirm one's self-esteem. Two groups of needs at the very top of the pyramid (the need for self-fulfillment and recognition) are referred to as the needs of individual development. The three lower groups of needs (physiological, security and belonging needs) are the needs of the deficiency. The needs of the lowest order – elementary – are more strongly felt by people than those of the higher order, due to their original nature. Satisfying higher-order needs is essential in terms of quality of life, mainly in terms of personal development [Rosa and Perenc, 2011, p. 48]. The pyramid of needs according to A. Maslow is presented in Figure 3.
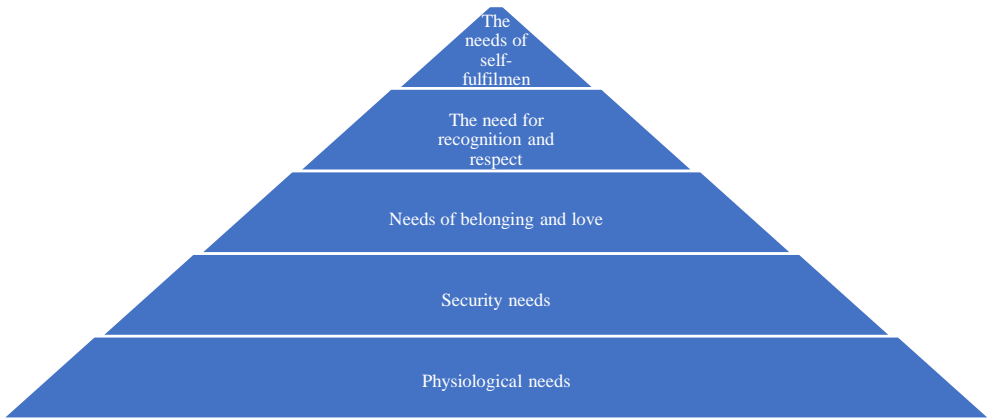
Fig. 3. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Source: A. Falkowski, T. Tyszka, *Psychologia zachowań konsumenckich*, GWP, Gdańsk 2003, p. 61.

Another theory of needs was presented by McClelland. That theory focuses on research into higher-order needs, which may include needs relating to [Sekuła, 2008, p. 28]: achievements, affiliation, power.

The needs for achievement relate to recognition and praise. They refer to people for whom it is important to publicize professional achievements concerning the concepts and results used. For such people, work is more important than financial rewards. People who have a need for achievement usually set themselves ambitious goals that they are able to achieve. The needs of affiliation concern the desire and aspiration for friendship or close interpersonal contacts [Olszewska, 2004, pp. 218-219]. The company's employees are motivated by the possibility to work in a team, with other people. The third type of need is the need for power. It is related to influencing employees, directing other people's behavior. Those in need of power are more concerned about prestige and impact on others than performance.

Incentives are necessary to motivate. They can be also called "motivators". At the beginning it is worth to define what the stimulus is. In the simplest words this is the factor causing the reaction of the body or the circumstance, the event, the factor encouraging to act [https://sjp.pwn.pl, 08.02.2020]. The stimulus contributes to a change in the internal or external environment of a human being, causing a specific reaction [*Leksykon* ..., 2001]. Incentives may be internal and external [Adamik and Nowicki, 2012, pp. 361-362]. External incentives are factors that are created by the employer. Such incentives may include, for example, pay rises or promotions. On the other hand, internal stimuli are those which the employee generates himself, such

stimuli may be, for example, job satisfaction or development or independence. In sociology of work, the following measures of motivation have been identified [Januszek and Sikora, 2000, pp. 172-173]:

- economic – financial and tangible;
- production – material environment and work organization;
- social and personal – work climate, interpersonal relations, independence of work, intangible awards.

Sekuła divided the stimuli into positive and negative [Sekuła, 2008, p. 185]. Positive incentives are designed to meet the specific needs of employees and the organisation must provide specific conditions for putting them into practice. These incentives should be aimed only at counteracting the most unfavourable situations and events for the organisation. Stevenson distinguished the following motivators for work: respect, money, order, challenge, creativity, mobility, learning and promotion opportunities, friendly atmosphere, pension schemes, etc [Stevenson, 2002, pp. 9-10; Szydło, 2018]. Negative incentives should be used when the safety and well-being of employees and the entire organisation is at stake and are based on negative motivation to create a sense of risk in employees.

Employees can be influenced by both specialized and synthetic incentives [Adamik and Nowicki, 2012, pp. 363-364]. Synthetic incentive is compensation of employees in the form of a single component of remuneration (for example basic salary), and no other variable components such as bonuses are applied. A specialized stimulus is used to motivate the employee by introducing an additional factor (one or more) into the basic salary. Such a factor may be, for example, a bonus for 100% attendance.

The motivation system also applies prizes and penalties for work. That part of system of motivation has been known in the world since ancient Egypt, when people were motivated by whips (i.e. one can say in a rather brutal and negative way). Over the course of time, however, this system has changed in favour of prizes, although penalties still found their way and are applied nowadays, but their form has changed. The application of penalties has a worse effect than the application of awards. This is due to the fact that the punished employee has a sense of anger, discouragement or doubt about what he or she is doing. All this causes that the employee is no longer so motivated to work, it leads to a decrease in the effectiveness of his work. The use of prizes has a better effect. Prizes can vary in form, financial or in kind, but praise for good work can also be a reward. After receiving the award, the employee may feel better motivated to work, his or her productivity may increase. A motivated and well-working person is a great value for the whole organization. Nowadays, organizations are asking themselves what kind of system of rewards and penalties would

be appropriate and the most effective; they are not asking themselves whether it is more effective to reward or punish [Skarżyńska, 1999]. The organisation endeavors to develop its own incentive system that is appropriate to its functioning and that ensures that employees work efficiently. Prizes and penalties can be divided into tangible and intangible ones:

- a material reward may be, for example, an increase or a bonus, while a material penalty may be a salary reduction;
- an intangible reward may be, for example, oral praise, assignment of more interesting and demanding tasks, and an intangible punishment may be reprimand or reprimand.

A very important element that affects the motivation of employees is the remuneration system. Griffin states that reward systems are formal and informal mechanisms by which employee performance is defined, rewarded and evaluated [Griffin, 1985, p. 533]. Armstrong argues that the compensation system consists of processes, ways and practices for remuneration in an organization according to its contribution, skills, competencies and market value [Armstrong, 2011, p. 497]. It can be assumed that the remuneration system is a set of solutions necessary to motivate employees in the company. Each employee expects a remuneration adequate to the tasks performed by him/her, and the employer should see the motivational specificity of the remuneration function. There is no single universal pay system and each company should develop its own pay system in line with the organisation's strategy.

The main element of an employee's remuneration is salary. Wage is the employee's remuneration in the form of cash resulting from the employment contract, it is the cash form of remuneration [Listwan, 2002, p. 127; Szydło, 2017b]. Pay should be fair and decent. According to the definition of the European Social Charter, a decent wage is a wage, which provides the worker and his family with a decent standard of living, i.e. sufficient for their subsistence. According to Pawlak and Smoleń, fair pay pays equal pay for equal work, if two employees do the same work and one of them receives a lower pay, it is surely unfair payment of at least one of them [Pawlak and Smoleń, 2012, p. 9].

2. Research methods

The main objective of the study was to identify the key factors influencing the motivation of employees in the company. The research method used in the research process was a diagnostic survey with implementation of a questionnaire technique. The following research techniques were used to obtain data:

- survey – CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) with the use of we-bankieta.pl portal;
- PAPI (Paper & Pen Personal Interview).

A research tool was developed, which was a questionnaire consisting of the main part containing 18 questions and a metric enabling the characteristics of respondents. The questionnaire form was constructed in such a way that it would take about 10 minutes to complete and would allow to obtain as much information as possible on the role of the incentive system and the quality of work based on the example of the employees of Podlaskie voivodeship.

The research was conducted between 4th April and June 2019 among inhabitants of Podlaskie voivodeship aged 18-65, both men and women, employed in enterprises of various sizes. The survey yielded 111 completed survey questionnaires.

3. Research results

The survey was conducted with the participation of 79 women and 32 men. The largest group of respondents were people aged 25-39, while the smallest group were people aged 55 and over. The age structure of respondents is presented in Figure 4.
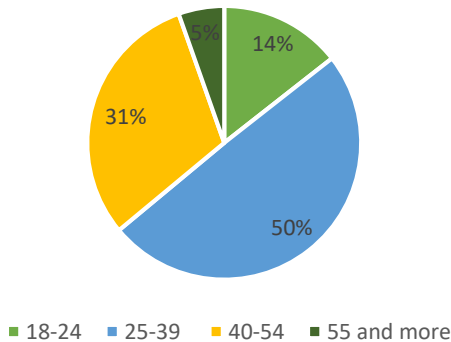

Fig. 4. Age structure of respondents

Source: own calculations based on questionnaire surveys.

The vast majority of respondents have higher education. Due to the fact that persons over 18 years of age were covered by the survey, none of the respondents had a primary or lower secondary education (Figure 5).
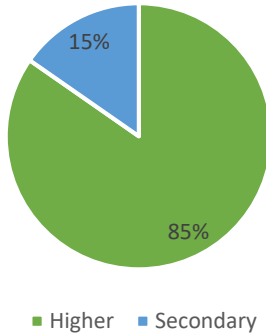
Fig. 5. Education of respondents
Source: own calculations based on questionnaire surveys.

Taking into account the place of work of respondents, most of the respondents worked in the city of more than 250,000 inhabitants. Slightly fewer people worked in the city with less than 20,000 inhabitants. A detailed structure of respondents in terms of place of residence is presented in Figure 6.
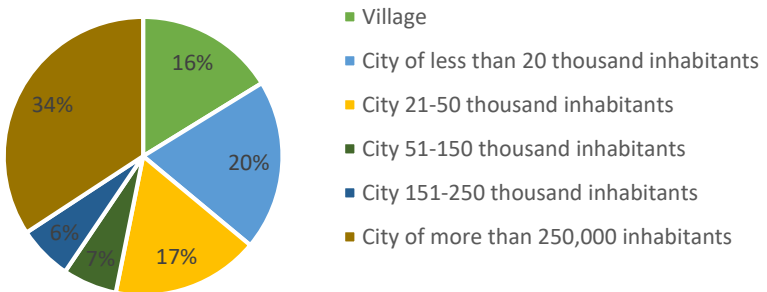

Fig. 6. Residence of respondents
Source: own calculations based on questionnaire surveys.

The largest group of respondents are people with average monthly net income of 2001-3000 PLN. The smallest group were people with income at the level of PLN 7001-10,000 and over PLN 10,000. Detailed data on the average monthly net income of respondents are presented in Figure 7.
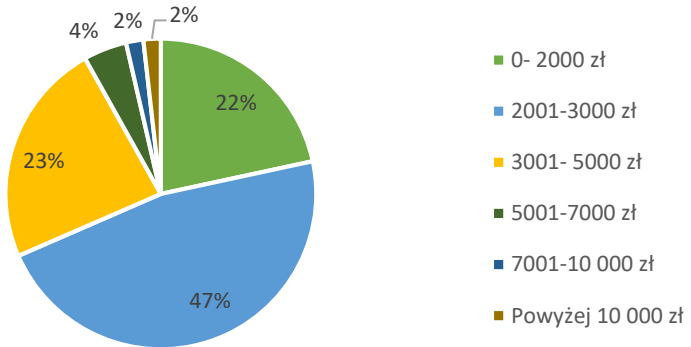
Fig. 7. Average monthly net income of the respondent
Source: own calculations based on questionnaire surveys.

The majority of respondents work in large enterprises employing over 250 people (35%). Slightly fewer people are employed in medium-sized enterprises (30%) and the least respondents work in microenterprises (Figure 8).
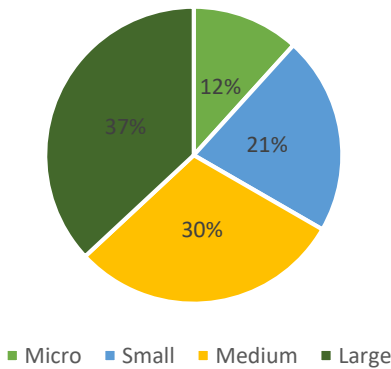

Fig. 8. Size of companies in which respondents are working
Source: own calculations based on questionnaire surveys.

Respondents were asked about the ways of financial motivation applied in the companies they work for. Most respondents said that these are monthly bonuses (32% of respondents). In a large number of cases, there were no ways of financial motivation other than basic pay. 13% of respondents answered that in their work-

place there are awards for employees of months, quarters and years. Quarterly bonuses were also a very frequent answer in survey. Respondents also mentioned other ways of financial motivation (6%), such as Christmas bonuses, director's award or commissions. Detailed data on the methods of financial motivation used in the respondents' enterprises are presented in Figure 9.
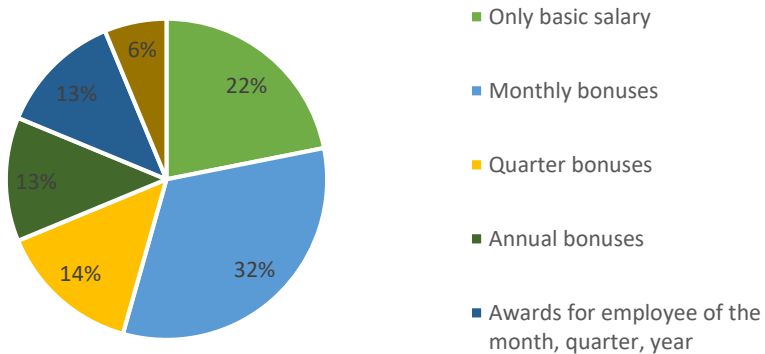

Fig. 9. Ways of financial motivation in companies where respondents work

Source: own calculations based on questionnaire surveys.

Various forms of non-financial motivation are also used in enterprises. The largest number of respondents as a way of non-financial motivation regarded holiday packages (16%), sports passes (12%), integration trips (10%) or business equipment such as mobile phones (10%) or laptops (10%). Respondents often pointed to co-financing of various courses or study costs (6%), additional insurance (5%) or reimbursement of travel costs (7%). The lowest number of respondents indicated a company car (4%) and prizes (2%). Figure 10 presents detailed data on the methods of non-financial motivation in the respondents' companies.
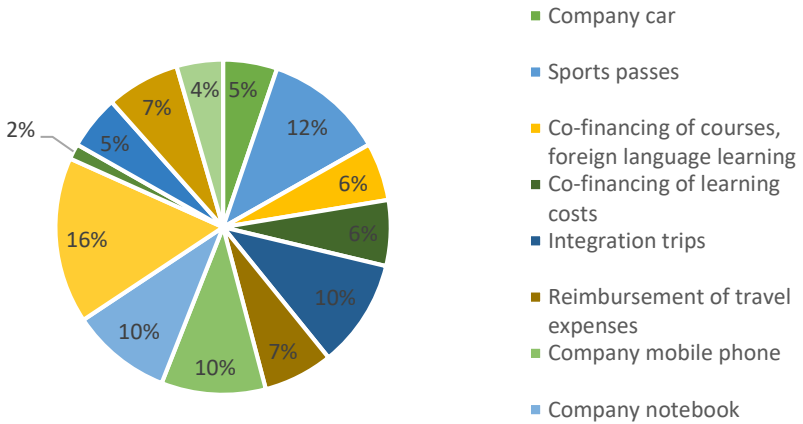
Fig. 10. Non-financial ways of motivation in employees' companies

Source: own calculations based on questionnaire surveys.

The majority of respondents tend to agree with the statement on job security in the company (43%). Nearly 11% of respondents declared that they are definitely not sure of employment in their company.

The vast majority of respondents are satisfied with their current position (almost 37% tend to agree, 28% strongly agree). Less than 7% of employees are not satisfied with their current position.

Nearly 25% of the respondents definitely claim that their remuneration is not adequate to the job they are doing. Nearly 20% of the employees declared that they rather agree with the statement that their remuneration is adequate for their work. 13% of respondents strongly agree with this statement.

Almost half of the respondents (49.55%) rather agree with the statement that their superiors treat and respect them well. Only 7% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement, and 16% have no opinion.

The majority of respondents stated that their work is interesting for them (rather agree – 48.65% of respondents, 28.83% definitely agree).

Less than 19% of respondents strongly disagree with the statement that they have the opportunity to develop their skills and improve their qualifications. 21% said "it is difficult to say" and almost 31% rather agree with this statement.

The majority of respondents say that their remuneration is not satisfactory for them (26% strongly disagree, 31% – rather disagree). 12% have no opinion and 9% are definitely satisfied with their salary.

The majority of respondents say that co-workers are friendly and friendly towards them (37% – rather agree, 36% strongly agree). Less than 15% do not agree with this statement.

More than 40% of respondents tend to agree with the statement that their company has a good relationship between superiors and employees (17% strongly agree with this statement). More than 20% of respondents said "hard to say".

The vast majority of respondents are satisfied with the atmosphere at work (46% of respondents agree with this statement, while almost 22% agree with it). 9% do not agree with this statement, and 17% have no opinion.

More than 35% of respondents tend to agree with the statement that they are motivated to work. 17% said they rather disagreed and almost 22% said "hard to say".
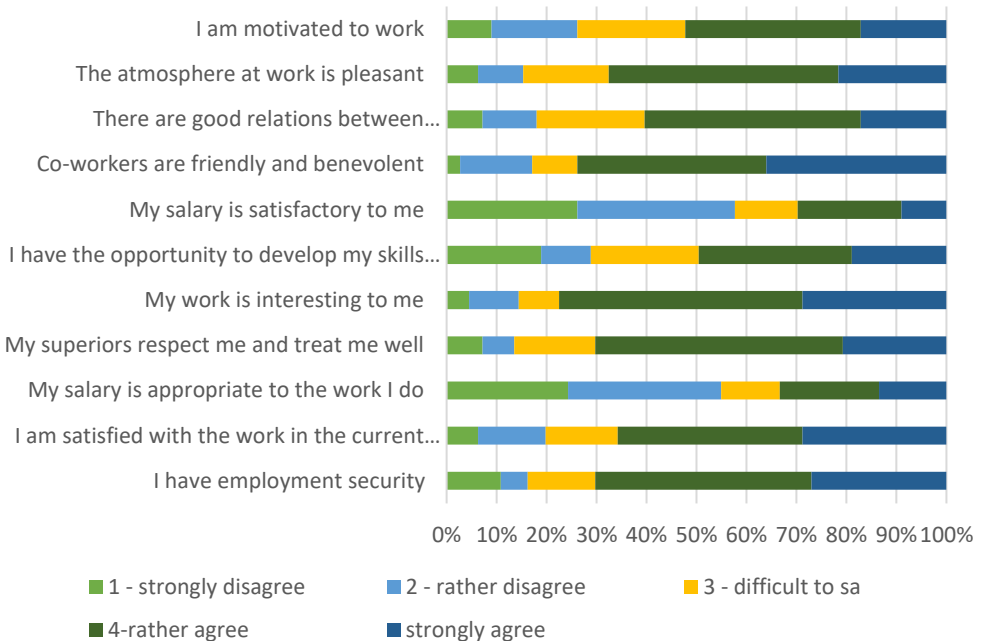

Fig. 11. Opinions of respondents about their workplace

Source: own calculations based on questionnaire surveys.

The bonus has a strong impact on the motivation of over 40% of respondents and a very strong impact on the motivation of 33% of employees participating in the

survey. 9% of respondents claimed that the bonus had a very small impact on their motivation at work.

Nearly 46% of respondents declared that the amount of remuneration has a very large impact on their motivation at work. 34% said that it had a big influence and less than 4% stated that it had a very small influence.

The atmosphere at work is very important, almost half of the respondents declared that it has a very large impact on their motivation. 34% said that it had a high impact and less than 13% said it had a medium impact. Less than 3% said that the workplace atmosphere had very little influence on their motivation.

46% of respondents said that fair treatment in the workplace had a very strong impact on motivation. Nearly 38% said that this element had a high impact on motivation and almost 11% said that fair treatment has a medium impact.

For less than 46% of respondents, improving their qualifications has a big impact, and for 28% – a very big impact. 6% considered that this element had little influence on motivation.

A very large part – 42% of respondents – believed that the sense of self-fulfillment and development have big impact on motivation, and almost 37% – that it has a big impact.

28% of the surveyed employees stated that the risk of losing one's job has an average impact on their motivation, and 18% that it has a very small impact. On the other hand, 16% believed that these elements have a very strong impact on motivation.

Nearly 40% of respondents said that the possibility of promotion at work has a big impact on their motivation, and 22% said that it has a medium impact. Nearly 12% declared that this element has very little influence.

Only over 7% of respondents declared that the sense of achievement has a very small and small impact on motivation. Over 40% assessed that this element has a big impact on their motivation at work, and 23% – that it has a very big impact.

Nearly half of the respondents (46%) said that appreciation of involvement by superiors has a strong impact on motivation, and 32% said that it has a very strong impact. Over 7% declared that this element has a very small impact on their motivation.

More than 35% of respondents said that the prestigious position name had a medium impact on their motivation. For 25% of respondents this element has a big influence, and for over 11% – a very small one. 8% of respondents declared that this element has a very strong influence on motivation.

Flexible working time is an important element for many employees. Over 33% of respondents stated that this element had a big impact on motivation, and for 20%

of respondents – a very big impact. For 11% of respondents, flexible working time has a very small impact on their motivation.

For over 40% of respondents, participation in decision-making has a big influence on motivation, 34% of employees declared that this element has an average impact, and for less than 5% of respondents – this element has a very small impact.

Appropriate standard of the workplace for over half of the respondents (51.35%) has a big impact on the motivation to work, less than 4% of the respondents answered that this element has a very small impact, and over 20% – that it has a medium impact.

Stress may be a key element when it comes to quality and motivation to work. 37% of respondents answered that this element has a very high impact on their motivation, less than 20% – an average impact, and for 5% of respondents – a very low impact.
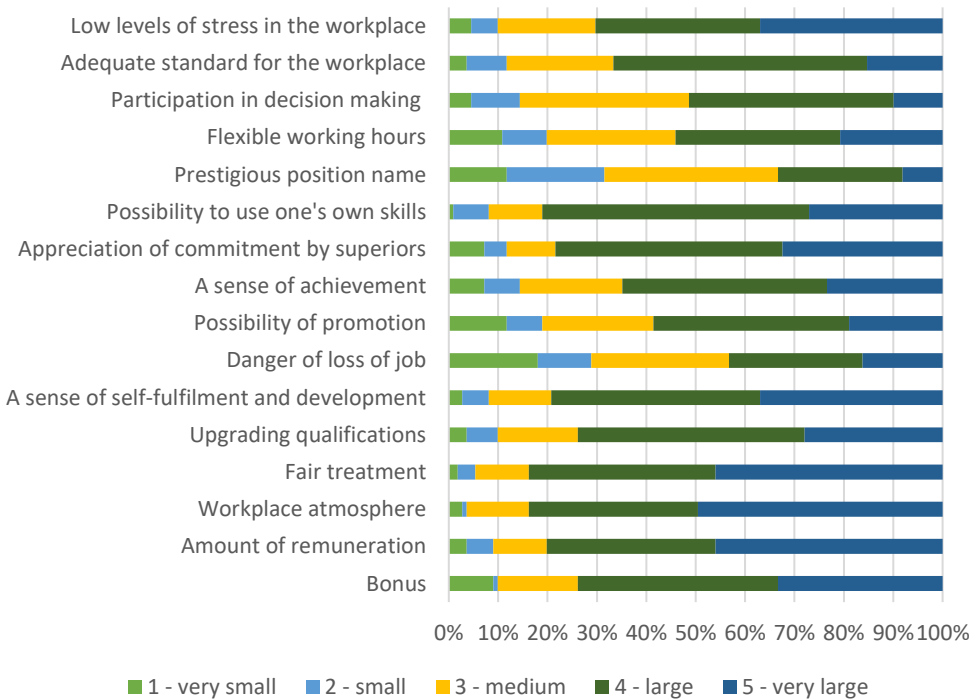

Fig. 12. Determinants of motivation to work

Source: own calculations based on questionnaire surveys.

The majority of respondents declared that low amount of remuneration largely or very largely demotivates them to work (30%). 24% of respondents replied that this element demotivates them to work to an average degree, and less than 7% of respondents replied that this element demotivates them to work to a very small degree. Lack of bonuses is also very serious obstacles of motivation to work – 33% of respondents answered that this element demotivates them to a very large extent, and 35% – that to a large extent. 18% of respondents indicated that the lack of bonuses has an average impact on their demotivation.

Next obstacle is lack of interest of superiors – 33% of respondents declared that this factor has a large impact on their demotivation at work, for almost 21% of respondents this element has a very large impact. For less than 12% of respondents this factor has a small impact on their demotivation to work.

Bad relations with superiors can be a very disturbing factor at work. Over 40% of the respondents answered that bad relationships with superiors to a very large extent demotivate them to work. For 18% of respondents this factor is medium demotivating, and for less than 4% – very small.

For almost 37% of respondents, bad relations with co-workers are a demotivating factor to a very large extent. 33% indicated that this factor had a large impact on their demotivation at work. To a medium extent, this element is demotivated to work by 9% of respondents, and to a small extent – by 9%.

Unpleasant atmosphere at work to a very large extent demotivates to work over 40% of respondents. For 35% of respondents this factor is highly demotivating. Over 7% perceive this element as demotivating to a medium degree, and 9% perceive it as demotivating to a small degree.

Lack of efficient work organisation to a very large extent demotivates 35% of respondents. To a large extent, this element demotivates almost 38% of respondents to work, and to an average extent - almost 19%.

Monotony at work largely demotivates 36% of respondents. For 15% of respondents this factor is very demotivating to a very large extent, the average degree of this element demotivates 32% of respondents to work.

Inflexible working hours to an average degree demotivate almost 37% of respondents, and to a large extent – 25%. For 18% of respondents this element is demotivating to a small extent.

Tasks that that are not demanding demotivate 42% of respondents to a medium degree. For 21% of respondents this element is highly demotivating.

Demotivating tasks to a medium degree discourage 42% of respondents to work. This factor largely demotivates over 21% of respondents, and to a small extent –

15%. 14% of respondents said that this element demotivated them to a very small extent.

The lack of an independent opportunity to do so to a medium degree demotivates almost 40% of respondents. For 27% of respondents this factor demotivates to a large extent, and to a small extent – 17% of respondents.

Lack of promotion and development prospects to an average degree demotivates to work over 33% of respondents, to a large extent – 32%. For 25% of respondents this factor is very demotivating to a very large extent. Over 5% of respondents declared that the lack of perspectives and development demotivates them to a small extent.
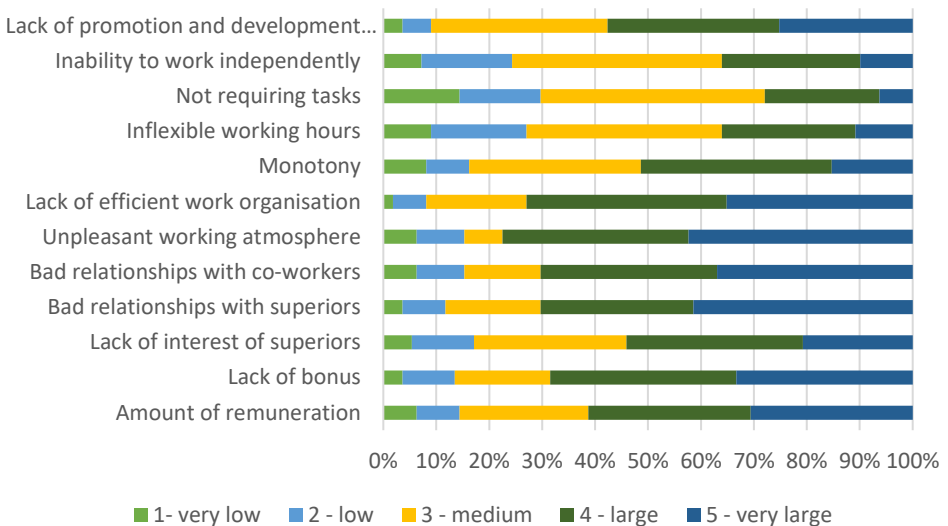

Fig. 13. Obstacles of work +motivation
Source: own calculations based on questionnaire surveys.

Conclusions

The main aim of the work was to identify the key factors influencing the motivation of employees and the relationship between the motivation system and the quality of work in companies operating in Podlaskie voivodeship.

Following research finding, there can determined some motivators (factors), which in the opinion of respondents have the strongest influence on their work. They are bonuses, the level of salary, atmosphere in the workplace, fair treatment, the

possibility of improving their qualifications, sense of self-fulfillment and development, opportunities for promotion, sense of achievement, appreciation of commitment by superiors, the possibility of using one's own skills, flexible working time, appropriate standard of work position and low stress level in the workplace.

There are also elements and behaviors in the work that can significantly demotivate the employee. Such factors and behaviors included bad relations with superiors, lack of interest of superiors, lack of bonuses, too low level of remuneration, bad relations with co-workers, unpleasant atmosphere at work, lack of efficient work organisation, monotony and lack of perspectives of promotion and development.

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Kluczowe czynniki wpływające na motywację pracowników

Streszczenie

Motywacja jest bardzo ważnym czynnikiem w procesie funkcjonowania firm. Dobrze zmotywowany pracownik będzie dobrze wykonywał swoją pracę, co przełoży się na większe korzyści dla firmy. Dlatego tak ważne jest, aby motywować pracowników w miejscu pracy. Na motywację wpływają różne czynniki, a proces motywowania pracowników nie jest procesem łatwym i nie każdy menedżer potrafi właściwie zmotywować swoich podwładnych. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest identyfikacja kluczowych czynników wpływających na motywację pracowników, którzy pracują w przedsiębiorstwach na terenie województwa podlaskiego. W procesie badawczym wykorzystano metodę badawczą polegającą na badaniu diagnostycznym z wykorzystaniem techniki kwestionariuszowej. Zastosowanymi technikami badawczymi były CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) oraz PAPI (Paper & Pen Personal Interview).

Słowa kluczowe

motywacja, system motywacyjny, jakość pracy, czynniki