

Motivational Factors Influencing Senior Managers in the Forestry and Wood-Processing Sector in Slovakia

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Senior managers in the forestry and wood-processing sectors in the Slovak Republic were asked to complete questionnaires. The aim of the research was to identify the importance of certain factors that affect the process of their motivation. A total of 493 senior managers were surveyed. The respondents used a five-point rating scale to rate the significance of each motivation factor, where 5 was very important and 1 was unimportant. The importance of 36 motivation factors was studied for senior managers through the use of statistical methods. Based on the study, it was concluded that the base salary is the most important factor of motivation, followed by job security as the second most important motivation factor, and the third most important factor was the fair appraisal system.

Keywords: Slovakia forestry and wood-processing sector; Senior managers; Post-hoc tests; Motivation process; Top motivation factors

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations focus on their employees to gain a competitive edge. Technology, processes, and organizational structure can be copied, but the value that competent and dedicated employees can bring to companies cannot be easily taken away (Ahmad *et al.* 2012). Managers in companies strive to build a functioning process within their enterprises (Vaňová *et al.* 2009). This is why companies have to cooperate with their employees. Companies must motivate and stimulate employees to make them feel satisfied with the organization and to prevent them from leaving. Halepota (2005) defines motivation as “a person’s active participation and commitment to achieve the prescribed results.” Without motivation, employees cannot offer their best performance, resulting in the company’s performance being less efficient (Muslim *et al.* 2016). Motivated employees help businesses to succeed, as they are more productive (Almacik *et al.* 2012). Hence, motivated employees can contribute to making an organization more valuable and profitable (McKenzie-Mohr and Schultz 2014).

To have a comprehensive understanding of employee motivation, one must examine its history, as well as further development, because employee motivation and engagement has long been a major concern for research (Sanyal and Biswas 2014). When Frederick Herzberg researched the sources of employee motivation during the 1950s and 1960s, he discovered a dichotomy: the things that make people satisfied and motivated on the job are different, in kind, from the things that make them dissatisfied. The renowned two-factor theory of established hygiene factors and motivators influenced better employee

performance (Herzberg 2003; Herzberg *et al.* 2009). The factors that lead to satisfaction are termed as motivators, while the others that lead to dissatisfaction are termed as hygiene factors. Herzberg pointed out that the major hygiene factors were company policy and administration, supervision, salary, interpersonal relationships, and working conditions; some people may be motivated by factors relating to the content of their work and are therefore motivators themselves (Herzberg 1968). Based on Damij *et al.* (2015) the traditional motivating factors identified in Western European economies primarily include salary and prestige, often complemented by meaning, creation, challenge, ownership, identity, *etc.* According to Fakhruddinova *et al.* (2013), there are several means of employee motivation, such as bonuses, career growth, or obtaining the right to purchase shares of the company at a discounted price.

During the economic crisis, motivation platforms are focused not only on financial incentives but very often on non-financial incentives, such as rebuilding teams, providing education and training within the company, offering qualifying training courses, language courses, managerial and IT courses, seminars, or using different outsourcing market tools (Wu *et al.* 2008; Kampf and Ližbetinová 2015). Kamasheva *et al.* (2015) added that non-financial motivation includes the acquisition of new skills, admission to more important work, comprehension of importance to the company and, finally, the pleasure of work accomplished. Employee job satisfaction is also an essential ingredient to organizational success, according to Myint *et al.* (2016). The authors say that the “supervisors,” “co-workers,” “compensation,” and “job contents,” are factors that lead to job satisfaction. It has been demonstrated sufficiently and convincingly that human resource management is one of the most sensitive and important fields of action for the future success of companies (Pickett 2000; Evans *et al.* 2002; Hayton 2005; Sparrow *et al.* 2006).

Learning in the 21st century requires radical rethinking. The most important success factors in global competition are the people: their competences, their motivation to learn and to perform, leadership and cooperation, corporate values, and culture (Scholz and Böhlm 2008; Kučerová *et al.* 2015). Moreover, based on Ahmad *et al.* (2012), employees are the most important factor in the success and failure of any organization. The basic factor of success of any organization is to recruit capable employees, to retrain them, and to employ them in order to fulfil a company’s set goals (Lindner and Wald 2011; Maruta 2012). Personal characteristics as well as the workplace environment affect employee motivation. Organizations benefit from “engaged workers” in a number of ways. Two-way communication helps to shape employee perceptions and aid the company in understanding its employees better (Harter *et al.* 2002). In times when companies are striving to minimise their production costs, clearly, voluntary employee turnover can be harmful to organizational performance, and the cost of replacing an employee can range from a few thousand dollars upwards to double the employee's salary (Hinkin and Tracey 2000; Glebbeek and Bax 2004; Kubš *et al.* 2016).

EXPERIMENTAL

Data Collection

The data were collected using electronically distributed questionnaires. Senior managers in the forestry and wood-processing sectors in the Slovak Republic were asked to complete the questionnaires to identify the importance of factors that affect motivation.

A pre-defined 0.05 accuracy, and 95% confidence criteria secured by the tabular value $z_{0.025} = 1.96$, desired accuracy $\Delta\bar{x} = 0.05$, and the average variability of responses according to the significance scale of various motivation factors, given by variance of $\sigma_x^2 = 0.3$, were used to calculate the minimum sampling unit. The following equation was used to set the sample-size (Schmidtová and Vacek 2013),

$$n = \frac{z_{\alpha/2}^2 \cdot \sigma_x^2}{\Delta\bar{x}^2} \quad (1)$$

where n represents the sample size set, $z_{\alpha/2}$ represents the critical value of a standard normal random variable (1.96 for $\alpha = 0.025$), $\Delta\bar{x}$ represents the desired absolute accuracy, and σ_x represents an estimate of the sample size standard deviation.

A total of 461 questionnaires were required to be returned to meet the pre-defined accuracy and confidence requirements. A final count of 493 respondents working in forestry and wood-processing businesses in Slovakia were engaged in the research and completed the questionnaire, whereby the minimum sample size criteria was met. Results from 20 forestry and 41 wood-processing companies were acquired. Private and state-owned companies were included. The sampling unit was represented by 126 males and 18 females working in forestry and 265 males and 84 females working in wood-processing companies. A majority of respondents were 31 years to 40 years old. Nearly 85% of the respondents have been working in the company for more than 4 years.

Methods

A sampling unit was obtained through the questionnaire, and consisted of senior managers working in the forestry and wood-processing sector in 2016. This sample was used to analyse the importance of selected motivation factors that affect employees. The questionnaires focused on five areas including the nature of work, physical conditions of work, economic conditions at work, intangible assets at work, interpersonal relationships at workplace, and the technical and logistic conditions of work. These areas were examined through 36 motivation factors. The respondents were using a five-point rating scale of the significance of each motivation factor, where 5 was very important, 4 was important, 3 was medium important, 2 was less important, and 1 was unimportant.

The extrapolation method was used for the analysis. Statistics 12.0 software (Dell, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) was used to process and evaluate the research outcomes. Methods of inductive statistics were also used for more in-depth analysis. A one-way analysis of variance at the significance level α of 5% verified that the averages of the importance of motivation factors are statistically significantly different. Duncan's test enabled the identification of groups with more significant average differences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this research was to analyse the employees' responses regarding the level of their motivation in forestry and wood-processing businesses *via* the level of significance attributed to a selected motivation factor. More detailed results, including relative multiplicity, are presented in the following tables.

Table 1. Relative Multiplicity of Respondents Evaluating the Criteria of the Nature of Work, According to the Level of Importance

Motivation Factor	Very Important	Important	Medium Important	Less Important	Unimportant
Benefits of one's qualification	17.24	55.17	20.69	6.90	0.00
Education and personal growth	24.14	55.17	20.69	0.00	0.00
Individual decision making	6.90	58.62	31.03	3.45	0.00
Job attractiveness	20.69	55.17	24.14	0.00	0.00
Scope of work	13.79	58.62	24.14	3.45	0.00
Variability of work	3.45	65.52	24.14	6.90	0.00

Based on the gathered data related to the nature of work (Table 1), 24.14% of respondents considered education and personal growth as a “very important” factor. Also, 20.69% of respondents rated the job attractiveness as “very important,” and 65.52% of respondents considered the variability of work as “important.” For 58.62% of the respondents surveyed, the scope of the work and individual decision-making were considered “important.” Among all of the analysed motivators, the factors related to the nature of the work were most frequently rated as “important.”

Table 2. Relative Multiplicity of Respondents Evaluating the Criteria of Physical Conditions of Work, According to the Level of Importance

Motivation Factor	Very Important	Important	Medium Important	Less Important	Unimportant
Anti-dust precautions	27.59	37.93	34.48	0.00	0.00
Occupational safety	44.83	34.48	20.69	0.00	0.00
Physical effort at work	17.24	44.83	34.48	3.45	0.00
Spaciousness	17.24	51.72	20.69	10.34	0.00
Work environment	17.24	62.07	20.69	0.00	0.00
Workplace equipment	20.69	51.72	27.59	0.00	0.00

In the category of the physical conditions of work (Table 2), 44.83% of respondents considered occupational safety as “very important,” and 62.07% rated the work environment as “important.” The workplace equipment and spaciousness were “important” for 51.72% of respondents.

Table 3. Relative Multiplicity of Respondents Evaluating the Criteria of Economic Conditions at Work, and Intangible Assets at Work

Motivation Factor	Very Important	Important	Medium Important	Less Important	Unimportant
Base salary	62.07	37.93	0.00	0.00	0.00
Career advancement	20.69	44.83	27.59	3.45	3.45
Free time	13.79	44.83	24.14	10.34	6.90
Fringe benefits	44.83	41.38	13.79	0.00	0.00
Job security	55.17	37.93	6.90	0.00	0.00
Name of the company	17.24	37.93	27.59	17.24	0.00
Relation to the environment	3.45	48.28	20.69	13.79	13.79
Social benefits	13.79	48.28	34.48	3.45	0.00

Table 3 shows that the base salary was the most important motivation factor, with as many as 62.07% of respondents. The second most important factor, related to the economic conditions of work, was job security (55.17%). The next factors in the scale that were recognized were fringe benefits (44.83%). Interestingly, 13.79% of respondents considered the company's relationship to the environment as "less important" and even "unimportant" (13.79%) on the scale of importance of motivation factors. Only 6.90% of the respondents considered free time as "unimportant," and only 3.45% of respondents rated career advancement as "unimportant."

Table 4. Relative Multiplicity of Respondents Evaluating the Criteria of Interpersonal Relationships at Work, According to the Level of Importance

Motivation Factor	Very Important	Important	Medium Important	Less Important	Unimportant
Atmosphere in the workplace	31.03	44.83	24.14	0.00	0.00
Criticism from superiors	17.24	55.17	27.59	0.00	0.00
Decision-making process	20.69	34.48	37.93	6.90	0.00
Event management information	17.24	62.07	20.69	0.00	0.00
Fair appraisal system	62.07	24.14	10.34	3.45	0.00
Good work team	24.14	58.62	17.24	0.00	0.00
Information about performance result	27.59	37.93	34.48	0.00	0.00
Opportunity to express one's opinion	31.03	34.48	34.48	0.00	0.00
Superior's recognition	41.38	37.93	17.24	0.00	3.45
Supervisor's approach	37.93	37.93	24.14	0.00	0.00
Way of completing the assignments	10.34	55.17	31.03	3.45	0.00

As far as interpersonal relationships are concerned (Table 4), 62.07% of respondents considered the fair appraisal system and 41.38% of respondents considered the superior's recognition as the "most important" motivation factors. The event management information is "important" for 62.07% of respondents, and 58.62% consider a good work team as "important".

Table 5. Relative Multiplicity of Respondents Evaluating the Criteria of Technical and Logistic Conditions of Work, According to the Level of Importance

Motivation Factor	Very Important	Important	Medium Important	Less Important	Unimportant
Division of work	27.59	37.93	34.48	0.00	0.00
Work organization	41.38	24.14	24.14	10.34	0.00
Workflow	10.34	55.17	20.69	13.79	0.00
Working time	27.59	51.72	20.69	0.00	0.00
Workplace technical equipment	10.34	55.17	34.48	0.00	0.00

In the area of technical and logistic conditions of work (Table 5), 41.38% of respondents viewed work organization as "very important", followed by working time (27.59%) and the division of work (27.59%). For more than 50% of the respondents, the workplace technical equipment is "important" as well as the workflow (55.17%) and working time (51.72%).

The top 10 motivation factors were considered by employees, and the most important were subject to a more detailed analysis using the methods of inductive statistics (Table 6). Using a one-way analysis of variance, at the significance level $\alpha = 5\%$ it was verified that the averages of the importance of 10 motivation factors are statistically significantly different ($p = 0.000$). On the basis of the follow-up post-hoc tests (Duncan's test $\alpha = 5\%$), significant differences in the level of importance of the motivation factors were identified in pairs. The p -levels of the pairs of the motivation factors are highlighted with statistically significant differences under the diagonal line.

Table 6. Results of Tested Pairs of Motivation Factors, Ordered According to the Level of Importance

	M= 4.621	M= 4.483	M= 4.448	M= 4.310	M= 4.241	M= 4.138	M= 4.138	M= 4.069	M= 4.069	M= 4.069
Base salary		0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Job security	0.002		0.444	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Fair appraisal system	0.000	0.444		0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Fringe benefits	0.000	0.000	0.002		0.126	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Occupational safety	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.126		0.022	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.000
Supervisor's approach	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.022		1.000	0.149	0.177	0.165
Superior's recognition	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.029	1.000		0.126	0.165	0.149
Working time	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.149	0.126		1.000	1.000
Good work team	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.177	0.165	1.000		1.000
Atmosphere in the workplace	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.165	0.149	1.000	1.000	
Duncan's test: Marked differences are statistically significant at the $p < .05000$ level										

Table 7. Motivation Factors, Ordered According to the Level of Importance

	Motivation Factor	Average	Standard Deviation	Confidence Interval -95.00%	Confidence Interval 95.00%
1.	Base salary	4.62	0.49	4.58	4.66
2.	Job security	4.48	0.62	4.43	4.54
3.	Fair appraisal system	4.45	0.81	4.38	4.52
4.	Fringe benefits	4.31	0.70	4.25	4.37
5.	Occupational safety	4.24	0.78	4.18	4.31
6.	Supervisor's approach	4.14	0.77	4.07	4.21
7.	Superior's recognition	4.13	0.94	4.06	4.22
8.	Working time	4.07	0.69	4.02	4.13
9.	Good work team	4.06	0.64	4.01	4.12
10.	Atmosphere in the workplace	4.05	0.74	4.00	4.13

In the following step, the motivation factors were ordered by the level of importance, as they were rated by the respondents (Table 7). There were 10 motivation factors that acquired the highest values of the selected averages. With the exception of the selected averages and standard deviations, Table 7 also presents 95%-confidence intervals for the sampling unit averages. Based on the collected data, the research outcomes were generalized, and further assumptions were made. For example, one can assume with a 95% confidence, when rating the base salary factor, employees would give this factor an average rating from 4.58 to 4.66 in a similar survey. Job security was rated as the second most important motivation factor, and the third position among the top important motivation factors was taken by the fair appraisal system.

Base salary was rated as “the most important.” The reasoning perhaps lies in the valued added and in the lack of the amount of wages. According to the Slovak Bureau of Statistics (<https://slovak.statistics.sk>), average monthly salary in forestry industry was 670 Euro in 2015; in wood-processing industry average monthly salary was almost 800 Euro, which is under the average salary in general industry – 877 Euro in 2015. Similar outcomes were confirmed by Faletar *et al.* (2016), who discovered that employees were more afraid of their salaries during crisis. This result is understandable, as the number of unemployed people in Croatia during crisis was high, and it was very hard to find another job. It is evident from the results of another foreign research study that pay and benefits play a key role in motivating employees towards their organizational goal of higher satisfaction (Ahmad *et al.* 2012). But based on the previous research of Hitka *et al.* (2014) the effect of the world economic crisis, and its economic and social impacts, does not lead to a significant change in the level of employee motivation in woodworking industry. A huge difference was identified in the second motivational factor, which was represented by job security. The third motivation factor was a fair appraisal system. Job security and a fair appraisal system were considered equally important for employees. The importance of job security, basic salary and financial remuneration has been clearly confirmed by research of Hitka and Sirotiaková (2011) and Hitka and Štípalová (2011).

These criteria make it clear that employees, in order to achieve job satisfaction, need the feeling of security, support, and stability, and also a sense for fair appraisal. Sanchez-Sellero *et al.* (2014) show that the variable that exerts the greatest influence on job satisfaction is motivation. The following factors included fringe benefits and occupational safety. Employees recognized fringe benefits to be important, however, they did not consider them as crucially important as their base salary. In terms of statistics, fringe benefits and occupational safety were considered equally important. These factors were considered as a very sensitive area, as they are usually not parts of a fixed salary. The amount of benefits and rewards is individually set for each working position, and these are also stipulated within work contracts. Interestingly, fringe benefits were rated as equally important for occupational safety. An explanation may lie in the fact that employees often work in very stressful conditions, which may have a directly negative impact on their health and thus, may require additional finances. The last five motivation factors with the lowest degree of importance was represented by supervisor’s approach, superior’s recognition, working time, good work team, and atmosphere in the workplace, which all belong to the area of interpersonal relationships at workplace. The group of the last five motivational factors was considered equally important for employees. However, these 5 factors were considered “very important” from the global point of view of all 36 factors.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Motivational factors were ordered according to their level of importance by participating senior managers. Following the collected data, the 3 motivation factors of a base salary, job security, and the use of a fair appraisal system, were considered the most important.
2. In the forestry and wood-processing sector in Slovakia, motivational factors affecting the development of personal relations and job security should be the centre of attention. Following the research outcomes, the motivation factors were divided into three fields relating to finances, work performance, and social status. The most important financial motivation factors included base salary, a fair appraisal system, and fringe benefits. Job security, occupational safety, and working time were the most important work performance-related motivation factors. The supervisor's approach, superior's recognition, good work team, and atmosphere in the workplace were factors associated with social status. Other motivation factors were of secondary importance.
3. Creating motivational programmes is a difficult and expensive activity for any organization. Its effectiveness is influenced by an exact employee needs analysis. These needs often depend on employees' sex, age, seniority, and level of education completed. Moreover, employee motivation factors need to be re-evaluated periodically as some of them are, after some needs are covered, subject to change.
4. The Slovak government tries to improve the conditions of employment and work conditions of all employees in Slovakia including those working in the forestry and wood-processing industry. Some of the supporting agenda related to this improvement includes the National Plan of Regional Development and Field Operational Plan "Human Resources Development" and Law no. 568/2009 on Lifelong learning; followed by Law 386/1997 have been issued. The main aim of these materials is to provide the working environment where an employee can acquire and broaden his/her qualification in accordance with the labor market requirements.

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