

FLEXIBILITY AND VARIABILITY OF MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS IN SLOVAKIA AND POLAND

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Abstract: Paper deals with the motivation and motivating the individuals. It focuses on the investigation of flexibility which is the basis of effective influencing motivation and results in exploring various aspects of managing and motivating people, i.e. gender, age, education, and work experience. The methodological part is devoted to the presenting the most important results of questioning conducted in Polish and Slovak organisations that examined the motivation and process of managing the individuals' motivation. The opinions of 1,946 Slovak and 1,736 Polish respondents show the motivation differs significantly according to the most studied aspects. Results confirm the need to pay attention to the sufficiently flexible and differentiated way of managing and motivating employees and managers.

Key words: flexibility, motivation, motivating, sociological survey, age, education, gender

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Introduction

Reciprocal social interaction is a prerequisite for social behaviour, which is typical for its high flexibility and/or variability. Variability of behaviour is apparently given to a man as a biological species (Nový et al., 2006). Variability of needs of people and their motivational structures is very broad, but motivational resources are also varied and various (Bedrnová et al., 2004). Variability as a certain volatility is therefore one of the fundamental characteristics of human behaviour and management systems. When we want behaviour to be effectively managed, it must be flexible. In this sense, variability and/or flexibility are very often perceived as both the basic managerial approach and motivational tools in the area of providing desirable working comfort of employees. On the basis of the above, purpose of the paper is to examine motivation from the viewpoint of flexibility and variability. These ones are considered as the keys features of current process of motivating oneself (self-motivation) as well as motivating the other individuals. A premise for our searching endeavour is an assumption the motivation is flexible and dynamic. It develops in time due to many circumstances, events and factors.

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Therefore, on the basis of specified hypotheses, results of the questionnaire survey that we made in Slovakia and Poland, we devote attention to searching differences in the theme of motivation and influencing it. Motivation differences will be searched according to an age, qualification, length of practice, and sex of motivated individuals. Flowing from results of this searching, our further experience and other authors' inspirations, we point out relatively adverse situation in the field of motivating individuals.

Flexibility and Variability in Relation to Motivating Individuals

Connection between flexibility or variability and managing individuals' motivation seems important. E.g. Nakonečný points out the relation between motivation and action: motivation determines the aim of action, whereas the situation in which it takes place determines the method of action, which means that the same aim can be achieved in various situations with various methods of action, what is the function of cognitive analysis of situation. Wide structural links between motivation, cognition and behaviour (behavioural patterns) are formed which jointly predestine the complex of motivated instrumental behaviour (Nakonečný, 2005).

Motivational flexibility can be perceived as a form of continuous adaptation of personality, classification and restructuring of its motives and choice of forms of behaviour adequate in that moment, showing high probability of acceptance by one's self (i.e. the individual) and by others (colleagues, superiors etc.). The higher the rate of manageable flexibility (vs. so-called over-motivation or inconsistency in motivated behaviour), the higher chance to succeed in intended action and to achieve required appreciation and satisfaction for one's work the individual has.

There are more motivating forces, more individual themes at once acting at any given moment on the side of the subject (Bedrnová et al., 2004). It is interesting that the rate of achieve of satisfaction and acceptance for motivated behaviour can be increased by the individual to a certain level also during the course of the particular situation. For instance, Hewstone and Stroebe (2006) mention the existence of so-called situational correction which as if enabled to react very promptly to changed parameters of considered situation and acting powers by an immediate choice of corrected method of better reaction to specific conditions.

Issues of the necessary flexibility and/vs. certain constancy in motivating were elaborated in a specific manner also by Výrost and Slaměnik: "*Motivation of employees in an organisation and influencing their work willingness take place at both the individual and group level. They can occur in some cases spontaneously and on an improvised basis to a certain degree but they should substantially remain within certain motivation scheme*" (1998, p. 53). It is similarly desirable to point out the quasi 'controversy' with the defined topic of this study: flexibility in motivating and/vs. long-term invariable motivational tool applied to employees. E.g. Zanger (1978) examined conditions in Lincoln Electric where the management implemented policy of guaranteed employment without influence on the amount of profit. The policy meant motivating employees by means of guaranteeing life-

long employment to those employees who have worked in the company for more than 2 years. That means that despite efforts to achieve maximum flexibility of decision-making about/in motivation (motivational decision-making), also those motivating elements should be used in motivating which are based on the principle of permanence, invariability, constancy. In other words, the motivation effect must respect the knowledge the motivation of each individual is different (the diversity of priorities, needs, values), (Bender et al., 2012; Lisjak et al., 2012; Armstrong, 2009; Clegg, 2001; etc.). In this view, individuality of each person is crucial. However, there are some common features, appearing in motivation of older versus younger individuals, motivation of highly qualified versus less qualified individuals, motivation of men versus motivation of women, motivation of managers versus motivation of staff, etc., that put the flexibility in managing work motivation in different light. It means that when examining flexibility in motivation, it is also necessary to pay attention to further aspects.

Methods

We set up our research on a thorough theoretical analysis. The first inspiration for specification of our research hypotheses is the assumption that motivation is flexible, i.e. individualistic – that behaviour of every individual is motivated by various, individually different motives (Tršková and Holubčík, 2016; Bender et al., 2012; etc.). The second inspiration for research was the knowledge that motivation is variable and many diverse factors determine it. This assumption has been already confirmed by many authors through their surveys (Priglová, 2007; Maccoby, 1988; Khol, 1982; etc.). The third inspiration was the assumption that efficiency of applied motivators is different in a case of men versus women, i.e. efficiency of the motivation influencing depends on gender (Wziatek-Stasko, 2012; Papalia and Olds, 2007; etc.). Based on these assumptions, we have decided to confirm assumption that there is considerable scope for stronger utilization of flexibility in motivating individuals – it is possible to improve the quality of decision-making on how could motivation be managed more effectively. Stated differently, we assume the motivating (as process) is not flexible in desirable measure (tailored to the needs of individuals) because there are differences with regard to the age, sex, education, and length of practice of motivated objects in the intensity of motivation as well effectiveness of applied motivation tools that are not accepted and effectively re-utilized. Furthermore, we assume that comparing results between Poland and Slovakia could generate more interesting inspirations for more advanced motivating.

Identification of Survey and Participants

In terms of the survey efficiency undertaken in conditions of two countries, in September – December 2013 we performed a sociological questioning, implemented through a technique of questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted

of 20 questions for employees and 22 questions for managers. The survey covered 3,682 respondents with an average age of 37.50 years; there were 1,845 (50.11%) males and 1,837 (49.89%) females. Of the total number of respondents, 1,946 (52.85%) of respondents were from Slovakia and 1,736 (47.15%) from Poland. For processing data we used our program created on the platform of database systems. The distribution of respondents from the viewpoint of sex in Slovakia and Poland was about the same but in reverse sense (43% of men in Slovakia and 42% of women in Poland). According to education, the composition was also about the same, i.e. (60% resp. 61% respondents with secondary, 39% resp. 37% with college and 1% resp. 2% with PhD). Distributions in regard to age and practice are similar too, with only small differences.

Hypotheses and the most important results

Level / Intensity of Motivation

In the calculations, we estimated what is the motivation level towards the individual orientations of motivation within each group, i.e. motivation level to the quality work, to increase the skills, to the submission of new ideas, and to the cooperation with a superior. 5-point scale was used to express the strength of respondents' motivation in questionnaire: 1 – low, 2 – rather low, 3 – average, 4 – rather higher, 5 –high. Later we have divided it into three groups, *low* (1 + 2, i.e. low and rather low), *average* (3, i.e. average), *high* (4 + 5, i.e. rather higher and high). In addition to national origin (Poland versus Slovakia), motivation was searched from the viewpoint of sex, age, education, and length of practice.

We defined this null hypothesis H0: “*The probability, that the motivation for particular orientation is high, is equal to π .*” An alternative hypothesis H1: “*The probability, that the motivation of the particular orientation is high, is less than the π .*” Test with parameter π of an alternative distribution was chosen for testing, where an unknown probability of π is estimated through using the relative frequency p of the phenomenon occurrence (motivation is high) – i.e. their number is divided by the number of choice. Tested criterion has a format $\frac{(p-\pi)\sqrt{n}}{\sqrt{\pi(1-\pi)}}$, where π

is the estimated probability, p is the relative frequency of respondents who said their motivation for the particular orientation is high (i.e. grades 4–5, that is rather higher and high). The value of π in Table 1 is the lowest just such that level of significance α , at which the hypothesis H0 is not rejected, was $\alpha < 0.05$. In a case of higher value, hypothesis has been rejected or the level of α has to be raised so that the probability π can be higher. Other values in the Table represent the relative frequency of responders whose motivation for the particular orientation is high. If in the Table is symbol** presented instead the value π then the presumption of test $n > 9 / p / (1 - p)$ is not achieved.

It flows from Table 1 that the relative frequency within each group (All, Males, Females, Age, Education, and Practice) between Slovak and Polish respondents is

not too much different, also the differences between males and females in each group are small.

Table 1. Intensity of respondents' motivation to quality work

	Slovak Republic						Poland					
	Respondents		Males		Females		Respondents		Males		Females	
	\bar{x} = 3.92		\bar{x} = 3.95		\bar{x} = 3.90		\bar{x} = 3.91		\bar{x} = 3.89		\bar{x} = 3.93	
	π	p	π	p	π	p	π	p	π	p	π	p
All	0.72	0.75	0.73	0.76	0.71	0.74	0.70	0.73	0.68	0.71	0.71	0.74
Age <26	0.62	0.68	0.59	0.67	0.61	0.69	0.67	0.73	0.63	0.70	0.68	0.76
Age 26–35	0.71	0.74	0.71	0.76	0.68	0.73	0.71	0.75	0.66	0.71	0.76	0.81
Age 36–45	0.72	0.76	0.72	0.77	0.70	0.75	0.67	0.71	0.67	0.72	0.63	0.70
Age >45	0.73	0.77	0.74	0.80	0.70	0.74	0.66	0.70	0.67	0.73	0.61	0.68
Secondary	0.66	0.69	0.65	0.69	0.66	0.69	0.66	0.69	0.65	0.69	0.65	0.70
College	0.79	0.82	0.81	0.85	0.76	0.80	0.74	0.77	0.71	0.76	0.75	0.79
PhD.	**	0.96	**	0.93	**	1.00	**	0.85	**	0.84	**	0.88
Practice <6	0.67	0.71	0.65	0.71	0.66	0.72	0.73	0.77	0.72	0.76	0.73	0.78
Practice 6-15	0.69	0.73	0.70	0.75	0.66	0.71	0.67	0.70	0.62	0.67	0.71	0.77
Practice 16–25	0.73	0.77	0.70	0.76	0.72	0.77	0.67	0.72	0.66	0.73	0.64	0.72
Practice >25	0.73	0.77	0.77	0.83	0.69	0.74	0.59	0.66	0.61	0.71	0.53	0.62

\bar{x} = average value expressed by respondents (on the scale 1–5)

To some extent, however, the average power of this motivation varies for males: \bar{x} = 3.95 versus females: \bar{x} = 3.90, i.e. for males it is slightly higher. The situation in Poland is reversed (males: \bar{x} = 3.89; females: \bar{x} = 3.93). The observed relative frequency is related with these results, for example, in a case of motivation to increase the skills, the ratio between males/females was 65%/69% in Poland. The relative frequencies have varied between education groups. The higher the education, the greater the power of motivation was expressed by respondents. The difference between Slovak employees in individual groups according to education is greater than in a situation of Polish employees. Regarding the age of employees, power of this motivational orientation increases with age in Slovakia. In Poland, the respondents in age group 26–35 years have assigned the largest weight to this orientation. Regarding the distribution by practice, the strength of motivation grows with growing practice in Slovakia; in Poland, on the contrary, the strength is declining with growing practice.

In Figure 1 (based on Tables 2), we can see how the *relative frequency* (--- p_{SK} , --- p_{PL}) and the *probability* (— π_{SK} , — π_{PL}) of respondents' opinions from Slovakia and Poland for different groups *are changed*. The greatest intensity of this first orientation in motivation (motivation to good quality work) was attributed through the respondents with higher education, particularly with a PhD – 85% in Poland, and even 96% in Slovakia. There are not great differences among other groups in Slovakia and Poland but it is interesting that the strength of this motivational orientation has increased tendency with the age and also with the practice in Slovakia, whereas in Poland it is rather the contrary and it almost falls.

Table 2. Intensity of respondents' motivation to increase the skills, submission new ideas and cooperation with superior

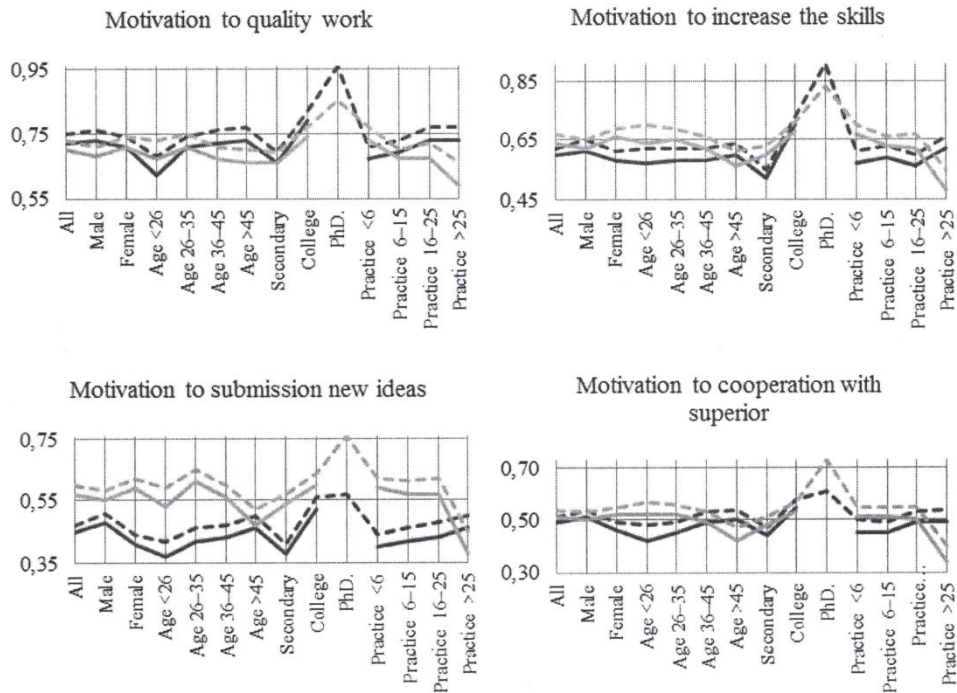
	Increase the skills				Submission new ideas				Cooperation with superior			
	Slovakia		Poland		Slovakia		Poland		Slovakia		Poland	
	$\bar{x} = 3.69$		$\bar{x} = 3.78$		$\bar{x} = 3.42$		$\bar{x} = 3.65$		$\bar{x} = 3.48$		$\bar{x} = 3.52$	
	π	p	π	p	π	p	π	p	π	p	π	p
All	0.60	0.62	0.64	0.67	0.45	0.47	0.57	0.60	0.49	0.51	0.51	0.54
Males	0.61	0.65	0.62	0.65	0.48	0.51	0.55	0.58	0.51	0.54	0.50	0.53
Females	0.58	0.61	0.66	0.69	0.41	0.44	0.59	0.62	0.46	0.49	0.52	0.55
Age <26	0.57	0.62	0.64	0.70	0.37	0.42	0.53	0.59	0.42	0.48	0.52	0.57
Age 26–35	0.58	0.62	0.65	0.69	0.42	0.46	0.61	0.65	0.45	0.49	0.52	0.56
Age 36–45	0.58	0.62	0.62	0.66	0.43	0.47	0.56	0.60	0.49	0.53	0.49	0.53
Age >45	0.60	0.64	0.56	0.61	0.46	0.50	0.47	0.52	0.50	0.54	0.42	0.47
Secondary	0.52	0.55	0.60	0.63	0.38	0.41	0.54	0.57	0.44	0.47	0.48	0.51
College	0.70	0.73	0.68	0.71	0.52	0.56	0.60	0.64	0.55	0.58	0.53	0.57
PhD.	**	0.91	**	0.83	**	0.57	**	0.76	**	0.61	**	0.73
Practice <6	0.57	0.61	0.67	0.70	0.40	0.44	0.59	0.62	0.45	0.50	0.51	0.55
Practice 6–15	0.59	0.63	0.63	0.66	0.42	0.46	0.57	0.61	0.45	0.49	0.51	0.55
Practice 16–25	0.56	0.60	0.62	0.67	0.43	0.48	0.57	0.62	0.49	0.53	0.50	0.55
Practice >25	0.62	0.66	0.48	0.55	0.46	0.50	0.38	0.45	0.49	0.54	0.34	0.40

\bar{x} = average value expressed by respondents (on the scale 1–5)

The intensity of motivation for further three orientations: motivation to increasing the skills, motivation to the submission of new ideas, and motivation to cooperate with the superior are listed together in Table 2. The values obtained are shown in Figure 1 too. If we compare all four motivational orientations to each other (including motivation to good quality work), all respondents attach them really great power in general. This is evidenced by the calculated average value \bar{x} of their evaluation (Slovakia/Poland): motivation to quality work $\bar{x} = 3.92/3.91$, motivation to increase the skills $\bar{x} = 3.69/3.78$, etc. Relative frequency of respondents and calculated probability of respondents, whose attribute great intensity to these motivational orientations, are high too. In terms of sex, differences were only minor.

Oddly, the average values of the motivation intensity were higher in the case of Polish females than Polish males. In Slovakia, it was the opposite: males showed a little higher power of motivation. Significant differences (in both countries) were in education; the importance of these criteria has increased with the education. It is interesting the importance of these criteria continued to grow in Slovakia with age and also with the length of practice while in Poland this one declined.

The lowest strength of these motivations was attributed by the group of respondents with secondary education in Slovakia and by the group of respondents with the practice > 25 in Poland. As shown in Figure 1, there are not great differences among individual groups in these motivations in Slovakia and Poland. The exception is the motivation to submission the new ideas, where Polish respondents attributed this criterion as much more significant (not account the group with practice > 25 years).



Legend: — π_{SK} , — π_{PL} (probability); --- p_{SK} , --- p_{PL} (relative frequency)

Figure 1. Comparison of respondents' motivation intensity

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Efficiency of Motivators Applied Towards the Respondents

Furthermore we investigated what is the efficiency/force of applicable motivational tools on the scale of 1–10. We again divided this range into three groups: low (1–3), average (4–7) and high (8–10). When testing an identical hypothesis H0: “The probability, that the efficiency of given motivator is high, equals the value of π ” and the alternative hypothesis H1: “The probability, that the efficiency of given motivator is high, is lower than the value of π ”, we also used a test with parameter π of the alternative distribution. Analogously, the probability value π is the lowest such so that the significance level α , with which the hypothesis H0 is not rejected, could be $\alpha < 0.05$. The results of the investigation and comparisons are shown in Figure 2.

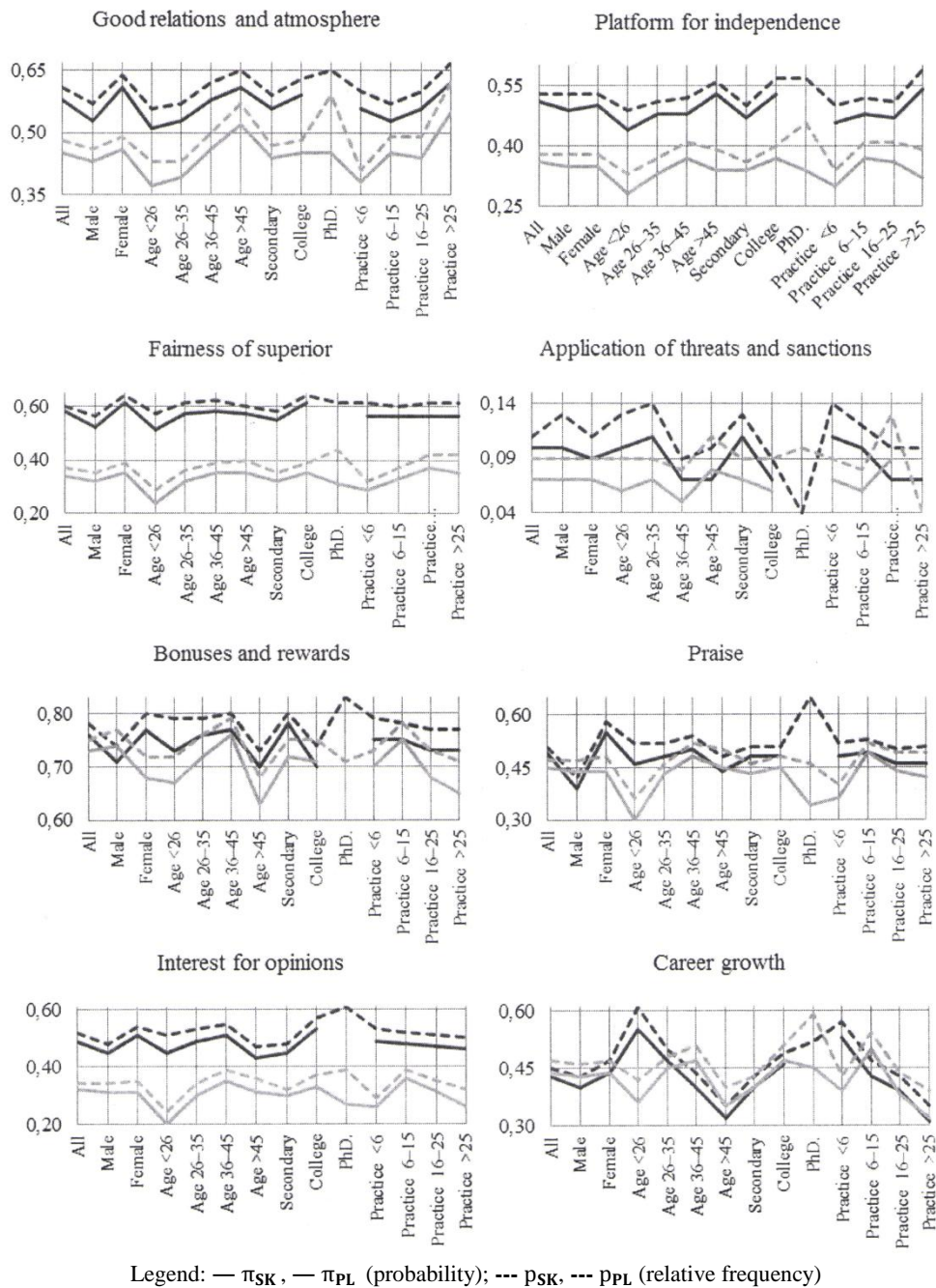


Figure 2. Comparison of expressed efficiency of 10 applied motivators

If we compare these motivators according the average value of \bar{x} of their effectiveness then very high value $\bar{x} = 8.35/8.31$ (Slovakia/Poland) was achieved at motivator 'Bonuses and Rewards', which is logical. The high efficiencies were also obtained for all other motivators, except the 'Threats and sanctions' ($\bar{x} = 3.05/2.66$). Slovak respondents attached the greater significance to all motivational tools, except the motivator 'Development and training activities' – this one obtained the greater importance from Polish respondents, and criteria 'Career growth' and 'Threats and sanctions' where it is overlapped. With regard to sex, significant differences were not found. Differences occurred between the respondents in terms of age and length of practice but these ones varied according to the individual motivators, and also in the two countries. The effectiveness of these instruments also generally increased with the education, with the exception of last criterion ('Threats and sanctions').

Research Implications and Discussion

An interesting question of Buckingham and Saunders (2010) can open this part: „Do you have to be a positivist if you want to do a survey?” Authors' answer is, of course, inspirational: *“There is a connection between positivism, social surveys, and the use of statistics to analyse social phenomena”* (p. 57). As opposite to a mentioned investigative euphoria, we realize the fact that our survey was performed in two Slavic countries. Obtained results are related with the unique geo-political region (i.e. central Europe and new political dis/culture). Applied managerial systems of organisations in both countries are cultivated by European Union structures and strongly influenced by foreign capital and management know-how. On the other hand, despite the fact the findings arising from the statistical processing of our survey are not always positive; we believe that they will contribute to the improvement of management systems of the both societies (Slovak and Polish) and their organisations. Based on our experience, negative findings can even more strongly appeal on the organisations executives (especially top-managers and owners) in their effort to make their systems more flexible and profitable.

Survey results of Kaleta (2012) can serve as an importance confirmation when connecting the management with the motivating employees and managers. Author performed the survey on the sample of 724 respondents, where he examined fluctuation tendencies and satisfaction and/vs. the importance of factors motivating people. It flows there is often a considerable difference between felt satisfaction and importance of motivating factors (Kaleta, 2012). If we build our considerations on the assumption that motivation is flexible and dynamic then the importance of perceived motivators is flexible too – it will necessarily change in time, depending on the development of personality of individuals, gradation of relations in a group and other situational factors. It leads to the necessity to dispose by excellently qualified managers who are able to connect the newest theoretical basis in the field of management with the concrete situational and system powers and strategies.

Conclusion

Organisations must effectively work and make progress – they have to be precisely managed. They can be effective if there are employed individuals and groups who have a strong and targeted motivation. In addition to the social (interpersonal) and private (family) motivation, working motivation is the most productive value that build the performance, market share, and success of organisations.

In our survey, performed on a sample of Slovak and Polish respondents, we investigated the motivation from the perspective of motivation strength and the efficiency of applied motivational tools, and we tried to identify the existence of relevant differences in motivation according to sex, age, education and length of practice. In both searched cases, we might do not reject defined hypotheses. Significant differences in the perceived motivation to quality work, improving own skills, submission new ideas, and cooperation with superior, were confirmed in particular with regard to education; significant dependency was confirmed with regard to age and length of practice. Paradoxically, these dependencies were opposite between both countries. In terms of gender, there were small differences but average values were significantly higher in a case of Polish men versus Polish women; situation in Slovakia was opposite. In the area of searching efficiency of motivators applied towards respondents, average efficiencies were again higher in a case of women both in Slovakia and Poland (9 of 10 motivators); significant differences were confirmed according education, age, and practice again.

It means that the perspective, wisdom, personality and qualification maturity must be firmly incorporated into the formation of each managerial system. In addition, perspective and cognitive correctness should be fulfilled not only on the side of the managers but also on the side of recipients of managerial effect (individuals or groups that are managed and motivated by other individuals or groups).

Study is a creative result and is conducted within the scientific project: VEGA No 1/0485/17 Stochastic Simulation of Decision-making Processes in Motivating Human Potential.

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ELASTYCZNOŚĆ I ZMIENNOŚĆ MOTYWOWANIA PRACOWNIKÓW I MENEDŻERÓW NA SŁOWACJI I W POLSCE

Streszczenie: Niniejszy artykuł dotyczy motywacji i motywowania jednostek. Skupia się on na badaniu elastyczności, która jest podstawą skutecznie wpływającej motywacji i skutkuje badaniem różnych aspektów zarządzania i motywowania ludzi, tj. płeć, wiek, wykształcenie i doświadczenie zawodowe. Część metodologiczna poświęcona jest prezentacji najważniejszych wyników badań prowadzonych w polskich i słowackich organizacjach, dotyczących motywacji i procesu zarządzania motywacją osób. Opinie 1.946 słowackich i 1.736 polskich respondentów pokazują, że motywacja różni się znacznie w zależności od najczęściej badanych aspektów. Wyniki potwierdzają potrzebę zwrócenia uwagi na wystarczająco elastyczny i zróżnicowany sposób zarządzania i motywowania pracowników i menedżerów.

Słowa kluczowe: elastyczność, motywacja, motywowanie, badanie socjologiczne, wiek, wykształcenie, płeć

斯洛伐克和波蘭的員工和經理人員的靈活性和可變性

摘要：論文處理動機和激勵個人。它側重於調查靈活性，這是有效影響動機的基礎，結果探索管理和激勵人們的各個方面，即性別，年齡，教育和工作經驗。方法部分致力於介紹在波蘭和斯洛伐克組織進行的最重要的質疑結果，該組織審查了管理個人動機的動機和過程。1,946名斯洛伐克人和1,736名波蘭受訪者的意見顯示，根據研究最多的方面，動機有顯著差異。結果證實，需要注意管理和激勵員工和經理的充分靈活和差異化的方式。

關鍵詞：靈活性，動機，激勵，社會學調查，年齡，教育，性別。