EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF AN ORGANIZATION'S DEVELOPMENT – STUDY RESULTS

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Purpose: The main objective of the study was to assess employee satisfaction at the University of Technology and Life Sciences in Bydgoszcz. Specific objectives included areas of employee satisfaction, with regard to the assessment of the opportunities for professional development, job motivation and satisfaction, the opinions on the changes necessary to be undertaken at the University to improve job satisfaction.

Design/methodology/approach: The evaluation study was conducted using a survey questionnaire, which was distributed to the employees by the means of an electronic questionnaire via the Limesurvey system, a traditional paper questionnaire, available at the University's lodges, and in a downloadable version available via the INTRA network.

Findings: The study showed that the respondents are satisfied, among others, with their professional development at the university, the possibility of using their abilities or competences, and their achievements.

Practical implications: The study also showed that the respondents are satisfied with the opportunity to acquire knowledge, new skills and self-fulfillment. In this group of questions, the university employees surveyed rate employment stability the lowest. For 22.32% of the respondents it is insufficient while for 22.03% it is sufficient.

Originality/value Satisfaction testing is a useful tool for streamlining organization and increasing employee satisfaction.

Keywords: job satisfaction, job contentment, development in an organization.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

Currently, such issues as social interest, environmental protection, and relationships with various stakeholder groups are more often taken into account in the development strategies of enterprises. A number of measures undertaken by enterprises, including activity for the benefit

of local communities, employees or the broadly understood natural environment, fit the sustainable development trend (Czop, Leszczyńska). K. Czop and A. Leszczyńska indicate that “the primary goal, from the perspective of a company, is to achieve harmony in the social, economic and environmental spheres”, while sustainable development of a company, implemented internally, is focused, among others, on employees – their development, creation of optimal work conditions. Employees expect not only ensurance of safety at work, but also opportunities for development, partner relations, recognition of their achievements, which in turn provides them with professional satisfaction. The issue of job satisfaction has become an important element of interest for managers at many institutions and organizations, and has been widely described in the literature on the subject. The concepts of job satisfaction and job contentment are used interchangeably in the literature, as synonyms. In occupational psychology, for example, job satisfaction signifies “positive or negative feelings and attitudes towards work” (Schultz, Schultz, 2002, p. 296), while in humanist psychology, satisfaction refers to the well-being of an individual, resulting from the fact of employment, which is characterized by optimism, hope and a sense of peace (Dobrowolska, 2010, pp. 229-248). Other authors treat this concept similarly, identifying it with a type of positive or negative feelings, in relation to the work performed, and with employee expectations (Lu, While, Barriball, 2005, pp. 211-227). Job satisfaction, according to E. Locke (as per: Springer), is understood as “the result of perceiving one's own work as that enabling achievement of important values from the work, provided that these values are in line with the needs or help fulfill basic human needs” (Springer, 2011, p. 162). According to A. Sowińska, the criterion differentiating the two terms – satisfaction and contentment, is the time of occurrence. Job satisfaction signifies a longer period of contentment, while contentment refers to a short-term condition (Sowińska, 2004, p. 47). In recent years, satisfaction with work has been clearly emphasized, because work environment should be friendly for every employee, and thereby managers can influence its development. According to M. Juchnowicz, job satisfaction/contentment is both a goal in itself and a measure of the effectiveness of human resource management. What is more, the level of job satisfaction is currently an important indicator of strong branding, hence it should become a priority for the management staff (Juchnowicz, 2014, p. 10). Research shows that job satisfaction has impact on organizational behavior, including – job performance, quality, work discipline, and fluctuation (Bańka, 2007, p. 330). The data contained in the ‘2018 Polish Professional Satisfaction’ report [original title in PL: *Satysfakcja Zawodowa Polaków w 2018*]¹, prepared on the basis of a survey (survey platform HR.pl), covering 14 key aspects of company and employment assessment, indicate that, compared to 2016, satisfaction with organization of work in companies has increased significantly. It is worth adding that almost 7% of the respondents are satisfied with the company's image on the consumer market and the company's image as an employer (Raport...).

¹ For the purpose of linguistic clarity, titles of the Polish publications mentioned in the body text of the article have been translated into English, with the original titles given in square brackets.

Care for integrated development, including incorporation of trainings and support in the employee development programs, allowing the use of employees' potential while supporting their passions, should be the key issue for managers. M. Michalak emphasizes that development opportunities are an important determinant of job satisfaction. This aspect positively affects the value of the entire organization (Michalak, 2013, p. 26). Implementation of regular diagnosis of employee satisfaction will allow construction of a strong organizational culture and thus will make it an element of competitive advantage (Mrówka).

2. Research methodology

The main objective of the study was to assess employee satisfaction at the University of Technology and Life Sciences in Bydgoszcz. The results of the study can promote activities that can increase employee satisfaction and improve the functioning of the university. Specific objectives included areas of employee satisfaction, with regard to the assessment of the opportunities for professional development, job motivation and satisfaction, the opinions on the changes necessary to be undertaken at the University to improve job satisfaction, the University authorities' management, as well as identification of problem areas.

The evaluation study was conducted using a survey questionnaire, which was distributed to the employees by the means of an electronic questionnaire via the Limesurvey system, a traditional paper questionnaire, available at the University's lodges, and in a downloadable version available via the INTRA network.

As part of an additional study on the assessment of the Information and Promotion System, individual in-depth interviews were conducted with all employees of the Department of Information and Promotion (DIP), using a structured interview questionnaire.

Additionally, detailed analysis of the functioning of the Department as well as the comments provided, among others, by the Deans constituted the basis for development of the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire consisted of 20 questions, which enabled feedback on the work environment, the information and communication flow, professional development and the concept for restructuring the DIP. In total, 354 employees took part in the survey, which constitutes 31.6% of all employees.

3. Employee satisfaction in the light of the research results

In the opinion of 36.44% of the employees surveyed, management of the University by its authorities was rated satisfactory. Maintenance and security were rated well by 41.24% of the surveyed. Regional promotion of the University was rated as satisfactory by 35.88% and as good by 24.01% of the employees.

The University's website, as an element of promotion, its transparency and timeliness was rated well by 35.03% of the respondents. It is worth emphasizing, however, that the analysis carried out with regard to the Department of Information and Promotion and its functioning indicated a need for urgent restructuring. Extensive activities have been undertaken in this respect, including, *inter alia*, an increase of the current employment as well as website management and its modification, in visual and functional terms.

Analysis of the scope of the DIP employees' duties shows that the description of task distribution was incorrect. The organizational structure is illegible, because it does not incorporate in the manager's duties the tasks arising, for example, from direct supervision, employee control or from the control of the tasks tasks they perform.

What is more, each workplace has an individual, detailed job-description card. The study showed that internal organization within the Department does not meet its needs, while work organization needs improvement. This results from the extended scope of tasks which, at insufficient employment, often cause stratification of work.

Analysis of the main factors causing the respondents' work-related stress allows clear indication of 'time' as the main source of stress. All surveyed employees themselves determined the factors that cause stress in their current work, which are associated with two groups of factors. The first group is generally related to time, where the surveyed indicated 'work pace', 'timeliness', 'time pressure' or 'tight deadlines'. The second group of factors includes 'lack of clearly-defined responsibilities', 'insufficient technical support' and, above all, 'insufficient number of employees at the Department'.

The need to increase the level of employment has also been confirmed by analysis of the tasks implemented by employees in 2017, which practically from the beginning went beyond the real possibility of their efficient and effective implementation. It can be said, however, that the employees form a very good team that supports and motivates each other. When analyzing the results obtained, it should be added that the employees surveyed often emphasized that fact that they work in a young and well-integrated team. Some of the surveyed simply stated that the motivation to perform their current job entails: 'work environment', 'interpersonal relations, employee-supervisor relations', or the 'atmosphere at the Department – cooperation with the manager'.

According to the employees, as confirmed by the survey, the current state of employment does not allow efficient and timely performance of the tasks entrusted. Currently, staff shortages, in terms of task implementation, i.e. relative to the scope of the cooperation with the promotion coordinators at the faculties and the broadly understood popularization of science, as well as with regard to edition and distribution of the University journal 'Format', can be signaled. Opportunities to participate in trainings, courses or post-graduate studies should complete the construction of high-quality human resources.

The specificity of work at the Department requires continuous acquisition of new skills and knowledge or further development of competences and qualifications. All the respondents signaled the need for acquisition of new skills, through participation, for example, in courses or postgraduate studies, which can also serve as a source of non-financial motivation, thus making employees eager to participate in such courses or to undertake further studies. The need for flexible response to the emerging training needs should be taken into account here, all the more so because the nature of the work performed requires continuous training.

The specificity of the Department's work and the current shortage of staff raise the need to combine certain processes taking place within individual tasks, which may interfere with implementation of the key tasks. It is recommended to analyze the institutional and personnel structure, in terms of the needs identified. An important element in any work environment entails the question of whether the nature of the work performed is interesting for a given person, because it affects the overall approach to the duties performed. This opinion has been confirmed in this study, since all employees found their work interesting. A conclusion, therefore, is that when ensured adequate working and pay conditions, majority of these employees will remain part of the University's staff resources.

An established pattern of values, norms, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions that shape people's behavior and manner of accomplishing tasks is the so-called organizational culture (Armstrong, 2000, p. 149). It is the organizational culture which is created over a long period of time. The study showed that the organizational culture was rated very well by all team members. The atmosphere at work is a factor that positively affects the quality of work and the level of employee satisfaction. This is particularly important in terms of work environment, where such factors may occur as stress, periodic layering of work, high responsibility and new tasks. The respondents evaluated the work atmosphere at their office according to a 5-point scale, where 5 was the highest rank. The work atmosphere was rated very highly.

The flow of information and communication plays a key role in efficient and effective implementation of tasks, also on the part of faculty proxies. The respondents were therefore asked to assess the flow of information between departments on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 meant very good information flow. Unfortunately, none of the employees rated this area very well. Everyone stated the flow of information deserves a satisfactory rating.

Additionally, the respondents stated that more frequent working meetings with the direct superior, i.e. the Vice-Rector for Organization and Development, would be an important improvement in this area, providing opportunities for strategic decision making.

Information and communication management requires improvement and inclusion of the departmental proxies for promotion.

External communication is also associated with this area, which requires the use of properly selected tools and channels of information distribution and promotion.

The quality of internal communication and information flow affects the quality and comfort of employees' work, especially for the those who have direct contact with the beneficiaries and provide them with information. The employees surveyed have identified convergent types of improvements that they believe should be implemented. The key, most frequently mentioned type of improvement entailed implementation of proper information flow and improvement, or even development, of a communication system. Another suggestion was to implement the draft Principles of Cooperation with the University's Department of Information and Promotion. The proposal to develop the Principles of Information Provision via the website, the Fanpage and the promotional monitors, to promote the events organized by the departments or to publicize departmental achievements as well as to publish content in the media is noteworthy.

Due to the fact that the area of information and communication flow has been repeatedly indicated as requiring refinement, it is recommended to thoroughly analyze the solutions used so far and to introduce, in consultation with the proxies, adequate improvements.

In the respondents' opinion, it is necessary to introduce organizational improvements at the Department, to ensure effectiveness of the promotional activities and proper flow of information at the University. The improvements proposed include:

- an increase of employment,
- alternative division of responsibilities,
- increasing the capability for managing the Department,
- faster reaction on the part of the Supervisor,
- formal arrangement of the Vice-Rector's meetings with the Department,
- development of forms of effective cooperation between the departments,
- extension of the mailing database containing the institutions, organizations, schools, etc. cooperating with University by including the Departments' contacts,
- increased technical support,
- involvement of younger employees and students in representative activities, e.g. during events and celebrations,
- creation of a Volunteer,
- Center.

The employees stated that when difficult situations arise at the University, the first problems sought are those associated with promotion. Detailed analysis of the DIP's functioning indicates a need for its restructuring. It is necessary to supplement the staff, within the existing job positions, and employ at least two additional persons.

Communication on the part the University authorities, in the employees' opinion, was assessed as sufficient by 27.4% of the respondents. The fact that over 21% of the employees rated the communication methods and manners as well as the rules for granting awards as very poor, i.e. 28.53% of the surveyed, and 23.16% as satisfactory, is noteworthy. Efficiency of the university administration functioning was rated as good by 34.46% of the respondents. The rules for granting awards, set out in the University's regulations, were rated as good in the opinion of 37.57% of the surveyed. The scope of the social and living benefits offered by the University was rated well by 39.27% of the respondents. The functioning of labor unions was assessed as sufficient by 16.95% of the surveyed, while the fact that 34.46% of the employees selected the 'no assessment' answer is noteworthy. Over 35% of the employees rated the functioning of the internal employee Internet network (intra-University) well, whereas 31.07% of the employees evaluated the functioning of the IT systems used at the University, i.e. USOS, APD, XPRIMER, DOCUSAFE, as satisfactory. Adaptation of the library resources to the needs of the research and teaching staff was rated as good by 32.49% of the surveyed. Over 32% of the respondents claims to have seen the signs of mobbing at the workplace.

4. Conclusions

At a time when the market success of organizations, including the universities, is determined by the people employed at those institutions, in particular by their knowledge and skills, the development opportunities that these entities get as part of their organization deserve special attention. This may mean that professional development contributes to mutual benefits – the institution provides educated staff and satisfied employees, while employees, in addition to raising their qualifications, are provided with a sense of satisfaction with tasks they carry out.

The study indicates that it is necessary to increase the University's promotional activities of in the region. Due to the fact that the area of information and communication flow has been repeatedly indicated as requiring improvement, it is recommended to thoroughly analyze the solutions applied so far and to introduce adequate forms of effective cooperation.

The employees surveyed assess their motivation well and their job satisfaction very well. Commitment to performance of professional duties has been assessed particularly high, as very good, by as many as 44.63% of the respondents. In contrast, employment stability has been rated the lowest by the employees surveyed, i.e. for 22.32% of the respondents it is insufficient and sufficient for 22.03%.

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