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## **FACTORS INFLUENCING YOUTH MOTIVATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET BASED ON OWN RESEARCH**

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## **CZYNNIKI WPŁYWAJĄCE NA MOTYWACJĘ MŁODZIEŻY NA RYNKU PRACY PRZYGOTOWANE NA PODSTAWIE BADAŃ WŁASNYCH**

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**Summary:** The situation in the Polish labour market, in which employers face lower supply of employees and their low efficiency, requires them to take actions aimed at the specific motivation of employees. They have different expectations, which are conditioned by their age, among other things. The research goal was to recognize the motivational expectations of young people on the labour market. The study included students of selected universities from the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship, and the respondents were provided with paper questionnaires to complete. The conducted research proved that young people are positively oriented towards professional challenges and to taking up employment. Although remuneration, bonuses and other financial conditions are important to them, the relationships between people, the respect and the atmosphere prevailing in the company are crucial. These expectations are certainly a challenge for modern entrepreneurs who should modify their employee motivation systems.

**Keywords:** youth, motivation, work, labour market.

**Streszczenie:** Sytuacja na polskim rynku pracy, w której pracodawcy muszą zmierzyć się z niższą podażą pracowników oraz niewysoką ich efektywnością, wymaga od nich podejmowania działań nastawionych na specyficzne motywowanie pracowników. Mają oni bowiem odmienne oczekiwania, które uwarunkowane są m.in. ich wiekiem. Celem badawczym było rozpoznanie oczekiwań motywacyjnych młodych ludzi na rynku pracy. Badaniem objęto studentów wybranych uczelni wyższych z województwa wielkopolskiego, a respondentom do wypełnienia zostały przekazane kwestionariusze ankietowe w formie papierowej.

Przeprowadzone badania dowiodły, że młodzież jest pozytywnie nastawiona do wyzwań zawodowych i do podjęcia pracy. Wprawdzie wynagrodzenie, premie i inne warunki finansowe są dla niej ważne, jednak kluczowe są relacje międzyludzkie, szacunek i atmosfera panująca w firmie. Te oczekiwania z pewnością stanowią wyzwanie dla współczesnych przedsiębiorców, którzy powinni dokonać modyfikacji swoich systemów motywowania pracowników.

**Słowa kluczowe:** młodzież, motywacja, praca, rynek pracy.

## 1. Introduction

Motivating employees is a current problem and applies to all employers and managers who are interested in increasing employee involvement in their work. The tools used in companies are often modified, and companies are constantly looking for modern tools that, with their originality and attractiveness, will attract valuable employees to the company and keep them in it for longer.

Therefore, constant research and analysis are needed to help companies take appropriate actions in the field of employee motivation. Hence the research goal of this article was to identify the motivational expectations of young people in the labour market. The survey method conducted among students of selected universities in the Wielkopolska region helped to identify those elements that can motivate young people to take up employment and then to be involved in the duties assigned to them.

Modern incentive systems recognize that financial elements have the greatest impact on employee engagement. Although the individual needs of employees are increasingly recognized, there are still large disparities in the labour market between what candidates are looking for and what employers offer. In addition, large discrepancies in motivational expectations result not only from the individual personality differences of employees, but primarily from the age differences of employees, as well as their seniority. Against the backdrop of all candidates, young people have higher requirements that differ significantly from those of older workers with experience in market realities. The study showed that in addition to the financial conditions in the company, students also value interpersonal relationships, the atmosphere that surrounds them, and respect.

Research has confirmed the need to perform various types of analyses regarding the motivational expectations of employees in the market and the work offer of employers, as the situation in this area is constantly changing. It is therefore necessary to control the situation in the turbulent labour market so that enterprises do not lag behind others and can adapt their offer of employment to the market requirements as best as possible.

## 2. The situation in the labour market in Poland

The contemporary labour market in Poland is starting to transform into the employee market. This is a new phenomenon in the face of the current employer market since the economic transformation of two and a half decades ago. This situation, extremely beneficial for employees, is a serious challenge for employers [*Wciąż korzystna...* 2018].

Current reports on the situation on the labour market in Poland prove that companies are increasingly struggling to find the right employees. The Grant Thornton report showed that in 2018, 60% of medium and large companies in Poland have problems finding employees, while a year ago this rate was 32% [*Nastal rynek...* 2018].

The existence of the employee market is demonstrated by the very low unemployment rate (the registered unemployment rate according to the Central Statistical Office fell in May 2018 to 6.1%, while it was over 13% five years ago) and a marked improvement in remuneration (average wages in the enterprise sector increased by 7.4% in relation to October last year, to the level of PLN 4,574 gross, which was the fastest rate since 2009. Since the beginning of 2017, salaries in this market segment have increased by nearly PLN 300).

This new market situation results, on the one hand, from the positive economic climate and emerging new job offers, and on the other hand from a number of adverse socio-economic phenomena, which include: ageing of the population, lowering the retirement age and lower than the average in the European Union productivity of Poles [Patorska 2018].

## 3. Literature review

### 3.1. Contemporary motivation system of employees

In the face of a smaller supply of employees, as well as the fact of their relative inefficiency, there is a challenge for employers to appropriately motivate employees to their high commitment to the tasks performed.

Motivation is sometimes referred to as a state of tension and energy readiness to perform specific actions as a result of motives (needs). Motivating, unlike motivation, is the process of conscious external or internal delivery of these motives in order to evoke a state of motivation. This phenomenon is considered from the point of view of the organization and the employee. The effectiveness of motivational processes is not determined by the organization's views on this subject, but the sum of the motivational tension images present in individual employees [Zielak 2019].

Interesting and important research on the discrepancy between what the company offers to employees and what they expect, was carried out by K. Kovach [Bessel et al. 2002]. He created a list of ten factors of motivation, and then asked the surveyed employees and their superiors to rank them from the most important to the least important ones. The results of the study showed significant discrepancies in the validity of motivators in the assessment by employees and employers. The three mostvalued motivators among employees, such as: interesting work, respect for work and a sense of participation, were ranked 5, 8 and 10 respectively, and in turn listed as the first ones among employers were: good remuneration, employment security and the opportunity to develop among employees' opinions, which were in positions: 5,4 and 6.

Motivating, currently recognized as one of the basic functions of management, aims to stimulate employees to take a job in a company, stay in it, grow professionally and personally and increase work efficiency [Król, Ludwiczynski (eds.) 2019].

Employers in Poland already see the need to stimulate employees to act. As the research shows, employers are now aiming to reduce staff turnover and retain employees for longer. Therefore, they are looking for educated, determined people with a clear vision of their professional future who are able to define their expectations towards the employer and identify sources of motivation [[https:// www.forbes.pl](https://www.forbes.pl)]. To fulfill this challenge, employers diagnose the needs of their employees.

The "Motivation Barometer" survey, which was completed by over 4,000 Poles from nearly 300 companies and institutions, shows that financial factors are still an important element of employee motivation (out of 30 identified employees' motivation factors, the salary was third in the ranking of the most important motivators and bonuses ranked eleventh). However, this study also proves that good relationships with colleagues, a good working atmosphere are more important to the average Pole than the amount of earnings [*Barometr...* 2019].

Other studies on employee motivation in Poland (sample of 1572 people from 61 enterprises) show what most inclines employees to get more involved:

- 1) appreciating commitment and successes,
- 2) good atmosphere in the workplace,
- 3) clearly and specifically defined goals and tasks,
- 4) employment security,
- 5) delegating tasks in which the employee can use his/her knowledge more fully,
- 6) improving qualifications – for example: training, studies,
- 7) extension of competences (decision-making),
- 8) accounting for the results achieved, and not for meeting the imposed limits,
- 9) allowing participation in the planning of goals and tasks (not disposing of them),
- 10) clearly defined career path [Niemczyk, Mądry 2009].

### 3.2. Young people on the labour market and their work motivation

A new generation called the Millennium, Generation Y or the generation of the Network Generation have entered the labour market. The beginnings of Generation Y can be traced back to the 1980s up to the late 1990s [McQueen 2016]. This generation is represented by people who are characterized by high self-esteem and self-confidence, which results from constant support and sometimes even being mollycoddled by adults. They are educated, ambitious, tolerant, well-versed with modern technologies and aware of social problems. They perfectly know new technologies, computer techniques and modern IT equipment, and at the same time are able to find the information they need in a very fast way. In addition, they are able to perform many tasks at the same time, they willingly work in teams and create communities with which they often communicate [Fazlagić 2008]. However, according to research, in interpersonal contacts with other people or in the field of communicativeness, they show lower competences than Generation X or baby-boomers [Mazur-Wierzbicka 2015]. The weaknesses of the representatives of this generation include also the lack of ability to make decisions independently (often parents planned their lives), as a result of which they expect the employer to set goals and help in professional development [Kosieradzka, Rojek (eds.) 2018].

The expectations of employees vary depending on their age. The older generation is looking for a well-paid, long-term employment, younger employees primarily want an employer who will provide them with inspiring professional responsibilities and understand their need for continuous personal development. Young people also choose companies that respect the division into private and professional life [*Nastał rynek...* 2018].

On the one hand they expect employers to set development directions and goals, and on the other, independence, lack of restrictions and barriers are extremely important for them. They expect flexible working time and openness to discussions from potential employers. People of this generation want to be assessed on the basis of the results they have achieved, not the time spent at work [Topscott, Bernard 2006]. They often take a demanding attitude towards superiors, expecting an interesting job with an appropriate remuneration and investing in their further professional development [Baran, Kłos 2014].

In addition, surveys of students' opinions, conducted by the Polish Association of Human Resources Management as part of the "I am Y" campaign. "I am not lazy" (1636 students and graduates from the largest academic centres took part in the study) showed a very worrying trend (especially in the face of labour shortages in Poland) that almost half of the Ys are considering the possibility of going abroad in search of better career prospects and development opportunities [*Nastał rynek...* 2018].

## **4. Factors influencing the motivation of young people – conclusions from own research**

### **4.1. Material and methods**

The presented research results are part of a research project aimed at recognizing the expectations of young people in the labour market. The study included students of selected universities of the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. The selection of the university for the study was made deliberately. One non-public university and two public universities were selected, including one providing education according to the practical profile and one according to the general academic profile. To provide a broad view of the issue, the study covered 370 students from twelve different fields of study (mostly economic) and various types of studies: first and second studies, uniform master studies and postgraduate studies.

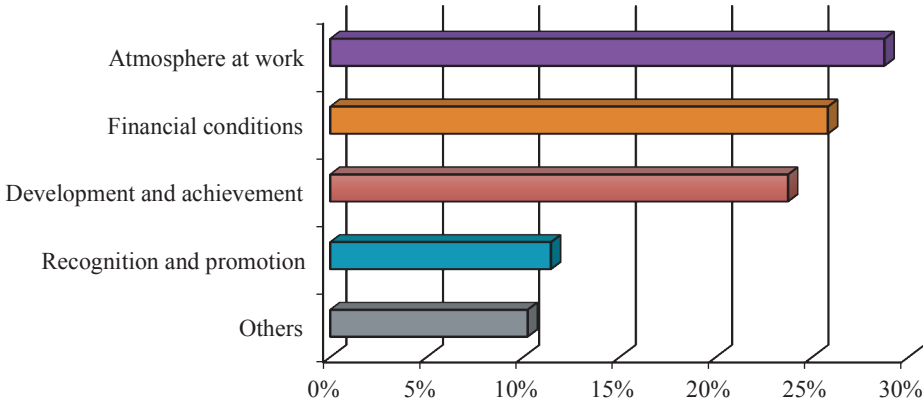
The study was carried out in the period from December 2018 to March 2019, and respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire in paper form. An auditorium survey was used as the method of collecting data from primary sources prepared during various types of meetings with students. This method allowed direct contact with the respondents and clarified any doubts that arose during the completion of the questionnaire. The respondents, after completing all the answers, provided the material directly to the researcher. Data analysis was performed by coding and then processing them using pivot tables based on selected criteria relevant to the inference. In the process of interpreting processed data, the authors' own observations and the researchers' professional knowledge resulting from their professional experience were also used.

### **4.2. Conclusions from the authors' own research**

Young people, contrary to popular opinions about their low positive attitude to professional challenges, are willing and ready to take up work. Almost 70% of young people are enthusiastic about their professional activity or plans related to it. A quarter of them declare that they would like to take up a job, another 22% that are positively oriented towards future work (I am positive about work and I cannot wait for it), and 19% are already professionally active and satisfied with this state of affairs (I work and do it with pleasure). For 26% of young people, work is a necessity and a life obligation (I work because I know that I have to, I know I have to work). There is also a small percentage of 5% of young people who are negatively oriented to their job (I work because I am forced to do so) and plans related to it (I would definitely prefer to postpone it in time).

To the open question about what will be the most encouraging to become engaged in assigned responsibilities (or encourages them when they are already professionally active), young people with the opportunity to identify five motivators have combined

a total of over 70 different factors that can be grouped into several key groups: atmosphere at work (relations with co-workers and with the supervisor), financial conditions (salaries, bonuses and a number of others) development and achievements (development, self-fulfillment, satisfaction with the results, importance in the company) recognition and promotion and others (working conditions, workplace, strategy and company policy, company reputation, compliance with regulations, etc.). which are presented in Figure 1.



**Fig. 1.** Factors most strongly affecting the involvement of young people in the tasks entrusted to them  
Source: own study.

Young people most strongly emphasize the importance of the atmosphere at work – a third of the respondents indicate its key importance. The atmosphere is understood by them as the appropriate relations in the team and with the superior. Appropriate, friendly relations with co-workers, a good team, support from others, etc. is important for 23% of respondents and additionally for good relations with the boss: friendly, humane (as defined by youth) attitude, help in difficult situations are indicated by another 5%.

Second place was taken by broadly understood financial conditions – 26% of young people emphasize that this is a key factor stimulating them to engage. The development and achievements (24% of the declarations), were at a very similar level with development understood as: gaining experience, improving skills, expanding knowledge, working in project teams, work full of challenges, cooperation with specialists, etc., is definitely important for young people – every fourth respondent points to it. In addition, 2% indicate their role in the company, their achievements and satisfaction with the effects, as factors strongly motivating. Details on this subject are presented in Figure 2.

In third place in terms of the strength of motivation for young people to work was a group of factors related to achievements and promotion (indicated by 11% of the respondents). In this group the most important for young people is recognition

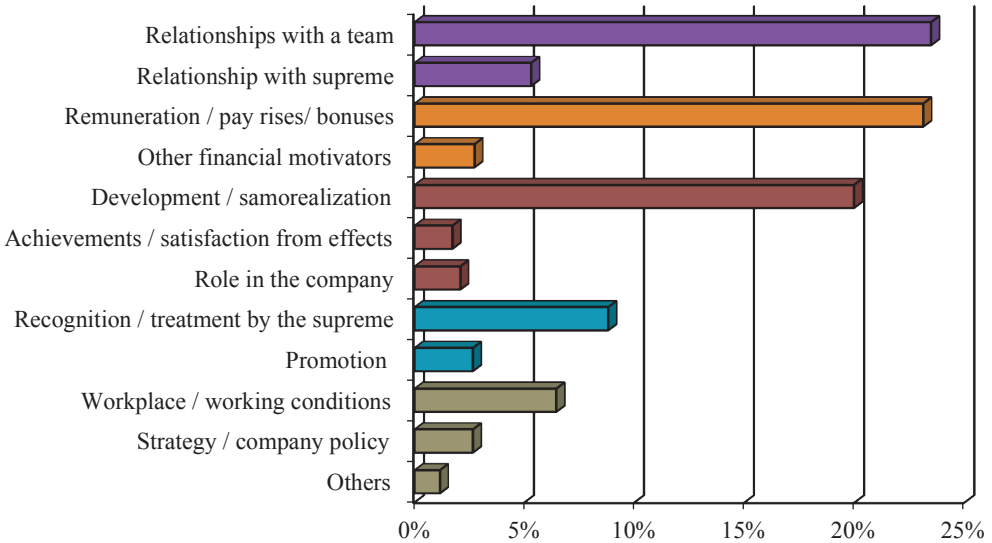


Fig. 2. Factors influencing the involvement of young people by category

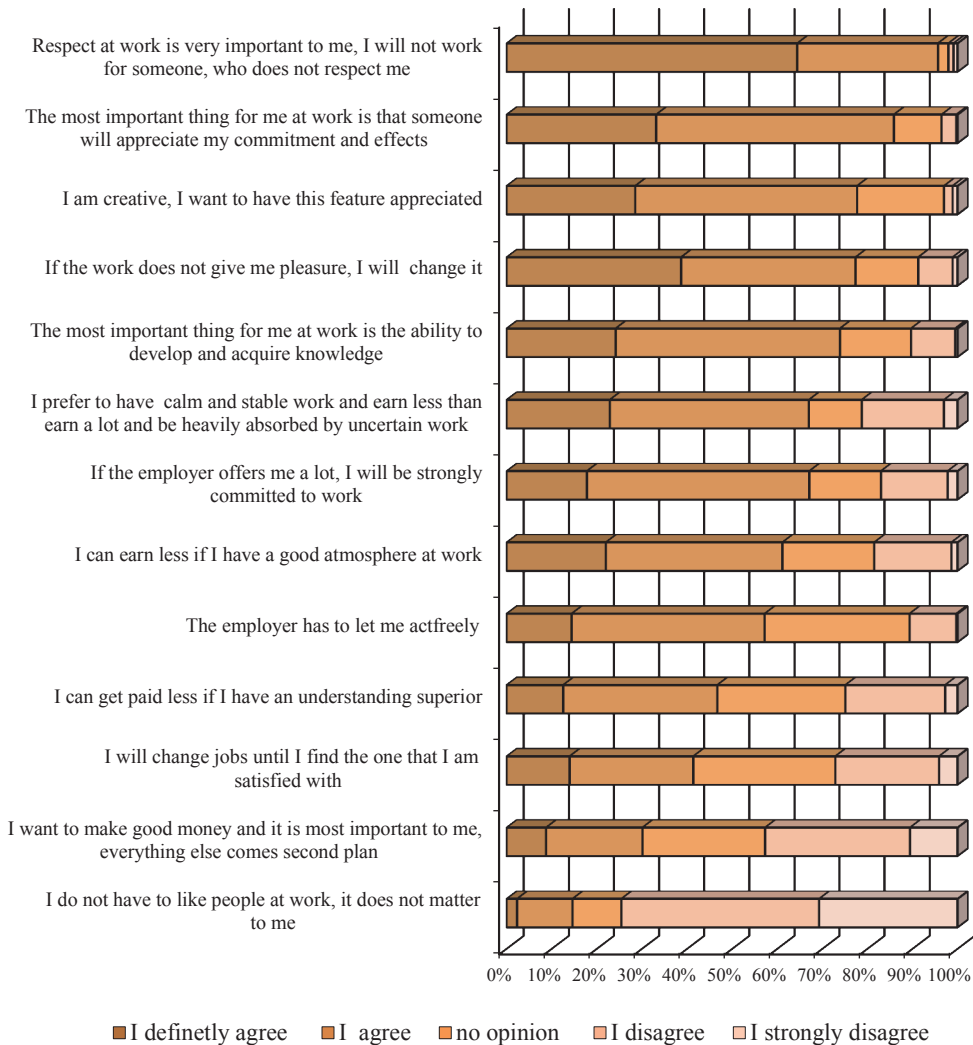
Source: own study.

from the supervisor (9% reported: satisfaction from my boss, recognition of my merits, satisfaction of the boss that I carry out the tasks entrusted to me, frequent praise, a good word for how well I do the work, gratitude shown, faith of the superior in me and my abilities, adequate assessment of my work, etc.) and second place – the possibility of hierarchical development, making a career and promotion (3% of responses among the respondents). The last group of indications, mentioned by every tenth respondent, were working conditions (physical conditions, type of contract, flexibility of working hours, business tools, etc.) and the company strategy and policy.

In addition to recognition of the ranking of factors motivating to professional activity, the respondents had the task of assessing their degree of compliance, with often radical statements that allow for a precise examination of the role of selected motivators. Details on this topic are presented in Figure 3.

The respondents were most strongly in agreement with the statement that respect is very important for them at work and unambiguously declared that they will not work for someone who does not show this respect, also it is very important for them to be appreciated for their involvement and results. The results of this stage of the study also confirm that young people perceive work as a place for self-development and gaining knowledge and finding an outlet for their own creativity. Young people are also open to changes in work and ready for them in a situation where work will not please them (if the work does not give me pleasure, I will change it; I will change jobs until I find the one that I am satisfied with).



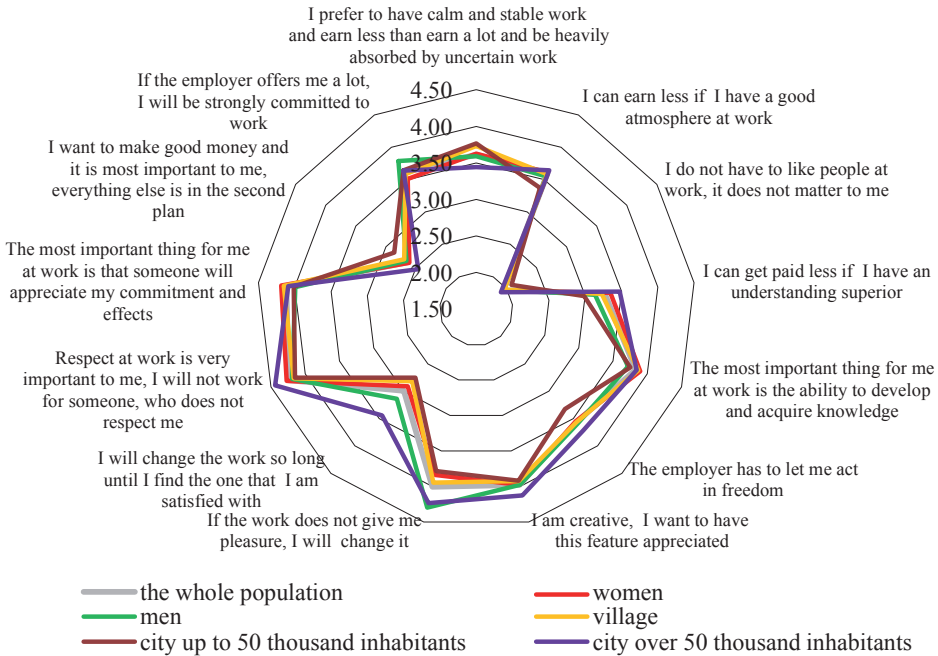


**Fig. 3.** The degree of compliance of young people with statements about motivating factors to work

Source: own study.

The importance of atmosphere at work for young people and good relations with the supervisor is also confirmed by the high degree of compliance with very radical statements about how much young people are ready to sacrifice material benefits to enjoy these relationships (I can earn less if I have a good atmosphere at work; I can get paid less if I have an understanding superior) and the lack of compliance with the statement about the lack of relevance in the work of interpersonal relations (I do not have to like people at work, it does not matter to me). In these statements, it is also easy

to confirm the strictly materialistic attitude of young people who disagree with the statement “I want to make good money and it is the most important to me, everything else comes second”. The approach to the issue of motivation to work differs depending on the demographic factors of the respondents, as illustrated in Figure 4.



**Fig. 4.** The degree of compliance of young people with statements regarding factors motivating to work depending on demographic conditions

Source: own study.

Men are more open than women for changes in work in a situation where work currently performed will not meet their expectations and are more demanding in relation to the employer (higher compliance with the statement “the employer must offer me a lot then I will strongly commit to work”). On the other hand, women emphasize the importance of development opportunities at work and the more important role of relationships at work in relation to the remuneration (I can get paid less if I have an understanding superior). Just like gender, the place of residence affects the motivation and approach to work. Inhabitants of smaller towns, presumably because of the smaller opportunities on the labour market are more conservative (they more often declare that they prefer to have calm and stable work and earn less than earn a lot, and be heavily absorbed by uncertain work). Residents of large towns are much more demanding, expect freedom of action, release their own creativity at work and respect, and are definitely more open to change and ready for it if the work

does not satisfy their expectations. In addition, surprisingly they are pay-oriented less than residents of smaller towns (they show the lowest out of all the groups compliance with the statement: “I want to make good money and it is most important to me, everything else comes second” and the highest with the statement: “I can get paid less if I have an understanding superior” and “I can earn less if I have a good atmosphere at work”).

## 5. Conclusion

The above conclusions prove that young people are positively oriented towards professional challenges and willing to take up work. They are not, contrary to popular opinions, only materialistically oriented towards work. It is true that remuneration, bonuses and other financial conditions are important to them, but above all, young people value interpersonal relationships and the atmosphere prevailing in the company. It is interpersonal relations, conditions for development and respect that will be the key factors attracting young people to companies and motivating them to act.

Therefore, modern enterprises face a huge challenge of setting up an organization based on fundamental values and creating an organizational culture corresponding to the values and expectations of the young generation. Such a solution will become a magnet for attracting and motivating the best young specialists, and in the long run will become a source of a more distinct competitive advantage.

That is why it is worth focusing the directions of further research around entrepreneurs and their job offers. Particular attention should be paid to financial and non-financial motivators, which entrepreneurs may propose in order to recruit valuable candidates from the market and build their commitment to work. It is also worth checking the employers' possibilities in matching motivators to employee expectations and comparing employee expectations with what the employer offers. Unfortunately, when conducting such research in the future, one should take into account certain restrictions that may arise when employers do not want to disclose information about their incentive systems, primarily for fear of evaluation, but also because of the low attractiveness and diversity of the motivators used.

Interesting conclusions could be made by the study of the same respondents after a few years, when they could boast of several years of professional experience. It can be expected that their expectations would be different. However, reaching the same people and inviting them to research would be a very big limitation.

To sum up, it is worth noting that the topic of motivating employees is still current, and the motivational factors and expectations of people are constantly changing. Therefore it is worth conducting research and analysing the results, as well as attempting to apply them in enterprises in which managers care for high motivation of employees to work.

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