

Motivation, Satisfaction and Knowledge Management

Gregor Jagodič

International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
gregor.jagodic@mfdps.si

Mirza Glavič

International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
mirzaky@gmail.com

Purpose: Today's organisations need to be aware of how important their employees are. The organisation is people, so their operation, success, and efficiency depend on employees, motivation, satisfaction, and knowledge.

Study design/methodology/approach: With the empirical research of satisfaction among employees in sample Organisation, we were interested in connecting motivational factors with knowledge management. Theoretically, we researched human resource management, motivation, satisfaction, job performance, knowledge management and career development.

Findings: Empirical findings show that employees are most satisfied with the continuity of employment, the work they do and co-workers, and they are motivated by the dynamism and interest of the work and additional education. They are least satisfied with the possibility of advancement and education, while they are demotivated by multi-shift activities and work on weekends and holidays.

Originality/value: From the point of view of knowledge management, employees want more knowledge, better knowledge transfer and better rewarding of new knowledge.

Definition and meaning of motivation

Motivation is any process of encouraging, maintaining and directing physical and mental activities so that an individual can achieve a goal (Kompore, Stražišar, Dogša, Vec and Curk, 2015, p. 98).

Our behaviour is motivated. On the one hand, it is encouraged by different forces, such as needs, instincts, motives and on the other hand, it is directed towards different goals (goals, values, ideas). Motivational factors can be divided into elements of push motivation (needs, instincts) and attraction motivation (values, ideals and other motivational goals), which are interrelated. With each participating need, there are also goals that we focus on, order to satisfy the requirement (if we are thirsty, we start looking for a drink). Conversely, a phenomenon becomes a motivational goal only when a need, motive or desire works (Šinko, 2000, p. 43).

Mori (2002, p. 31) believes that thought must first be created in the head for everything we want or intend to do. Our thoughts then affect our actions, actions, habits, and ultimately, our ultimate behaviour.

Knowledge management

Knowledge management (KM) is a relatively young science. It began to develop about twenty years ago as a theory - when the need for the best possible KM arose in companies, and it was also transferred to organisations (Oblak, 2005, p. 241). Due to the transition from the industrial to the information or scientific age, the development of KM began, as there was a more modern way of organisation and thinking in organisations and companies (Gomezelj Omerzel, 2009, p. 19).

Today, a significant change occurs in KM because we live in an environment characterised by

constant change. Therefore, an organisation must constantly monitor the situation and changes within the organisation and the environment in the market. In this way, leaders acquire new knowledge and skills (Vukasović, 2012, p. 61–63).

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995, p. 19) described KM as the ability of an organisation to create new knowledge that is created inside the organisation. If employees are involved or receive organisational learning, they will make new knowledge. The condition for success is that organisations continuously create new knowledge and use it in new products and technologies.

Dermol (2013, p. 6) defined KM as a process in which an organisation must make optimal use of knowledge-based resources, including knowledge of individuals, groups or associations, and knowledge available from other individuals and groups. Thus, the KM system includes acquiring, storing and organising knowledge and creating new knowledge and transferring knowledge in the organisation.

KM puts man at the forefront as a source and value. Therefore, it is crucial to transform people's knowledge and connect unstructured information into generally accessible and structured learning through a knowledge base accessible to all employees in the organisation (Možina, 2006, p. 131).

KM is a tool to increase the value of knowledge. It means applying knowledge in the organisation, namely by staffing, motivating, communicating, managing and verifying the match between established and imagined knowledge and related appropriate action. KM is thus part of the whole management process, which focuses on the systematic analysis, planning, acquisition, creation, development, storage and use of knowledge. It seeks to transform as much of the organisation's human capital as possible into its structural capital. The organisation's advantages enable it to achieve its goals rationally (Možina, 2006, p. 131).

Employee satisfaction and job performance

Practice and empirical research confirm that job satisfaction is an essential factor in the level of motivation for work. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction at work reflects the stimulation for work and the current work situation (Tanasijević, 2011, p. 116–117).

Workplace satisfaction is a complex and multifaceted concept that can have different meanings for individuals. We often associate it with motivation, but that connection is not yet entirely clear; we can argue that satisfaction is not the same as motivation. Job satisfaction is more than just an inner state; it can be related to a personal sense of accomplishment. A sense of satisfaction with the work done is necessary to achieve a high level of motivation and efficiency. Although a certain level of job satisfaction has a good effect on the power of inspiration, this is not always the case (Mullins, 2007, p. 277).

Motivation and employee satisfaction are critical factors in achieving good business results in the organisation. That is also undoubtedly a condition for good interpersonal relationships. A business culture based on trust, respect, mutual communication, teamwork and the free flow of information and knowledge is essential. In organisations where these values are present, and they are aware that motivated and satisfied employees are becoming key nowadays, the organisation is successful. The demands of today are ever-increasing. Employees are not only interested in pay. They want good relations with co-workers and superiors, capable and honest leaders, opportunities for promotion and education, quality and modern equipment, fair division of labour and other benefits. Successful organisations see their employees as the most important capital. Also, nowadays, employees spend a large part of the day at work or work. Fieldwork in combination with administrative work and professional and technical work requires a whole person.

Methodology and research pattern

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the research. A questionnaire with closed and semi-open questions was used. With semi-open-ended questions, we wanted to obtain opinions from the participants on the research topic. The set contained various statements regarding motivation in the workplace, and employees used a five-point scale to assess the extent to which they agreed. The third set of questions was related to KM. We were interested in the opinion of employees on possible improvements to increase motivation and satisfaction, so employees listed three suggestions for improvements or increase motivation and satisfaction. We used a five-point scale to check how employees see KM in the organisation in the fourth set. The last part of the questions included questions about employee demographics. The collected data were statistically processed with the SPSS program.

We published the questionnaire on the MFDPS.1KA portal. In addition, with the help of trade unions, we provided a link to a questionnaire to employees. The survey completed 1,050 employees. Of these, 499 were not entirely fulfilled, and 551 were relevant. Of the number of relevant surveys, 480 respondents completed the entire survey and 71 respondents only partially. Therefore, 551 responses were used as a basis for further analysis. Much of the demographic data was tied to the characteristics of our sample. For example, respondents were asked about gender, region of residence, education, age and length of service.

Analysis of employee motivation in sample organisation

We analysed motivation in the organisation in question. The questionnaire contained statements regarding motivation in the workplace. The claims were evaluated on a five-point scale using a questionnaire. The average score of all motivation-related claims represents the level of motivation. We used ten statements.

Table 1: Level of motivation

	f	M	SD
I am motivated to work on weekends and holidays	523	3,14	1,02
I am motivated for two or more shift work	517	2,97	1,02
I am motivated to work overtime	513	3,34	1,04
I am ready to replace co-workers	515	3,70	0,90
I am motivated to work in the field	515	3,63	1,02
I am motivated for additional education	516	3,93	0,92
I am motivated by the possibility of advancement	517	3,57	1,09
I am motivated by interpersonal relationships	518	3,71	0,97
I am motivated by the interestingness and dynamism of the work	515	4,00	0,87
I am motivated by the possibility of co-decision	513	3,58	1,05

Despite the assumption, employees are not highly motivated to work overtime. We analysed motivation according to gender and region of residence. Based on the analysis, we came to the following conclusions. Looking at the areas first, we find that the motivation is highest in the Savinjska region and again in the Zasavska region. Here, the participants rated the average level of motivation at 3.84 and 3.83, respectively, which means that employees there are motivated to work. On average, they are least motivated to work in the Obalno-kraška region, where the intermediate motivation level is 3.31, which means that employees there are moderately motivated. According to the level of motivation in other areas, we find that motivation is relatively evenly distributed around the average.

In the analysis of the level of motivation according to gender, we observe some more differences. The first finding is that men are, on average, more motivated to work than women. The mean score was 3.59 for men and 3.44 for women. According to the assessment, no significant difference is visible, but the differences become apparent when we check the gender

according to the region. In men, we find that they are most motivated in the Savinjska region. There, male employees rated their motivation for work as high as 3.87, while on average, men from Gorenjska were the least motivated to work, with an average score of 3.36. In other regions, the level of motivation in men is around the middle grade. In women, a more significant gap is observed. The most motivated are women from the Savinjska region with an average score of 3.95, and the least motivated are from the Zasavska region with a score of 2.88. The latest rating is already more different from other ratings, including satisfaction ratings. You could say that women from the Zasavje region are already almost unmotivated to work. Based on the obtained results and the set hypotheses, we also wanted to determine whether motivation is also statistically significant according to gender. The analysis was performed using an independent t-test at the characteristic level $\alpha = 0.05$. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 2: T-test of gender differences on the level of motivation

Motivation	Leven test		T-test			Average difference
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Equality of variance	1,26	0,26	2,21	474	0,03	0,14
Inequality of variances			2,16	229,99	0,03	0,14

To understand the test, it is necessary first to make a null and alternative hypothesis. In our case, there will be a null hypothesis that there are no statistically significant differences between the sexes and an alternative. To make the right choice to read the data, we must first stop at the Leven test. Let's check for differences between the two variants. We find that the calculated p-value is equal to 0.26, which is more than $\alpha = 0.05$. Then, we continue to analyse the t-test. The calculated p-value in our analysis is 0.03, which is less than our 5% risk level. Based on this calculation, we reject our null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. There are statistically significant differences between the sexes in the level of motivation. We continued with the remaining demographics. Let's look at the level of education first.

Table 3: Level of motivation according to the level of education

Education	M	f	SD
Primary school	3,03	3	0,67
Lower vocational education	3,20	2	0,42
Secondary vocational education	3,71	14	0,81
High school education	3,43	144	0,66
Higher education	3,62	121	0,65
Higher professional or university education (1st Bologna level)	3,61	117	0,62
Master of Science (2nd Bologna degree) or university education (according to the old system)	3,63	61	0,56
Master of science	3,31	8	0,39
Doctorate	2,45	2	0,64
Together	3,55	472	0,64

Employees with secondary vocational education are most motivated to work based on results. They rated the motivation level at 3.71 on average. Therefore, individuals with secondary vocational education are the most motivated. Also, in terms of motivation, those with a doctorate and those with primary education are the least motivated. The level of motivation is 3.03 in the others, and only 2.45 in the former. On average, we can find that other groups do not differ to such an extent, and the intermediate level of motivation does not differ. Non-high standard deviation values further indicate this.

Table 4: Level of motivation according to age

Age classes	M	f	SD
16–20 years	5,00	1	0,00
21–25 years	4,32	6	0,41

26–30 years	4,23	11	0,53
31–35 years	3,47	35	0,74
36–40 years	3,64	100	0,64
41–45 years	3,57	118	0,60
46–50 years	3,38	104	0,65
51–55 years	3,43	67	0,57
56–60 years	3,57	15	0,59
61–65 years	3,55	2	1,06
Together	3,54	459	0,65

The level of motivation has decreased slightly over the years. Based on the results, we find that young people have the highest level of motivation, and those over 40 have the lowest. Finally, we analysed the level of motivation in terms of length of service and the impact of length of service on motivation. The general analysis of the level of motivation according to the size of the service shows many exciting facts. First, we notice that those employed in the organisation for 4 years or less are the most motivated to work. The average score of this group is a high of 3.87. In this group, those who have more than 16 years of service stand out or have just joined the organisation with a high score of 4.30 or a high level of motivation. According to the data, we can also observe a decrease in motivation practically every five years. At the maximum working age, the level of motivation is only 2.70. Thus, after years of work, we soon start getting unmotivated people from motivated employees. Another interesting fact can be deduced from the data. The analysis shows that those who have practically spent their entire working life with their current employer are, on average, less motivated than those who have previously worked elsewhere.

Table 5: Regression analysis of satisfaction level by age and total length of service

Model		Non-standard Coefficients			Standard Coefficients		Confidence Interval	
		B	Stand. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower limit	Upper limit
I Constant		3,77	0,276		13,67	0,000	3,230	4,315
Age		-0,02	0,01	-0,23	-2,15	0,032	-0,040	-0,002
Total	supplemented	0,03	0,01	0,33	3,12	0,002	0,009	0,042

Again, we will first look at coefficient B. As already mentioned, this value tells us what the change of the dependent variable is if the independent changes by one point. We notice that the level of motivation practically does not change if the age or working age increases. We also looked at beta. The beta coefficient tells us which of the two independent variables has a more significant influence on the dependent. We note that beta is significantly higher with age and has a more substantial impact on motivation than working life. In the final calculation, we note that the results are not statistically significant for both variables. We observe that the value of $p = 0.03$ is less than our 5% risk level at age. It can be argued that the level of motivation according to age is statistically significant. The opposite is true of working life. The calculated value of $p = 0.76$ is significantly higher than our level of risk, so we can say that the level of motivation in terms of length of service has no statistically significant effect.

Knowledge management analysis in sample Organisation

We also wanted to check how the management of the Organization manages their knowledge according to the employees. We asked employees eight questions related to different areas of KM. Employees rated an individual phrase from 1 to 5, where 5 meant that he ultimately agreed with it or 1 that he did not agree with it at all. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 6: Knowledge management

Assertion	f	M	SD
The employees of the organisation have enough knowledge to perform their work successfully	481	3,59	0,92

Employees pass on knowledge to each other	476	3,86	0,85
The organisation shall provide the necessary training and education for the successful performance of the work	475	2,94	1,05
E-learning helps me rebuild and acquire something new knowledge	473	3,22	1,02
The wishes of employees are taken into account in education and training	476	2,63	1,03
The organisation has a reward system for newly acquired knowledge	476	1,98	0,94
Our employees are ready for additional education and training	473	3,90	0,78
In the organisation, we believe that knowledge is a significant factor in the success of organisations	468	3,66	0,96

In the analysis of KM in the organisation, employees gave quite diverse assessments. Employees believe that they have acquired enough knowledge (3.60), that knowledge is well transferred among employees (3.86) and that they want additional knowledge (3.90). Based on the results, we could say that there is no shortage of expertise in Organization. However, we find that newly acquired knowledge is not rewarded. Employees rated this claim at only 1.98 on average. Although employees want to be educated, they feel that their desire for education is not considered. In addition, all the training they receive is not in line with the education they would need. We also observe a significant standard deviation in all statements. For each phrase, the value of the deviation is on average 1. With the help of these results, we could also say that individual employees' estimates are much different. One could assume that the perception of some regarding governance is good, while others are inferior. Based on the deviations, we could also believe that some receive good communication, rewards, proper education and training, and some do not. As an additional curiosity, we were also interested in whether these responses differed according to demographic characteristics. For this reason, we performed a further analysis by gender.

Table 7: Knowledge management by gender

	Gender		
	Male	Female	Together
The employees of the organisation have enough knowledge to perform their work successfully	3,63	3,48	3,59
Employees pass on knowledge to each other	3,89	3,78	3,86
The organisation shall provide the necessary training and education required for the successful performance of the work	3,01	2,78	2,94
E-learning helps me to renew and acquire new knowledge	3,23	3,20	3,22
The wishes of employees are taken into account in education and training	2,65	2,57	2,63
The organisation has a reward system for newly acquired knowledge	2,00	1,93	1,98
Our employees are ready for additional education and training	3,88	3,98	3,90
In an organisation, we believe that knowledge is a significant factor in the success of an organisation	3,67	3,65	3,66

Although we slightly expected any differences to be observed, we can conclude that there are almost no gender differences based on the results obtained. According to respondents, it could be said that men, on average, agree a little more with individual statements than women. First, however, we would look at some of the claims in more detail. Above all, the claims about adequate knowledge and the provision of additional learning for successful work were striking. It is noticeable that female respondents disagree that the organisation provides sufficient training to perform work than men. The same gender gap also claims that employees have enough knowledge to do a job successfully. Although the grades are not exactly low, there is undoubtedly a question or concern that women think that they receive less education compared to men, and as a result, they gain less knowledge than they would need.

Findings and suggestions

Employees are most motivated by the dynamism and interest of work and additional education, while they are least motivated by multi-shift work and work on weekends and holidays. By analysing KM, we found that employees want more knowledge, that knowledge is well transferred among employees, that they have acquired enough knowledge. Still, it is inappropriate that new knowledge is not rewarded. With the research question, we found that employees want higher pay for their work, improved interpersonal relationships and communication with their colleagues and superiors, and a better promotion system or a better career system. They also expressed the wish to have more employees or that there is a shortage of staff. We will present measures to improve the situation, namely material incentives in the form of increasing income, improving interpersonal relationships or communication, increasing the number of employees and actions in the areas of opportunities for promotion and education (due to low satisfaction with the survey). Theoretically, we will support them.

It is essential that the organisation motivates people with a salary and not for it. Otherwise, the employees will unconditionally want a higher salary. Still, if they get used to always getting something done, it will be a system in which both the employee and the employer will be satisfied (Lipičnik, 1997, p. 180). Given that employees are not precisely dissatisfied with the salary, but still want a higher salary, we believe that the management could introduce the payment of individual performance. Such a payment would increase the basic wage or take a bonus system and depend on the performance achieved by individuals. However, the organisation could also consider performance rewards. These would be rewards strictly related to achieving pre-set goals, which we set to encourage people to the highest possible level of effort. However, we believe that the company should consider higher pay for shift work, night work, Sunday work and holiday work.

Advancement is an important motivating factor. It is one of the intangible factors, among which we also include recognitions and praises. The organisation should constantly monitor the development of potential candidates and train them. There are two ways to progress. The first is horizontal advancement, which involves an increased complexity of the employee's work through work experience and appropriate professional education. We reward and encourage the employee and do not change the job's tasks for a higher salary. Another way to progress is vertical advancement. With this method of promotion, the employee's position and status in the organisation change. In this case, it is a more demanding managerial position, which he can occupy only if the prescribed conditions are met. As a rule, the employee acquires a higher level of responsibility and consequently more responsibilities. The criteria for promotion must be understandable to all, and the promotion system must be in line with developments or changes in the labour market. In this way, the organisation will recognise the career goals and abilities of the employee and have the opportunity to coordinate with the needs of the human resources department. Employees must know what knowledge and competencies they need to achieve to progress.

Management must be aware that employees have become intellectual capital, which today is a valuable asset to increase efficiency with proper management. Employees need to be encouraged to learn on an ongoing basis, acquire new knowledge, be creative and innovate. KM has become a central activity of a modern organisation (Koren, 2012, p. 86).

References

- Dermol, V. (2013). *Sistemi managementa znanja: Dodatno študijsko gradivo 2012–2013*. Celje: Mednarodna fakulteta za družbene in poslovne študije.
- Gomezelj Omerzel, D. (2009). *Management znanja v majhnih in srednjih podjetjih*. Koper: Fakulteta za management. Pridobljeno s <http://www.fm-kp.si/zalozba/ISBN/978-961-266-053-6.pdf>

- Glavič, M. (2020) *Motivacija in zadovoljstvo zaposlenih v organizaciji X* (magistrska naloga). Mednarodna fakulteta za družbene in poslovne študije, Celje.
- Kobal Grum, D., & Musek, J. (2009). *Perspektive motivacije*. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete.
- Kompare, A., Stražičar, M., Dogša, I., Vec, T., & Curk, J. (2015). *Uvod v psihologijo*. Ljubljana: DZS.
- Koren, B. (2012). *Vodenje in motivacija zaposlenih* (magistrska naloga). Mednarodna fakulteta za družbene in poslovne študije, Celje.
- Lau, C. M., & Roopnarain, K. (2014). The effects of nonfinancial and financial measures on employee motivation to participate in target settings. *The British Accounting Review*, 46 (3), 228–247.
- Mori, S. (2002). *7 skrivnosti motivaKcije*. Maribor: Smiljan Mori Success Systems.
- Možina, S. (2006). Vloga menedžmenta znanja v organizaciji. V S. Možina, in J. Kovač (ur.), *Menedžment znanja : znanje kot temelj razvoja : na poti k učečemu se podjetju* (str. 127–151). Maribor: Pivec.
- Mullins, L. J. (2007). *Management and organisational behaviour* (8. izdaja). Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- Nelson, B. (1999). The ironies of motivation. *Strategy & Leadership*, 27(1), 26–31.
- Nonaka, I., & Takeuchi, H. (1995). *The Knowledge-Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Oblak, L. (2005). Pomen znanja in motivacije v podjetjih. *Les: revija za lesno gospodarstvo*, 57(9), 239–242.
- Prossack, A. (2018, 31. May). How To Resolve Conflict In The Workplace. *Forbes*. Pridobljeno s <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashiraprossack1/2018/05/31/how-to-resolve-conflict-in-the-workplace/#1d70875a387c>
- Tanasijevič, Z. (2011). Zadovoljstvo poslom-ključni pokazatelj motivacije zaposlenih. *Sociološka luča*, 5(1), 116–123.
- Šinko, B. (2000). *Psihologija dela*. Maribor: Doba.
- Tanasijevič, Z. (2011). Zadovoljstvo poslom-ključni pokazatelj motivacije zaposlenih.
- Treven, S. (1998). *Management človeških virov*. Ljubljana: Gospodarski vestnik.
- Vukasović, T. (2012). *Trženje: od temeljev trženja do strateškega tržnega načrtovanja*. Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem.