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Employee Motivation at the Workplace: Case Study of Slovenian Company

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Abstract

Employee motivation at the workplace is one of the main determinants of the workers' productivity, as well as enticing organizational culture, which in turns affects the organizational performance. The usual approach to motivation is based on the concept of the carrot and the stick, which uses the reward and the punishment as the main tools for shaping the behaviour of employees. On the other hand, self-determination theory is based on the assumption that the employees are motivated when they believe that they are the agents of their own future. This paper investigates employee motivation at the workplace, using the case study of one Slovenian company. The survey covers a wide range of employees divided by gender, age, education and length of employment. The goal is to explore the level of motivation of the employees and discuss it within the context of self-determination theory and human resource development using the survey of employees in a Slovenian company.

Keywords: self-determination theory, human resource development, reinforcement, work intention, work motivation scale

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Introduction

The work environment is a very important element for any employee. Work environment differs greatly from company to company. In a particular work environment, there may be more women compared to men; there may be differences in age, education, working period or years of experience, different views on work, a different understanding of work environment, job security, promotion opportunities, reward opportunities and more (Ramadanty & Martinus, 2016). In addition, differences among employees according to their individual differences are substantial and in interaction with the environment, they strongly affect the employees' motivation in the workplace (Ronen & Mikulincer, 2014). Employee motivation is relevant since every employee has the right to her/his view, and this is why the employee view of motivation differs from one employee to another. One person places working conditions first, to another one working conditions are not so important and for some people, they are not important at all. The same applies also to other conditions, namely job security, attitude towards employees, challenges in the workplace, perhaps the opportunities for promotions or rewards. However, most employees value proper payment very highly. Any assumption (perception) is essential about motivation in a certain environment.

Reinforcement theory presumes that the human behaviour can be shaped by the concept of carrot-and-stick approach (Landry et al., 2016; Stone et al., 2009). This approach presumes that the companies would use various incentives (Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Premack, 1965; Ryan & Deci, 2017). However, various research indicated that these programmes may have different impact to the employees, and may sometimes yield a minor effect. However, these programmes are still implemented (Landry et al., 2016).

Self-determination theory (SDT) stress the motivation based on the inner resources that drive the behaviour of employees (Deci et al., 1991; Deci & Ryan, 1980, 2000). Its main presumption is that employees are motivated to conduct the work in case they have the perception that they affect their own future (Zigarmi & Nimon, 2011). Numerous researches has emerged in that direction (Gagne & Deci, 2005; Landry et al., 2016; Shucke et al., 2015; Stone et al., 2009).

The goal of this paper is to investigate the drivers of the motivation of the employees of one Slovenian company. For that purpose, the survey research has been conducted on the sample of employees of various age and gender groups.

Methodology

The goal of this paper is to investigate the motivation of employees of one Slovenian company. The research was carried out on a sample of 50 employees in a Slovenian company. The company in which the research was conducted is focused on the distribution of computer equipment.

The research was conducted in November 2018 in a Slovenian company, which is solely in Slovene ownership. The survey used various theoretical concepts and research to design the instrument for measuring the employee perception of motivation at the workplace. To determine employee perception of motivation at the workplace, the employees indicated their agreement to the listed statements on a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 = completely agree and 1 = strongly disagree.

Table 1 shows that 23 (46%) of men and 27 (54%) of women participated in the survey. The majority of respondents are aged between 36 and 50, which is 33 (66%) of all respondents.

Table 1

Gender and age of respondents

Gender	# of respondents	Age	# of respondents
Man	23	19-25	6
Woman	27	26-35	7
		36-50	33
		Over 51	4

Source: Authors work

Table 2 shows that most respondents have secondary and tertiary education, which represents 28% of all respondents. At the time of completing the survey, 70% of all respondents have more than higher education. Most respondents have been employed between 15 and 28 years, which represents 72% of all respondents.

Table 2

Education and length of employment

Education level	# of respondents	Length of employment	# of respondents
Secondary	14	Up to 7 years	5
College education	5	8-14 years	8
Bachelor	14	15-22 years	19
Master's degree	13	23-28 years	17
Master of science / PhD	4	Over 29 years	1

Source: Authors work

Results

This part of the paper will present the various aspects of general satisfaction with the job, and the sources of motivation and satisfaction at the workplace.

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents are satisfied with the work done, as 90% respondents answered affirmatively. In addition, the majority of respondents (82%) are happy to come to work, while 70% of respondents are also satisfied with the payment system and motivation in the workplace, which encourages them to achieve their goals. More than half (54%) of respondents believe that they are appropriately rewarded for their work and the majority of respondents (80%) think that they are ready to take greater responsibility for making a bigger payment. According to the respondents, the company has a good reputation in the industry, since this is important for 74% of all respondents. More than half (58%) of all respondents agree with the statement that information about the company is of sufficient importance when deciding to take or change the job, which can be associated with the previous title on the reputation which respondents confirm as very important. Again, more than half (56%) of respondents are satisfied with the way they are motivated. Among them, 50% of them think that they are rewarded appropriately for their work and following their expectations and agree with the statement about the impact of their performance on the level of salary, as 62% answered affirmatively to the question.

Most respondents gave a negative response to the question: "How do you perceive motivation in your company?" Generally, they think that perception is not reflected or is very poorly represented. They agree that without motivation, praise and reward the job is not done with gratification; they do not want new tasks and

responsibilities because they believe that their work is not always well appreciated and respected.

One of the main motives for changing the job is payment. Where the respondents had to present three possible reasons for changing the job, the majority stated the payment which was followed by poor relations with superiors or colleagues, the possibility of taking leave and the company location which can mostly be associated with demographic data of respondents; namely, 54% women aged between 26 and 50 answered the survey. By founding a family, people start to appreciate the shorter working time and taking leave, as well as a more appropriate payment and job satisfaction, which are all vital for survival and better general well-being.

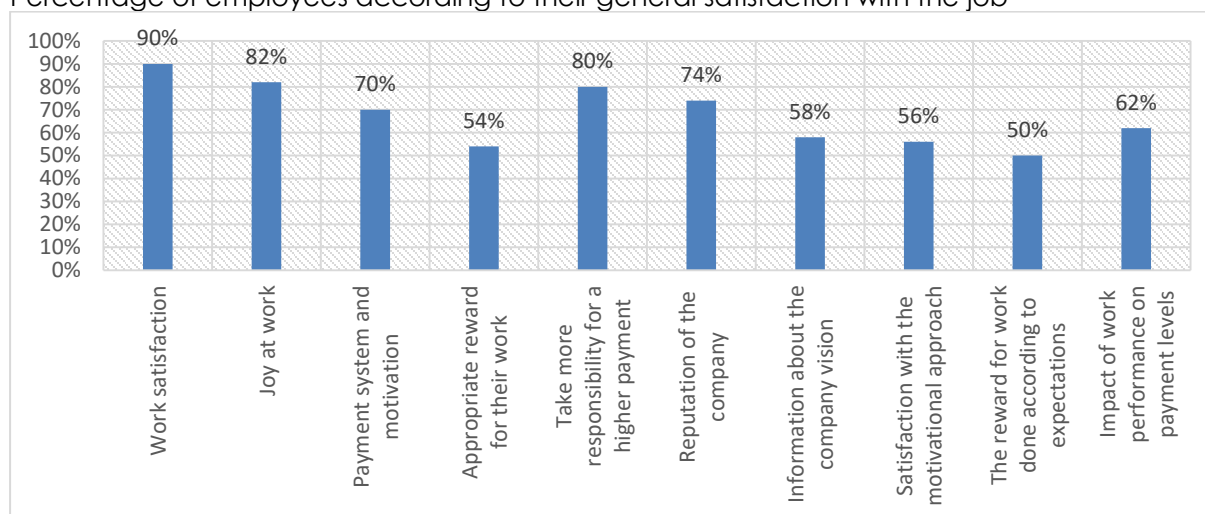
We asked the respondents about ways to motivate employees insofar as they find themselves in the role of employer. Among the most common answers were the same answers that they already gave to the question of their motivation at work. They declared that as employers they would offer additional training to their employees, stimulating payments in the form of financial assets or promotional products of the company, praise, teamwork and incentives. Figure 1 presents the data from the Table 3.

Table 3
General satisfaction with the job

Criteria	% of respondents
Work satisfaction	90%
Joy at work	82%
Payment system and motivation	70%
Appropriate reward for their work	54%
Take more responsibility for a higher payment	80%
Reputation of the company	74%
Information about the company vision	58%
Satisfaction with the motivational approach	56%
The reward for work done according to expectations	50%
Impact of work performance on payment levels	62%

Source: Authors work

Figure 1
Percentage of employees according to their general satisfaction with the job



Source: Authors work

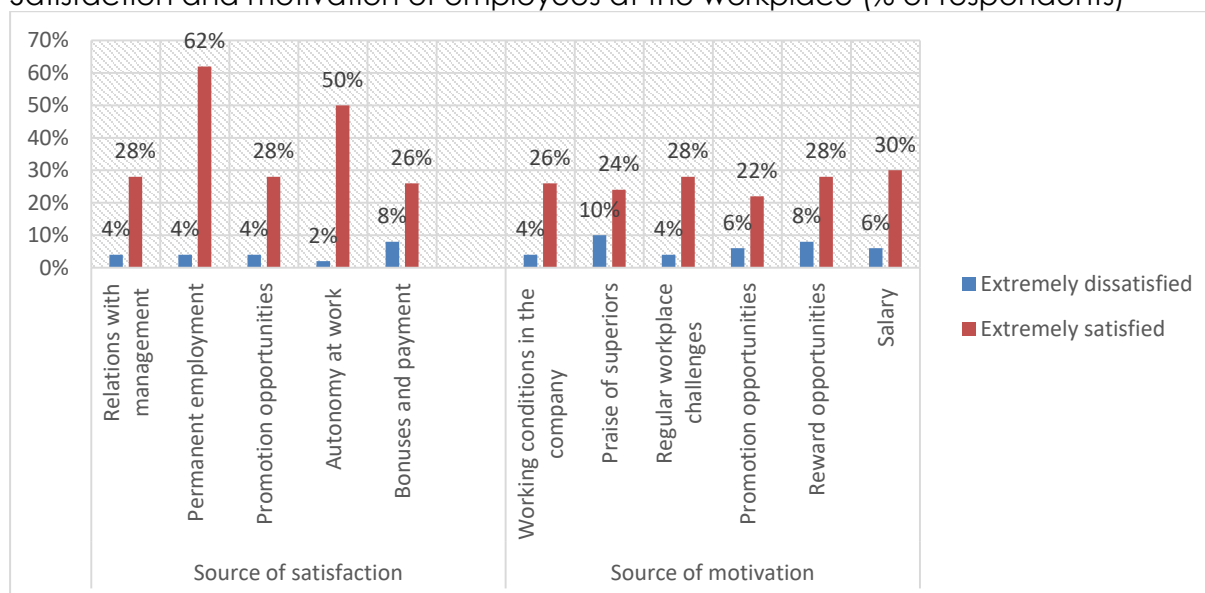
Table 4 shows that the respondents expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with rewards and payments, which represents 8% of all responses, followed by relations with management, permanent employment and promotion opportunities. More than half (62%) respondents are extremely satisfied with regular employment for an indefinite period, which represents their safety and sufficient motivation for performing their work. Our respondents in the workplace are most motivated with salary (30%) the reward option (28%), and working conditions (26%). Figure 2 presents the data from the Table 4.

Table 4
Sources of satisfaction and motivation of employees at the workplace (% of respondents)

Source of satisfaction		
Statement	Extremely dissatisfied	Extremely satisfied
Relations with management	4%	28%
Permanent employment	4%	62%
Promotion opportunities	4%	28%
Autonomy at work	2%	50%
Bonuses and payment	8%	26%
Source of motivation		
Statement	Not motivated at all	Highly motivated
Working conditions in the company	4%	26%
Praise of superiors	10%	24%
Regular workplace challenges	4%	28%
Promotion opportunities	6%	22%
Reward opportunities	8%	28%
Salary	6%	30%

Source: Authors work

Figure 2
Satisfaction and motivation of employees at the workplace (% of respondents)



Source: Authors work

Conclusion

This work provides conclusions in the following directions.

The results of the survey indicate that an employee develops affiliation to a particular work organization. Affiliation can be present in different areas of life. We can feel affiliated with specific brands of cars or a specific brand of food products, holiday destinations and, finally yet importantly, to the company that they are working for. Affiliation to the company grows over the years with a relationship between management or superiors and an employee. Affiliation is a product of two-way cooperation between the employee and the employer. If certain parameters are fulfilled, namely working conditions, adequate motivation, good communication, promotion opportunities, appropriate remuneration, proper payment, good relationships, and then gradually an employee becomes affiliated to the company (Bellemare et al., 2010). Affiliation is partially observed also, when an employee "works" as if he/she owns the company. In that case, the job is appreciated as something more than just a pay check and time until we go home.

Additionally, the work intentions have a significant impact on the results of the work for both, the individual and the company as a whole (Amabile, 1993). We can act in a positive spirit with great enthusiasm or in total opposition being a burden to the environment in which we operate and thus our work intentions are contrary to the positive ones (Ganta, 2014).

Future research directions could extend the current approach to individual characteristics, such as persistence. Persistence is a fine virtue, highly recognized in the business world (Scalese, 2001). Anyone starting his/her first job probably finds out that not everything is as they expected and there is still a long way for him/her to "get placed" in the workplace that he/she had wanted all his/her life and which he/she had dreamed of as a child (Tutu & Constantin, 2012). Taken into account in the corporate environment, the persistence is a kind of a business operation because not everything can be done overnight or at the very moment when someone demands it (Maslyn et al., 1996). We can talk about persistence in the workplace only if all conditions are met, for example, job security, correct relationships with colleagues and company management, promotion opportunities, adequate rewards in the form of praise or financial rewards, education opportunities and more. Finally, education is also a kind of persistence, which comes in helpful later in life.

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