

## **YOUNG EMPLOYEES – WORK SATISFACTION AND MOTIVATION**

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### **Abstract**

*Job satisfaction refers to a set of positive reactions of an employee towards his job. This implies not only economic yield but also social and personal performance, which means that the employee benefits from participating in work activities and also from obtaining personal advantages such as remuneration, a stable job and promotion prospects. Motivation refers to all the incentives and impulses that can push somebody to do something or to aspire to certain goals. This study is based on a research whose aims are to identify what satisfies and what motivates young people at the workplace. The sample consists of 151 young employees with ages ranging from 15 to 29 years old. The concept of job satisfaction is seen in literature and by both employers and employees as a state of wellbeing or a positive mood which results from combining the right amount of employee opinion, work climate and proper motivating management. The resulting work and level of satisfaction is directly influenced by the relationship with the management and co-workers and also by the work conditions. In terms of the stimulating part of motivation, it is shown that employees are feeling satisfied when their merits are considered, when they are rewarded accordingly and when they feel motivated for their next activities.*

**Keywords:** Satisfaction, motivation, young people, Spearman coefficient

**JEL Classification:** M54, E24, C12

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### **Introduction**

Young people account for an important part of the active workforce and they are a crucial asset for any country's economy. The companies that value the young employee's potential can benefit long-term and if they manage to keep them pleased and satisfied they will have a better return, will bring more profit and will take part in the evolution of the company.

Job satisfaction is an important element of a company because it involves its social role and its capacity to provide "a place to work and live". This means that the company has the obligation to offer its employees all the possibilities to develop their personality. From the company's point of view, employee satisfaction involves human resources components, which are one of the most important factors which account for the overall efficiency of the company.

Motivation is a key element for performance and it is in general determined by benefits and importance given at work: earnings, promotion to a higher position, maintaining the current job if necessary, avoiding sanctions and criticism as much as possible, superiors consulting employees whenever taking decisions regarding the team, prestige and esteem among colleagues, favorable work environment, well-done activities and their usefulness.

### **1. Literature review**

Above all, in order to obtain job satisfaction, one has to understand what self-knowledge is. A definition of this concept can be the focusing of attention to oneself, and that is, to monitor how you do your tasks in order to see precisely and clearly the goal and the way to achieve it. People who are self-aware are much more responsible, they assume failure and success, tend towards success and so they have greater satisfaction (Rowan, 2009).

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Once the self-knowledge is ready, that is, we know exactly what we want and what are the steps to follow, it goes without saying that one must learn from lost opportunities and not leave any of them to waste. Every bold move is noticed, any unsolved topic can become a problem in the future and if a topic has already become a problem it requires involvement. Any problem can be solved, and the ones that we think cannot be solved require a thorough analysis to identify the problem (Rowan, 2009). Once the employee knows himself, the organizational factor intervenes. Depending on the degree of participation in carrying out the activities of the organization, an employee may be satisfied or dissatisfied. Taking part in such activities entails emotions, whether positive or negative. Satisfaction can be studied from several perspectives: attitudinal, psychological and psychosociological. The attitudinal perspective analyzes the fact that an employee has a certain attitude towards working in the interest of the organization, but also in his own interest, such as: the work itself, promotion, admiration, wage, working conditions, supervision and management, co-workers. From a psychological perspective, satisfaction is seen as a positive and pleasant state of well-being as a result of hard work. From a psychosociological perspective, it is the result between what employees think they deserve and what they actually get in return (Micle, 2008).

Dissatisfaction stems from negative feelings and unsatisfactory results at work. This can affect the mental well-being of the employee, leading to working outside of the optimal parameters for both the employee and the whole company. The mental health and the satisfaction that an employee has in their private life is of direct interest to the organization. A mentally healthy employee will have positive attitudes and will carry out activities correctly and efficiently because it will correlate positive out-of-work manifestations with those in the organization (Micle, 2008).

The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (also known as DEX) defines motivation as all the causes, incentives and impulses that can push somebody to do something or to aspire to certain goals (Academia Română – Institutul de Lingvistică "Iorgu Iordan", Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române, Editura Univers Encyclopedic, București, 1996, p. 656). There are internal and external types of impulses that make us react: needs, motives and values, but also impulses that attract us such as impetuses, goals or objectives. These impulses lead to a higher degree of motivation. The motivation has the following characteristics:

- It differs from one individual to another, but can also vary with respect to the same person;
- It is not directly noticeable and must be deduced from previous situations and their consequences;
- It can be determined by a combination of the individual characteristics of the person and the characteristics of the working environment;
- A primary feature of motivation is the link between intentions and the allocation of resources for undertaking specific actions (Fătăciune, 2017).

Personnel stability is a widely debated field that involves a wealth of research in the field of economics, psychology, sociology, but also in the field of management, especially human resources. Staff motivation greatly influences this stability. Therefore, for an organization to be productive and efficient, employees must make an effort and their endeavor only comes from the received motivations (Miron, 2010).

## **2. Research methodology**

The aim of this research is to identify young people's motivations and the degree and sources of satisfaction at their current job. In addition, we aim to find out what helps and stimulates them to be more active and productive in their work. Given that a job involves various general aspects, such as the relationship and communication with colleagues and superiors and also specific aspects of motivation and satisfaction, such as financial and personal stimulation, material benefits and chances of promotion, we wanted to find out to what extent these components can influence young people. We also aimed to find out how much young people are motivated by superiors, the ways to motivate them are and how it influences their work. One of the objectives pursued in this research is the study of dissatisfaction and its triggers in the professional lives of young people, but also how absenteeism and

staff turnover can influence the work environment. The stress level and the involvement of young people is another topic pursued in this paper, these being among the most common drivers of motivation and implicitly of obtaining job satisfaction. Taking into account all the aspects faced by young employees, studying the relationship between motivation and satisfaction is essential. The study provides useful knowledge for the young people in their vocational training and in their successful integration into the labor market, but it also proves necessary for managers and team leaders to properly observe the wishes and needs of young employees. Based on the study of the specialized literature and in close connection with the research objectives we have defined a series of hypotheses:

1. The higher the satisfaction in the personal life, the higher the satisfaction at work;
2. The greater the motivation, the greater the job satisfaction;
3. The lower the motivation, the unhappier the employees are;
4. The lower the job satisfaction, the more young people tend to change jobs;
5. The higher the financial incentives, the higher the job satisfaction.

In order to achieve the objectives and to test the hypotheses, a quantitative research consisting of a questionnaire-based survey was carried out. The questionnaire was applied online, through the survey platform iSondaje.ro, between May 1st and May 28th, on a sample of 151 people. The questionnaire was built in such a way as to offer the possibility to measure the satisfaction of individuals in relation to different indicators such us: amount of work, satisfaction in personal life and its different dimensions, degree of motivation in work and work-life balance. To measure job satisfaction, we put together a series of questions based on different amounts of work, satisfaction and motivation. We used scales between 1 and 5, where 1 represents very dissatisfied and 5 stands for very satisfied. The chosen scale aims to stimulate respondents to answer as honestly as possible:

- The first scale aims to find the level of satisfaction in life, which means the extent to which individuals are satisfied with their lifestyle, their current job, standard of living, working conditions and free time;
- The second scale is based on job satisfaction. More precisely, it is tracking if the young people are respected in the organization, if they feel that they have achieved something through work, if they have learned anything through work, if they are satisfied with the received salary, if working conditions are suitable for accomplishing the tasks, if they are praised by the supervisors and if the activities are diversified;
- The third scale pursues motivation through different types of stimuli.

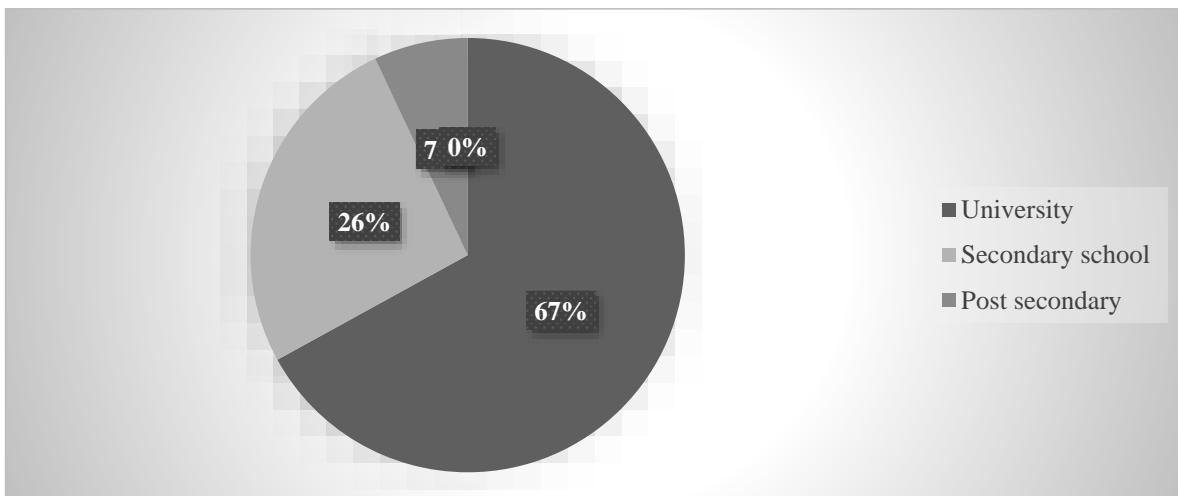
There were also multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire, such as whether respondents feel that they are being paid appropriately for their work.

- There were also questions that consisted in ordering several aspects related to the work in the company;
- There were also used questions that measure agreement or disagreement towards questions about work and motivation that were later divided into positive and negative aspects;
- Motivation and job satisfaction were also tested through multiple-choice questions about non-compliance with deadlines, low efficiency, health issues due to stress and other causes, but also through ordering different motivational elements such as: financial reward, promotion, praise in front of the team, higher salary, criticism from the supervisor or colleagues.

### 3. Results and discussions

#### 3.1 Empirical results

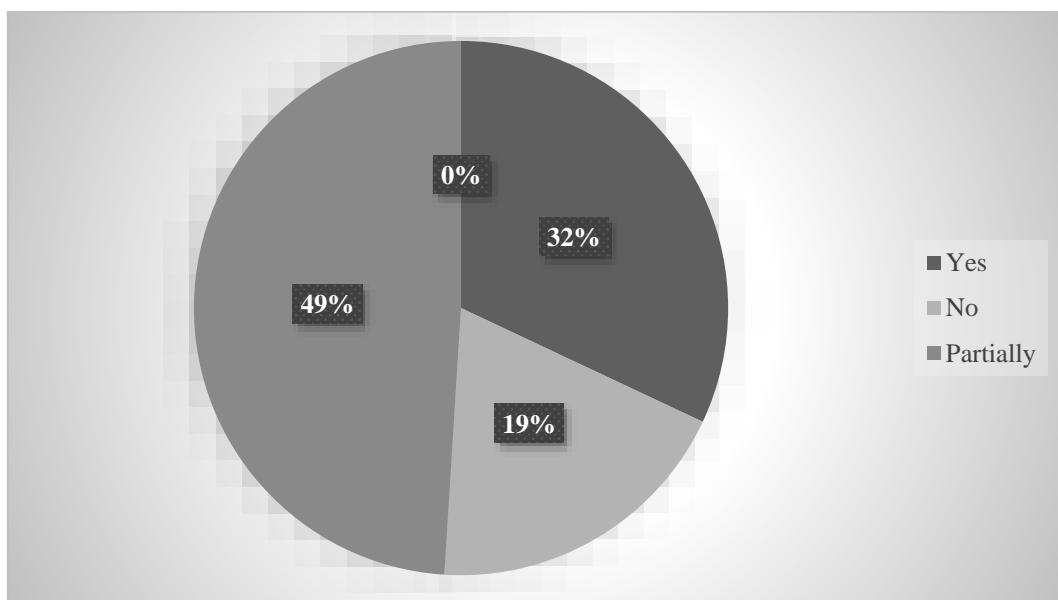
The number of respondents was 151, consisting of both men and women, aged between 15 and 29 years old. A majority of 100 people, representing 66.9% of the respondents, have a Bachelor degree as the highest level of completed school, followed by 40 secondary graduates at about 26.5%, and 6.6% of people having graduated a post-secondary form of education.



**Figure 1. Respondents distribution based on the last graduated school**

Source: made by the author based on the research

Regarding the salary satisfaction, out of the 151 respondents, 74 of them said they are only partially satisfied with the reward received, which shows that most of them find it difficult to evaluate their work. 28 of the respondents are sure that their work is not appreciated at its true value, while 49 of them are satisfied with the reward received. The weights look like this: 49% partially, 18.5% answered no, and 32.5% answered yes.

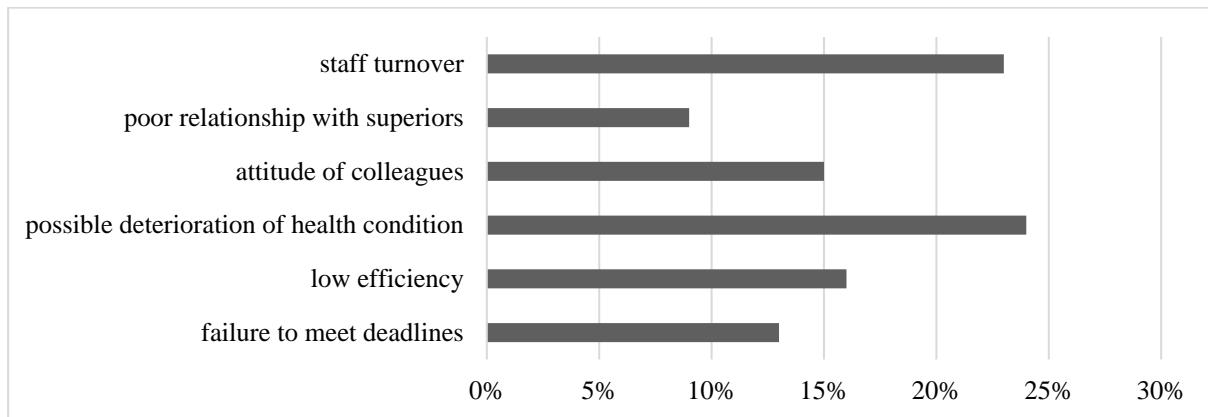


**Figure 2. Respondents distribution according to their opinion on the remuneration for their work**

Source: made by the author based on the research

When we talk about what worries the young employees at work, we talk about failure to meet deadlines, low efficiency, stress, the attitude of colleagues, the relationship with superiors and staff turnover. Following our research young people are most concerned about the possible deterioration of

their health caused by stress, followed by staff turnover and low efficiency in relation to the activities they perform.



**Figure 3. Share of concerns at work**

*Source:* made by the author based on the research

### 3.2 Testing hypotheses

Hypothesis number 1: The higher the satisfaction in personal life, the higher the satisfaction at work.

The correlation between life satisfaction and job satisfaction is significant and of medium intensity. Following the application of the Spearman test, the hypothesis is confirmed ( $r =$ ,  $p = .01$ ). In other words, if life satisfaction is high, the job satisfaction increases.

**Table 1. The relation between life satisfaction and job satisfaction**

Life satisfaction	Spearman	Life satisfaction	Job satisfaction
Life satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.572**
	N	151	151
Job satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	.572**	1.000
	N	151	151

\*\*. The correlation is significant if it exceeds 0.01.

*Source:* made by the author based on the research, output SPSS

The answer distribution shows that most young employees are satisfied with the life and work they have, which is clear from the high average of answers (3.75).

Hypothesis number 2: The greater the motivation, the greater the job satisfaction.

Following the correlation of the two variables (job satisfaction and employee motivation) in the questionnaire, it results that the hypothesis was statistically confirmed with the correlation being significant ( $r =$ ,  $p= .01$ ).

**Table 2. The relation between job satisfaction and motivation**

Variables	Spearman	Job satisfaction	Motivation
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.703**
	N	151	151
<b>Motivate</b>	Correlation coefficient	.703**	1.000
	N	151	151

\*\*. The correlation is significant if it exceeds 0.01.

*Source:* made by the author based on the research, output SPSS

Considering the relation between job satisfaction and motivation, we can say that they are closely related, and that a better motivation is increasing the degree of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis number 3: The lower the motivation, the unhappier the employees are.

The relation between incentives of different types and life satisfaction is statistically significant. Therefore, in the investigated sample, life satisfaction is determined by motivation through financial, social (from co-workers or supervisors) or self-realization incentives.

**Table 3. Relation between life satisfaction and motivation**

Variables	Spearman	Life satisfaction	Motivation
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.550**
	N	151	151
<b>Motivate</b>	Correlation coefficient	.550**	1.000
	N	151	151

\*\*. The correlation is significant if it exceeds 0.01.

*Source: made by the author based on the research, output SPSS*

It is highlighted that by motivating through incentives, especially financial ones, young employees are more satisfied with their life, so they have a higher degree of life satisfaction.

Hypothesis number 4: The lower the job satisfaction, the more young people tend to change jobs.

The correlation between changing jobs and job satisfaction is significant. Following the application of the Spearman test, the hypothesis is confirmed ( $r =$ ,  $p=0.01$ ). In other words, if job satisfaction is low, individuals tend to change their job.

**Table 4. The relation between job satisfaction and job change**

Variables	Spearman	Job satisfaction	Job change
Job satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.550**
	N	151	151
<b>Job change</b>	Correlation coefficient	.550**	1.000
	N	151	151

\*\*. The correlation is significant if it exceeds 0.01.

*Source: made by the author based on the research, output SPSS*

Increasing job satisfaction brings security and puts away the matter of changing jobs. Thus, the answer distribution shows that the two variables are closely linked and that on average young employees want to change jobs if satisfaction does not meet their expectations.

Hypothesis number 5: The higher the financial incentives, the higher the job satisfaction.

Spearman's correlation coefficient has a significance threshold lower than 0.001 and it is safe to say that we have a statistically significant connection. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed, so the salary brings a greater satisfaction to young people in relation to work.

**Table 5. Relation between job satisfaction and salary**

Variables	Spearman	Job satisfaction	Salary
Job satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.552**
	N	151	151
<b>Salary</b>	Correlation coefficient	.552**	1.000
	N	151	151

\*\*. The correlation is significant if it exceeds 0.01.

*Source: made by the author based on the research, output SPSS*

## Conclusions

As a result of processing the obtained data all our hypotheses were confirmed and all the tested correlations are statically significant.

Regarding the degree of life satisfaction in relation to job satisfaction, it turned out that the two elements are essential. In other words, the more satisfied a young employee is at their job, the more satisfied he is with the life he has. On the other hand, motivation is an element that is closely related to job satisfaction. Correlating these elements showed that the higher the motivation through incentives of different types, the higher the degree of job satisfaction.

There were no statistically significant differences in relation to the distinction between men and women. In order to increase job satisfaction, a pleasant work environment and a reduced stress exposure needed. In this way the tendency of young employees to leave work is diminished. Also, the correlation between the tendency to change jobs and job satisfaction showed that a lower job satisfaction entails a job change.

The salary ranges of the respondents showed that most of the young people have monthly earnings between 2001 and 3000 lei, which is also highlighted by the fact that most respondents are partially satisfied with how their work is appreciated.

There are strong links from a statistical point of view in regards to the link between job satisfaction and variables such as lifestyle, current job, standard of living, working conditions, free time and respect among the company. There is also a statistically strong link between motivation and employee happiness, and it is proven that a lack of motivation leads to unhappiness. Motivation, on the other hand, influences both happiness and job satisfaction, but especially if we are talking about motivation through financial incentives.

Therefore, we identified some elements that employers (regardless of the area of activity) must take into account, such as: life satisfaction, satisfaction with the performed work, expectations of the young employees and required motivation. The well-being of employees is a key element because young employees are the center in all activities of a company.

The topic of young employees is much debated nowadays, whether it is performance through work or motivation, both lead to greater employee satisfaction. On the other hand, dissatisfaction, staff turnover, staff stress, absenteeism and certain aspects of human resource management, are all elements that could lead to poor performance if not improved by effective management. The relationship with the management or colleagues and working conditions are directly affecting work and satisfaction through work. Regarding the stimulating part of the motivation, employees are satisfied when their merits are recognized and when they are rewarded and motivated for future activities.

Financial incentives are on the first position in terms of motivating young employees, but it is not alone. An employee must have a sense of belonging to the organization and must feel that it is an important pawn of it.

Although this study aims to contribute to the enrichment of knowledge about the concept of satisfaction and motivation among young people, the study has a number of limitations which may lead to new investigations and future research directions. The main limitation is the lack of

representativeness of the research, in terms of non-probabilistic sampling. Even though the results are indicative they cannot be generalized. A second limitation is specific to the process of administering online questionnaires and it refers to a decrease in control over the answering process. Due to the dynamic and temporal nature of the studied elements, the obtained results can be tested at another time and compared later. As this study was conducted in the labor market in Bucharest, the study can be applied to other areas or cities in Romania.

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