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MOTIVATION TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIC APPROACH TO MOTIVATION IN FBiH COMPANIES

Abstract: The success of a company depends on the employees, so the challenge for managers is to monitor their needs continuously and find ways to encourage them to work and achieve goals. By using a combination of compatible material and non-material techniques within motivation strategies, managers link long-term company goals and rewarding employees for work and achievements. The aim of this paper is to get insight into the used motivation techniques and strategic approach to motivation in companies in the Federation of BiH (FBiH). The survey was conducted in early 2019 and covered 63 companies. The most commonly used material motivation techniques are salaries, bonuses, and paid leave, and the most commonly used nonmaterial techniques are appropriate working hours, information on work results and the possibility of advancement. Almost half of the managers state that there are established rules for motivating employees in their companies, slightly more than ¼ point out that there is an established plan for motivating employees that is continuously implemented. Only a part of the surveyed companies, have a continuous, systematic way of monitoring employee motivation. Assessing motivation and taking corrective action is most often carried out by top management, two or more times a year. The results indicate that some companies in the FBiH have not yet realized that the human factor is a key factor in achieving better business results. In order for motivation to be truly effective, it must be approached in a planned and continuous manner.

Keywords: motivation, motivation techniques, strategic approach to motivation

1. INTRODUCTION

The most valuable assets in an organization are the people working in it but because of human nature people are also the most difficult resource to handle (Noko and Nwuzor, 2021). One of the reasons for this certainly lies in the fact that people are different, and that there is no universal way to encourage the desired behavior. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the complexity and personality of each individual, and develop different approaches to motivation with regard to the goals to be achieved.

In a work environment, the realization of any type of work requires the participation of employees of a certain structure and a certain quality and their willingness to ensure certain results, which actually depends on the level of motivation (Zámečník, 2014). Motivation is a dynamic process that links an individual or group in a complex interaction with the environment (Chiffre and Teboul, 1990), so the main challenge for today's management is to create a motivated workforce, i.e. to create such an environment in which a high level of motivation will be maintained. Building an appropriate motivation system, as the frame of all activities of a particular company aimed at motivation, allows management to influence employees and direct their behavior. For employees to be motivated to work, managers need to build practical, timely and appropriate policies for each individual to promote their work motivation (Thang and Nghi, 2022).

Rewards and incentives are one of the most effective managerial tools with which they can influence individual or group behavior, but also organizational results (Dobre, 2013). Considering that reward can be anything that has value

and meaning for the recipient it is clear that workers will not be motivated if rewards are not related to their preferences and values because motivation is an internal state and not an imperative to impose (Chiang and Birtch, 2007; Nicu, 2012). The manager has to understand each or different categories of an employee in terms of what motivates or demotivates them and built their reward system around that understanding (Alase and Akinbo, 2021).

Previous research on the effects of rewards on motivation shows that most authors agree that combining different forms of rewards and incentives can affect motivation. However, when it comes to money or material forms of incentives in terms of their importance and potentially dominant role in motivating employees, the results are quite different. Thus, one group of authors (e.g. Stajkovic and Luthans, 2001; Khan et al., 2010; Hafiza et al., 2011) concludes that material rewards have a stronger impact on motivation, while the studies of others (e.g. Pawlowski et al. 2005; Nandanwar et al., 2010; Zani et al., 2011) point to the greater importance of nonmaterial rewards.

Many of the factors influencing motivation can have a great influence on work outcomes because of the strong connection between work motivation and work outcomes (Ivanov and Usheva, 2021). Consequently, it has been important for the organisational managers to keep tracking of the motivational level of the employees so they could produce higher level of performance (Girdwichai and Sriviboon, 2020). The need to research, understand and implement employee motivation is the primary concern of modern organizations and managers because motivation is a key factor for performance (Kim, 2006).

Therefore, encouraging work and achieving goals requires a strategic approach to motivation, i.e. building a system of motivation and reward based on the vision and strategy of the company which can achieve long-term growth of the organization (Niki et al., 2012). A strategic approach to motivation ensures the connection of long-term goals of the company with rewarding individuals for work and achievements. Optimal combinations of material and nonmaterial motivation techniques are used as tools for the implementation of motivation strategies, depending on what motivation is to be achieved.

From the above it is clear that work motivation is a complex variable that is influenced by many factors, but is also a factor that affects work achievement and ultimately performance. Therefore, a strategic approach to management of motivation is a key determinant of success of any company. This paper is therefore aimed at investigating the prevalence of such an approach in FBiH companies and investigating the prevalence of certain material and nonmaterial techniques.

After this introduction, which gives a brief overview of motivation and motivation techniques, and highlights the aim of the paper, follows a methodology that describes the instrument and samples characteristics and statistical analysis. After that, the results of the conducted research were presented, the same were discussed and conclusions were made with reference to future research in this area.

2. METHODOLOGY

Empirical research was conducted in early 2019 on the population of large and medium-sized enterprises doing a business in the Federation of BiH. Medium (50-250 employees) and large (above 250 employees) companies employ a larger number of people and it is assumed that they have to some extent developed departments for human resource management. In small companies, the most common case is that one person performs tasks related to this function or even more often no one systematically performs these tasks. For this reason, small businesses are not even taken into account when defining the population.

The survey questionnaire used in the research was prepared based on similar research available in the literature. It consists of 26 questions with offered answers. Respondents answered by selecting multiple answers or selecting one answer, using the Likert scale with five degrees of intensity (in results, for some questions the 5-degree scale is reduced to three levels). In accordance with the set goal, in this paper the results for 8 questions were presented. The questions refer to the general characteristics of the company, determining the use of material and nonmaterial techniques in the company, the motivational potential of existing techniques in the company, the strategic nature of motivation and the general level of employee motivation.

Data were analyzed in IBM SPSS Statistics, version 25 (Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.). The analyzed characteristics of companies are presented as number and percentage and the mean and standard deviation. The results are shown in tables and described in the text.

The results of the empirical research are based on a sample of 63 companies, 51 (81.0%) medium and 12 (19.0%) large companies. The analysis of the activities of the surveyed companies showed 10 different activities, of which 34 companies, or 54.0% of the sample are companies engaged in activities within the secondary sector, and the rest are companies engaged in activities in the tertiary sector (29 and 46.0 %). The mean age of employees is 37.7 years (SD = 7.0), and the mean length of service is 13.6 years (SD = 8.7).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The obtained results show that pay, bonuses and incentives, paid leave and days off, as well as official cars and mobile phones are used the most in the surveyed companies. Of the nonmaterial techniques the most common are flexible working hours, feedback and promotion.

Among material techniques, gainsharing and stock-sharing have the lowest representation, while the possibility of work at home stands out due to the low representation in the group of nonmaterial techniques.

The frequency of use shows that certain techniques are used relatively rarely, although the analysis showed their stronger representation in a large number of companies. Examples of such material techniques are benefits for innovations and improvements, education with work and training and scholarships for family members of employees and almost all techniques in the group of nonmaterial techniques, except for flexible working hours.

The representation and frequency of the use of material and nonmaterial techniques in the process of employee motivation in the surveyed companies is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of enterprises according to the frequency of implementation of motivation procedures

Frequency of implementation of motivational procedures	Number (%) of the companies					
	N/A	Don't use	Use	Frequency of use		
				Rarely	Periodically	Often
Material techniques						
Pay	1	0	62 (100.0)	1	13	48
Bonuses and incentives	1	6 (9.7)	56 (90.3)	7	21	28
Compensation for innovations and improvements	4	23 (39.0)	36 (61.0)	11	19	6
Gainsharing	5	53 (91.4)	5 (8.6)	3	2	0
Stock-sharing	5	53 (91.4)	5 (8.6)	3	0	2
Education with work and training	3	9 (15.0)	51 (85.0)	10	26	15
Scholarships for family members	4	35 (59.3)	24 (40.7)	6	14	4
Paid leave and days off	2	3 (4.9)	58 (95.1)	7	23	28
Life and other insurances	4	32 (54.2)	27 (45.8)	2	11	14
Use of official cars and mobile phones	1	5 (8.1)	57 (91.9)	10	20	27
Nonmaterial techniques						
Work redesign	4	4 (6.8)	55 (93.2)	14	29	12
Participation in decision making	3	13 (21.7)	47 (78.3)	11	23	13
Participation in goal setting	2	9 (14.8)	52 (85.2)	18	21	13
Flexible working hours	3	6 (10.0)	54 (90.0)	7	13	34
Work at home	2	39 (63.9)	22 (36.1)	14	7	1
Public praises and recognition	3	18 (30.0)	42 (70.0)	14	19	9
Feedback	3	2 (3.3)	58 (96.7)	12	20	26
Promotion	1	2 (3.2)	60 (96.8)	10	24	26
N/A – not answered						

Source: Author's preparation

Pay is obviously used in the observed companies as the main material incentive for the desired behavior. The reason for this is the fact that money ensures the satisfaction of existential needs, but can also meet other needs of a higher order, which contributes to the widespread use of this material technique among the observed companies. On the other hand, the low representation of gainsharing and stock-sharing techniques shows that they are still not sufficiently recognized as alternative forms of material rewards, as well as compensation for innovations and improvements, and benefits such as education with work and training or scholarships for family members of employees who, despite good representation, are rarely used. The focus of material rewards on wages, paid leave and days off, and bonuses and incentives, or those forms that are probably the most "visible" and known form for employees may indicate that material motivation is not approached in an appropriate way, i.e. that the choice the technique is not based on the real needs of employees but on the belief of management about the importance of a particular motivator.

As far as nonmaterial techniques are concerned, it can be concluded that most of the offered ones are quite well represented in the observed companies. Apart from nonmaterial techniques the possibility of work at home is not used by almost two thirds of respondents and is also one of the least used techniques. The reason for this may be the fact that in certain activities (e.g. production, construction) it is actually impossible to do work in such a way. On the other hand, there is an indication that such an approach to work in a large number of companies was not even considered as a possibility given the different established practices, but also possible doubts about the effectiveness of such a way of working. There is, of course, the need to invest in adequate resources to work at home, which may also contribute to the under-representation of this technique.

Public praises and recognition as a technique is not represented by almost a quarter of companies, which is surprising because this technique does not represent a cost for companies, and publicly thanked the worker for the results can have great motivational potential for that person.

When asked about the strength of the impact of material and nonmaterial techniques on employee motivation in the respondents' companies, the following scores were obtained: 4.30 (SD = 0.91) for material techniques and 3.32 (SD = 1.16) for nonmaterial techniques. Within this question, one respondent stated that material techniques do not motivate employees from his company, while in the case of nonmaterial techniques 6 respondents answered the same. From such

results it is evident that, unlike material motivation, respondents on the issue of nonmaterial approach to motivation have significantly different attitudes and experiences. It is possible that nonmaterial techniques in many companies did not give good enough results, which may be due to ignorance of the needs of employees, and even inappropriate application of such techniques. In addition, it should bear in mind, as with other answers, that these are assessments and personal views of the surveyed managers, which do not necessarily reflect the real situation.

More than half of the respondents, i.e. 39 of them (61.9%) state that material rewards motivate employees in their companies better, while 23 respondents pointed out that the best combinations are material and nonmaterial techniques. This also confirms the previously stated assumption that money, i.e. various monetary forms of incentives, obviously play a dominant role in motivating employees in the observed sample of companies. Namely, as shown earlier, for the vast majority the influence of material motivation is clear and visible, while in the non-material approach the attitudes were quite divided. But despite the fact that managers generally do not see the potential of nonmaterial rewards, it should be noted that for a third of respondents the combination of material and nonmaterial forms of rewards gives the best results in terms of motivating employees. It can be assumed that this is a group of companies that have developed a balanced approach to motivation based on the real needs of their employees, and which implies their material and nonmaterial satisfaction, thus achieving mutual benefit.

Table 2: Distribution of enterprises according to the frequency of implementation of motivation procedures

	Number of the companies	%
Approach to the implementation of motivational procedures		
Employee motivation procedures are applied very rarely or never	1	1.6
Motivation procedures are applied from time to time	17	27.0
There are established rules for motivating employees in certain cases	27	42.9
There is an established employee motivation plan that is continuously implemented	18	28.6
Companies have a continuous, systematic way of monitoring employee motivation		
Yes	25	39.7
No	38	60.3
In charge of monitoring motivation in companies (n=25)		
Top management (director, board or owner)	14	56.0
Special department in the company (human resources, etc.)	3	12.0
Immediate managers (managers, task managers, project managers, etc.)	7	28.0
Someone else	1	4.0
Frequency of assessing employee motivation (n=25)		
Two or more times a year	17	68.0
Once a year	6	24.0
Occasionally, less than once a year	2	8.0

Source: Author's preparation

When it comes to the strategic approach to motivation in FBIH companies, it should be noted that this study took into account the fact that in practice the concept of strategy for each person has a different meaning, which makes it difficult to determine the actual existence of motivation strategy. Strategy is, by definition, a characteristic way in which managers understand company goals and develop human and other resources to achieve them (Boxal and Purcell, 2008), which actually leaves a lot of room for those who define or implement the strategy. Therefore, this research sought to assess which companies think strategically and act systematically in the field of employee motivation, i.e. to separate companies that have a more systematic approach to motivation than those that do not.

The frequency of implementation of employee motivation procedures in the surveyed companies shows that two thirds, i.e. 45 companies have in some form developed a systematic approach to motivation that is continuously implemented or is implemented in certain cases (Table 2). However, in the remaining 18 companies, employee motivation procedures are applied very rarely or never or occasionally. Such results indicate that in a significant part of the FBIH, the role of the human factor is still insufficiently recognized and recognized in the sense that not enough attention is paid to motivating employees. This can be explained by inadequate management and wrong business policy of those companies for which their own employees are not the most important resource and source of competitive advantage. Furthermore, this also implies that, since they do not apply motivational procedures at all or only use them occasionally, these companies very likely do not even consider motivating and rewarding employees in a strategic context.

Respondents were also asked in the survey to indicate whether there is a continuous, systematic way of monitoring employee motivation in their companies. Out of a total of 63 companies included in the survey, 25 stated that it existed, while the answer of the remaining companies was negative, which shows that companies without a systematic approach to employee motivation dominate. The relatively small number of those who systematically monitor motivation levels can also be considered an indicator of the development of awareness of the importance of work motivation to achieve the desired results in the observed companies. However, taking into account that one-third of companies only occasionally or never implement certain procedures to motivate and encourage employees, such results only confirm the

assumption that FBIH companies are still not sufficiently developed awareness of the importance of employee motivation.

For 25 companies that have a continuous, systematic way of monitoring employee motivation, it was further investigated who conducts motivation assessment, how often and in which range of assessments. It was found that in these companies in most cases (56%) the assessment of work motivation is entrusted to top management. This indicates that there is actually no comprehensive and quality monitoring of motivation since top management does not conduct surveys or communicate with all employees, which is why this answer should be taken with caution because it does not reflect the real situation. The results show that in slightly more than 1/4 of companies continuous monitoring of motivation is carried out by direct managers and in only three companies it is carried out by a special department in the company. This additionally indicates that motivation and its monitoring in companies is not approached systematically and in a planned way.

Furthermore, as many as 68% of companies conduct motivation assessments two or more times a year. Motivation is monitored once a year in ¼ of companies and two respondents stated that in their companies conduct evaluations less often than once a year. According to these results, it could be concluded that most of the group of companies conducting the assessment understand the importance of monitoring motivation, which is extremely important for the development and effective functioning of an appropriate motivation system.

The most commonly used grading system is from 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest grade and 5 the highest grade. Only 4 surveyed companies indicated a rating system of 1 - 10.

Table 3 shows the share of surveyed companies that use certain material and nonmaterial techniques in the process of employee motivation with regard to the approach to monitoring employee motivation.

Table 3: Distribution of enterprises according to the frequency of implementation of motivation procedures and the existence of a systematic approach to monitoring employee motivation

	Number (%) of the companies					
	Have a CSWofMEM (n=25)			Don't have a CSWofMEM (n=38)		
	Rarely or periodically	Often	Total	Rarely or periodically	Often	Total
Material techniques						
Pay	1	23	24 (96.0)	13	25	38 (100.0)
Bonuses and incentives	6	18	24 (96.0)	22	10	32 (84.2)
Compensation for innovations and improvements	12	4	16(64.0)	18	2	20 (52.6)
Gainsharing	2	0	2 (8.0)	3	0	3 (7.9)
Stock-sharing	1	1	2 (8.0)	2	1	3 (7.9)
Education with work and training	11	9	20 (80.0)	25	6	31 (81.6)
Scholarships for family members	8	2	10 (40.0)	12	2	14 (36.8)
Paid leave and days off	11	11	22 (88.0)	19	17	36 (94.7)
Life and other insurances	5	5	10 (40.0)	8	9	17 (44.7)
Use of official cars and mobile phones	10	13	23 (92.0)	20	14	34 (89.5)
Nonmaterial techniques						
Work redesign	13	9	22 (88.0)	31	3	34 (89.5)
Participation in decision making	12	8	20 (80.0)	27	5	32 (84.2)
Participation in goal setting	9	8	17 (68.0)	25	5	30 (78.9)
Flexible working hours	11	11	22 (88.0)	9	23	32 (84.2)
Work at home	9	1	10 (40.0)	12	0	12 (31.6)
Public praises and recognition	14	5	19 (76.0)	19	4	23 (60.5)
Feedback	9	14	23 (92.0)	23	12	35 (92.1)
Promotion	9	14	23 (92.0)	25	12	27 (71.1)
CSWofMEM - continuous, systematic way of monitoring employee motivation						

Source: Author's preparation

The analysis of the frequency of use of material and nonmaterial techniques with regard to the existence of a systematic approach to monitoring employee motivation shows similar results as in the whole sample. According to the respondents, some techniques are significantly represented, but their frequency of use reveals the real situation in companies. The results thus show that, despite the large number of surveyed companies that list them, education with work and training, compensations for innovations and improvement, gainsharing and stock-sharing, work redesign and employee participation in decision-making are not often applied in practice. Intensive use is recorded for pays, bonuses and incentives and flexible working hours. It was observed characteristic of both groups of companies - both those that conduct and those that do not conduct continuous and systematic measurement of employee motivation.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the obtained results, it can be concluded that it is certainly possible to act on the level of work motivation in the company by applying various material and nonmaterial forms of rewards and incentives. When it comes to material techniques in the FBIH companies are predominantly represented and most commonly used pays, paid leave and days off and bonuses and incentives, while the gainsharing and stoch-sharing of almost unrepresented and least used techniques. Nonmaterial techniques are well represented, except for the technique of working from home, which is almost unrepresented. However, when it comes to the frequency of using the nonmaterial segment of rewards, it is very low for almost all techniques except flexible working hours, which also confirms the views of most respondents that material techniques have stronger impact on employee motivation.

The research found that a significant number of companies do not approach motivation strategically. Their activities in this area are reduced to ad hoc activities, which indicates that domestic companies have not yet fully understood the importance of the role of the human factor in achieving desired goals. Improving existing motivation practices in domestic companies therefore requires first raising awareness of the importance of motivating employees to achieve more successful performance, and then identifying those factors that most motivate employees and encourage them to work harder. In order for motivation to be truly effective, the first step is to know the needs of employees, and then look for ways to meet them.

Given that rewarding in order to achieve work motivation requires significant resources that companies allocate, then it is primarily in their interest that the investment is justified, i.e. to choose those techniques that really encourage, and not those that are supposed to be able to. By redirecting material resources from elements that are considered in advance, but without solid, research-based evidence, to encourage work motivation to those that are really important to employees, ultimately better business results will be achieved, to the mutual satisfaction.

In the analysis of the obtained results, various limitations in the research should certainly be taken into account. First of all, it should be emphasized that this is a one-time survey and it would be good to repeat it on the same sample, which would give a better and clearer picture of changes in the observed companies, but also allow to identify some specifics. It is also important to mention the time of the research, given that it was conducted immediately before the COVID-19 pandemic and the drastic changes that necessarily occurred in every segment of life, including the work environment. The new situation imposed new working conditions, so the approach to motivation also necessarily changed in the period after the implementation of the research. This is best indicated by the nonmaterial technique researched here, the possibility of working from home, which was the least represented, and in the conditions of a pandemic, imposed itself as often the only possible way of doing business. Therefore, the research should be repeated to determine what and to what extent has changed.

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