

SUSTAINABLE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND GENERATIONS OF EMPLOYEES IN INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES

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Abstract: Sustainable human resource management is one of the distinguished approaches for ensuring the organizational performance of an organization in today's turbulent business environment. Human resource management ensures the achievement of the organizational goals through practices of managing human resources. Sustainable human resource management thereby ensures the development and maintenance of the potential of all employees in the organization. The main goal of this paper is to present the results of research in the field of human resource management with respect to different generations of employees in industrial enterprises operating in the Slovakia. The research sample consisted of $n = 1\,471$ respondents (employees of industrial enterprises). The most important results of the presented research is the finding that employees of industrial enterprises consider work performance, which influences their remuneration, to be important. The research showed that there are statistically significant relationships between employees at managerial and production positions and the perceived importance of work performance when determining the income of managers and production employees ($r_s = 0.274$ and $r_s = 0.363$).

1 Introduction

The first chapter of the paper consists from two parts. The first part provides insight to the literature and previous studies in the field of sustainable human resource management, partially performance of employees and their remuneration. The second part is devoted to a brief description of the individual generations of employees with respect to the analysed issues.

1.1 Sustainable human resource management and performance of employees

Sustainability is a long-term focused approach to business. It represents the creation of such systems and processes that are able to endure into long time work. Given that businesses have their economic nature but operate within certain environments and social systems, the study of sustainability is not limited to the environmental issues. The three key dimensions in which sustainability needs to be studied are economic, ecological

but also social [1]. Sustainability is not just a trend, but a topic in management of industrial enterprises, that should be seriously addressed [2]. By adopting the principles of sustainability, organizations can become more profitable and maintain their activities in the long run. The sustainable approach to management of organizations represents a processes in which organizations integrate their economic, environmental and social goals into their business strategies and optimize the balance between all three interconnected dimensions. Sustainability is about building a society in which the right balance is maintained between economic, environmental and social goals in the long term. For organizations, this means not only maintaining and expanding economic growth and shareholder value, but also adopting and adhering to ethical business practices, creating sustainable job positions, creating value for all stakeholders and caring for the needs of insufficiently secured workers [3]. Given the importance of employees for the success and performance of the organization, it is necessary for the management of

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organization to implement sustainability into human resource management processes [4]. Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) supports the conditions for the sustainability of organizational workforce. It develops the sustainability of the workforce by improving the ability of human resource management processes to continuously attract new employees, regenerate the workforce by caring for its employees, and support employees to be motivated and committed. Through targeted management of human resources processes, it ensures sustainability by, on the one hand, making the human resources management system itself sustainable. On the other hand, sustainable human resource management contributes to the sustainability of enterprises by reconciling economic, environmental, social and human sustainability objectives [5].

Improving the performance of organizations does not only depend on the characteristics of employees, such as their assumptions, abilities or competencies, but also on how the management is uses them, and this depends on human resource management practices in the organization [6]. From the point of view of the sustainability of business performance, it is, among other things, important to maintain the employability of employees [7], as well as their motivation and retention. In the productive population, many working days are lost due to illness. This represents a huge cost in terms of staff shortages and weakened economic performance. As we can see, the social, economic and environmental aspects are interlinked and form feedback loops [8]. Therefore, it is important to monitor which working conditions affect the health of employees, well-being but also social and family life [9]. Workplace stress also affects if employees feel they have a lot more work than their colleagues or feel that their efforts are not appreciated or adequately rewarded [10]. Recognition, trust, fair treatment and support contribute to motivation and improve not only workplace well-being but also work ability [11]. Employees of all ages are shaped by their own life experiences. Naturally, older employees had more opportunities to survive more events that could affect their attitudes. Age can therefore be one of the reasons for different values or attitudes, also to the work [12]. Usually, more than one generation of employees meet and cooperate at the same workplace. Each generation can manifest different values, attitudes to work and motivational preferences [13,14]. However, there is no absolute exactness in limiting the years of birth of individual generations. In order for remuneration for work to be motivating for employees, it is important that it takes into account their work values and work motivation, which can be differentiated individually, which is given by the uniqueness of individuality of each person. However, some research and studies confirm that the preferred remuneration for work may be different for different generations of employees. Employee preferences and individual preferences can be influenced by a person's

value system, his attitudes, interests, life situation, but also by the life stage or age of the employee.

1.2 Generational groups of employees

The post-war generation, sometimes referred to as "Baby boomers", is considered to be people born in 1946-1960, the next Generation X, born in 1961-1980, Generation Y born in (1981-1995) and Generation Z, born in 1995- 2009. The youngest generation born since 2010 is often referred to as the Generation Alpha. Members of each generation show certain characteristics, different values are essential for them, they have different approaches to work and motivational preferences. For the post-war generation, money is an important motivating factor, along with title, recognition and respect [15]. Compared to the post-war generation, Generation X, and in particular Generation Y, value leisure time more strongly and attach more value to work providing external rewards. Generation Y also values internal and social rewards less than the post-war generation. It is also pointed out that Generation Y prefers external rewards (external motivation) more than the post-war generation, not wanting to work hard but still wanting more money and a higher position [16]. Older employees could be offended when younger ones demand more responsibility or higher salaries during job interviews. According to them, these requirements are not always the result of an exaggerated ego, but of a market economy. As most of the workforce will be entitled to retire, young workers will become a much in request in the next decade. If the organization does not offer higher salaries and more engaging work for young employee, another organization will do so. Understanding these types of pressures is key to promoting strong intergenerational communication [17]. Generation X attaches little value to their things, they do not consider them part of their value system. While the materialistic person will stick to the property, this generation is more willing to get rid of it and replace it with a new and improved version. This means, for example, that they do not stick to their house or home as their parents and are more willing to replace it for a better quality of life or work [18]. Generation X employees are looking for a work-life balance and are motivated by work that satisfies them personally and financially. For them, money is a reward for a job well done, but they do not accredit value to that work. They appreciate the remuneration in the form of extra days off, which will allow them to improve their work-life balance. For Generation Y, friendship is such a strong motivator that Generation Y workers choose a job just to be with their friends. They have a sense of ethics and participate in justified activities. As with Generation X, money is an important but not separable factor for them [15]. Generations X and Y prefer work-life balance over the post-war generation, which saw sacrificing personal life for work as a price to pay for success [19]. The Millennium Generation Y focuses on finding work that is stable, preferably resilient to recession, and paid enough to

pay their bills and save. As soon as they find one, they would rather stay in it. Their reluctance to take risks influences their decisions in the sense that while other work may be more interesting to them, this does not mean that it is in their best long-term interest [20]. Generation Z is very responsive to clearly defined and directly calibrated rewards for spent time or performed tasks. The most effective way to maintain existing working relationships with Generation Z and manage their performance is for managers to clearly discuss performance with them and to reward transparently on an ongoing basis [21].

Demographic developments in Slovakia and the European Union suggest that organizations should take into account the age structure of employees when ensuring sustainable human resource management. From the point of view of future development, in addition to age diversity, it is also necessary to take into account the prognosis of the population aging [22-25]. Demographic trends and an aging population have become an emerging topics, mainly due to the impact of their effects. Given this, their are important not only from a social and health point of view, but also because of its economic context [26]. A comprehensive analysis of the issue of population aging brings more robust results that can be of great importance for decision-making processes in several areas of the decisive sphere. These are, in particular, labour market policies, the relationship between the burden on the economically active population and economic growth or social cohesion [27]. Several trends affect labour shortages. The number of the post-productive population is increasing, and the prevalence of chronic diseases is also increasing [28]. In recent years, skilled young people leaving for work that does not match their qualifications have also contributed to labour shortages. This characteristic type of migration has caused an accumulation of skills shortages due to the negative demographic trend in the Slovak Republic [29].

2 Methodology

The next part of the paper is devoted to the description of the research problem, the definition of the main goal of the research, the results of which are presented in the submitted paper. Next, there are defined established research question and research hypotheses, the method of data collection and the data collection tool, and finally, there is described the research sample.

2.1 Reserach problem and research goal

The main research problem is defined in the field of human resource management in industrial enterprises in Slovakia, dealing with the remuneration of employees on the basis of work performance. As already mentioned, the importance of remuneration and the preference for the form of remuneration may vary from employee to employee, and the degree to which individual needs are met affects the employee's well-being, mental well-being, or even health to varying degrees. Remuneration of employees is largely dependent on the nature of the work performed (job position), but it is also significantly affected by the work performance achieved. A common problem can be the perception of employee remuneration for work performance, which results from the subjective perception of an employee from a particular generation. Due to the fact that there are currently four unique generations of employees working on the labour market [21,29,30]. It is important to examine the conditions and used approaches of human resource management in industrial enterprises in Slovakia for the purpose of sustainable human resource management development.

Based on the analysis of the theoretical outcomes and the definition of the research problem, we can state that the research in the field of employee performance and remuneration is defined in two relationships, which are shown in Figure 1.

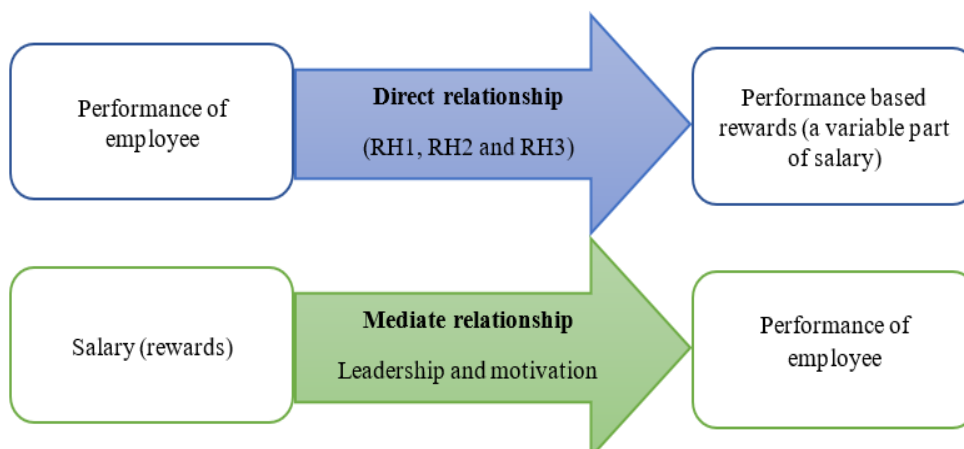


Figure 1 Research framework (source: own elaboration, 2020)

As shown in Figure 1 above, the mediated relationship between salary (remuneration for work performed) and

employee performance has been supported by several studies [31-33], which emphasize the importance of

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leading people and the aim-oriented motivation. The relationship is conditioned on reward system based on performance. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that employees may lose the motivation to perform quality work, because their evaluation depends on the quantity of work performed. The research presented by the authors of the paper dealt with the direct relationship where the relationships between the performance of employees in various job positions and their salary evaluation were proved through established research hypotheses.

The main goal of the research was to examine the sustainable management of human resources in industrial enterprises in the Slovak Republic with regard to employees from different generations.

The research problem is concretized through defined research questions, on the basis of which research hypotheses were established.

RQ1: How do employees of different generations perceive the importance of work performance in determining the income of employees in at different job positions?

RH1: There is a statistically significant relationship between managerial positions and the perceived importance of work performance in determining managers' incomes.

RH2: There is a statistically significant relationship between production jobs and the perceived importance of work performance in determining the income of production employees.

RH3: There is a statistically significant relationship between administrative jobs and the importance of work performance in determining the income of administrative staff.

2.2 Data collection tool, data collection and description of the research sample

The collection tool was statistically evaluated as valid and reliable, as evidenced by the fact that the Crombach alpha coefficient = 0.83, which can be considered sufficient for scientific purposes [34]. The research questionnaire contained 8 questions, the first 5 questions are socio-demographic (self-governing region in which the organization operates, number of employees, gender, job position and year of birth), the other 3 questions focused on the perceived importance of work performance in determining employee income at various job positions (managerial, production, administrative and others). The questionnaire was anonymous, the only identifiers were the age and gender of the respondents.

Data collection within the research was carried out by physical distribution of the collection tool, which was distributed to employees of different ages and in different job positions. Distribution was carried out in all eight self-governing regions of the Slovak Republic in the period from September 2018 to January 2019. The research sample consists of n = 1 471 respondents (employees of industrial enterprises). Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents according to their affiliation to a particular generation.

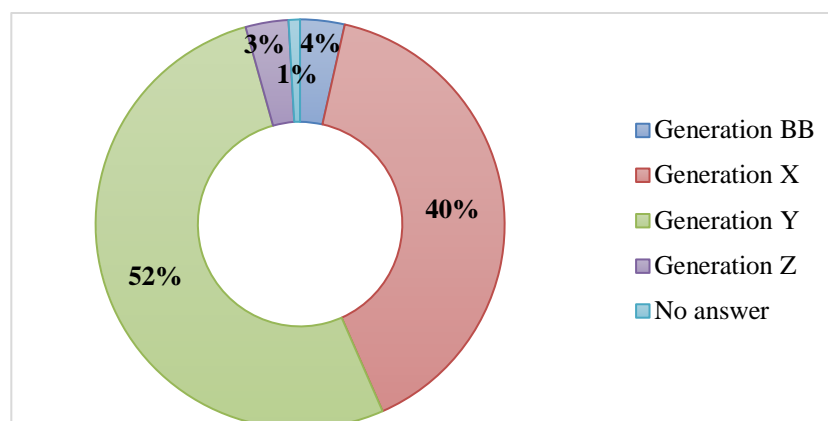


Figure 2 Respondents by generational groups in percentages (source: own elaboration, 2020)

Figure 2 shows that most respondents were 770 employees of industrial enterprises from generation Y (52.35 %). The lowest number of respondents was from the generation Z, they are represented by 50 employees of industrial enterprises (3.39 %). The stated percentages are approximately in the same percentage as the individual generations present on the labour market [23]. As can be seen in Figure 3, respondents were also divided according

to their current job position. Most respondents hold administrative and specialized jobs, 631 employees (42.90 %). The second largest group in the research sample is represented by production workers in the number of 549 (37.32 %). The third group consists of respondents who work at managerial positions, the group consists of 272 respondents (18.46 %). The last group consists of

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respondents who did not state what job position currently work at, 19 respondents (1.29 %).

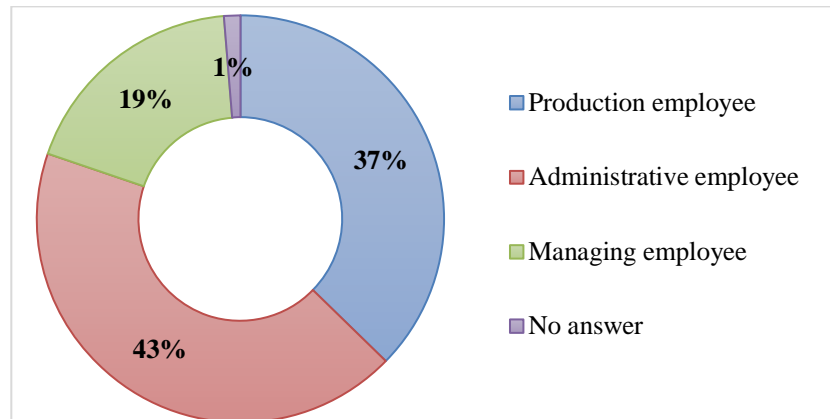


Figure 3 Respondents by job position (source: own elaboration, 2020)

Figure 3 shows the structure of respondents by job position. The structure of respondents according to the job position allows to compare the results within individual groups of respondents.

3 Results and discussion

The next part of the paper is devoted to the evaluation of established research questions and research hypotheses and a discussion of the most important findings in the research. The evaluation of the research question and research hypotheses was performed in the MS Excel

program and in the SPSS 22.0 program (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) from IBM.

RQ1: How do employees of different generations perceive the importance of work performance in determining the income of employees at different job positions?

For a better presentation of the results, we divided the results into three tables (Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3), which contain the perceived importance of work performance according to individual generations for particular job position categories. The results considering managerial job positions are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Perceived importance of work performance according to different generations of employees in determining managers' incomes (source: own elaboration, 2020)

Generation / Evaluation	1 – not at all	2 - partially	3 – significantly	No answer	Sum
Generation BB	8	20	24	0	52
Generation X	72	283	226	5	586
Generation Y	89	392	280	9	770
Generation Z	4	28	18	0	50
No generation assigned	3	6	3	1	13
Sum	176	729	551	15	1471

As can be seen from Table 1, it can be stated that up to 729 respondents (49.56 %) think that work performance has only a partial effect on managers' incomes. According to employees of industrial enterprises without affiliation to the generation, up to 551 respondents (37.46 %) think that the work performance of managers has a significant impact on their income and only 176 employees of industrial enterprises (11.96 %) think that work performance has no

effect on the income of managers. Based on the partial results, we can say that there is a difference in perception between the Baby boomer's generation and other generations of employees. Managerial positions are generally associated with higher revenues than for other job positions. However, linking managers' performance and remuneration can be difficult if their performance goals are not clearly defined. The significance of the

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reward may change as the general conditions change, regardless of the pressure on performance. Managers with high abilities are characterized by a high knowledge of the environment in which they operate. Especially in times of financial crisis, high-capacity managers focus on maintaining reputation, less risky opportunities and lower incomes [35].

Table 2 shows the analysed results of the perceived importance of work performance on income in production jobs. Individual results are divided according to the affiliation of respondents to individual generations.

Table 2 Perceived importance of work performance according to different generations of employees in determining the income of production employees (source: own elaboration, 2020)

Generation / Evaluation	1 – not at all	2 - partially	3 – significantly	No answer	Sum
Generation BB	7	16	28	1	52
Generation X	42	202	333	9	586
Generation Y	44	308	407	11	770
Generation Z	1	20	28	1	50
No generation assigned	1	5	6	1	13
Sum	95	551	802	23	1471

Based on the results shown in Table 2, it can be stated that up to 802 respondents (54.52 %) think that the work performance has a significant impact on determining the wages of production employees. The second largest group of answers is that work performance is partly important in determining the income of production employees 551 (37.46 %) and only 95 respondents (6.46 %) think that the work performance is not important in determining the income of production employees. Based on the above, we can say that the work performance of production employees is still dominant in determining the amount of their earnings. Performance-based remuneration can be motivating for workers by giving the worker a sense of control over the amount of his or her remuneration. On the

other hand, performance-based rewards can create stress responses that can have an impact on employees' health. Stress is indicated especially for certain types of reward systems based on performance, such as piece rate pay. The dependence of rewards on performance has a positive impact on the quantity of production, but not on the quality of the services provided [36]. When comparing the results, it was shown that there are no differences in the assessment of the impact of the achieved performance on the income of employees of industrial enterprises from different generations. The results of the evaluation of the last third partial part of the established research question can be seen in Table 3, which is shown below.

Table 3 Perceived importance of work performance according to different generations of employees in determining the income of administrative and other employees (source: own elaboration, 2020)

Generation / Evaluation	1 – not at all	2 - partially	3 – significantly	No answer	Sum
Generation BB	8	26	18	0	52
Generation X	94	289	186	17	586
Generation Y	101	409	242	18	770
Generation Z	10	22	18	0	50
No generation assigned	3	6	4	0	13
Sum	216	752	468	35	1471

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As can be seen in Table 3 above, according to the respondents, work performance is only partially important in determining the income of administrative and other employees 752 (51.12 %). The second most numerous answers were that work performance is important, 458 respondents (31.82 %) marked this answer. Lastly, respondents indicated the answer that work performance is not important at all in determining the income of administrative and other employees 216 (14.68 %). We reiterate that there is no difference between the responses of employees of different generations. Furthermore, we can state that this answer was most often marked for administrative and other job positions. For example, the negative impact of performance-based remuneration has been demonstrated for university staff. It has been shown that if remuneration was based on experience and productivity, this led to a lower level of satisfaction in the long run and a lower level of cooperation, especially with a large range of remuneration depending on performance [37]. Research has shown that human resource management plays an important role in performance-based remuneration by ensuring and emphasizing clarity and consistency in what employees are expected to do and on the basis of which the remuneration is awarded [38,39]. When evaluating the research results, we focused on the perception of differences with respect to different generations or job positions of employees. We did not focus on gender differences in the perception of differences between the remuneration of employees based on their work performance in presented research. Other research has confirmed some gender differences, for example it was confirmed that the basic wage is more important for women than for men [40].

RH1: There is a statistically significant relationship between managerial positions and the perceived importance of work performance in determining managers' incomes. The mentioned variable correlates at the level of $\text{sig} = 0.05$ with the value of the Spearman correlation coefficient $r_s = 0.274$. The value of significance reached the required level ($\text{sig} < 0.05$), therefore we do not reject the above alternative hypothesis and we can confirm that there is a weak correlation between the analysed variables.

RH2: There is a statistically significant relationship between production jobs and the perceived importance of work performance in determining the income of production employees. The mentioned variable correlates at the level $\text{sig} = 0.10$ with the value of Spearman's correlation coefficient $r_s = 0.363$. The value of significance reached the required level ($\text{sig} < 0.10$), therefore we do not reject the above alternative hypothesis and we can confirm that there is a moderately strong correlation between the analysed variables.

RH3: There is a statistically significant relationship between administrative jobs and the importance of work performance in determining the income of administrative staff. The mentioned variable correlates at the level of sig

$= 0.05$ with the value of the Spearman correlation coefficient $r_s = 0.094$. The significance value reached the required level ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). The analysed relationship is statistically significant, but with a very low to negligible value of the correlation coefficient. Based on the above, we reject the alternative hypothesis H3 and confirm the null hypothesis H0. Therefore, we can argue that there is no statistically significant relationship between administrative jobs and the importance of work performance in determining the income of administrative staff.

4 Conclusion

Research presented in the paper has shown that employees of industrial enterprises at various job positions perceive work performance equally important in determining the income of production and administrative employees. The only exception is the perception of employees of different generations in determining the income of employees at managerial positions. All findings can be used in application of the sustainable human resource management, because clear, transparent and fair remuneration is not only a significant motivating factor. It also affects the perception of the employer as socially responsible and fair, which affects not only the relationship of employees to the employer but also the reputation of the employer in society and in the labour market. The perceived importance of the achieved work performance in the remuneration of employees from different generations has a significant influence on motivating and the perception of the employer's approach to fair treatment of employees at various job positions.

Employers should focus on improving human resource management processes with an emphasis on employee care to ensure a sustainable workforce that affects not only the individual but also the overall performance of the organization. It should be clear from the human resource management priorities, which activities and how they are aimed at improving human resource management processes. These should ensure the improvement of the sustainability of human resources by increasing satisfaction and thus the willingness to perform and retain in the organization, which, by focusing on securing and maintaining the employability of employees through prevention and health protection.

The authors of the paper will continue in further research and expand their results by examining the factors influencing the priorities of human resource management in industrial enterprises. In their further research, they will focus on the impacts of the introduction of Industry 4.0 and pandemic measures on industrial enterprises, on human resource management in industrial enterprises and disadvantaged employees. Sustainable human resource management is focused on human resource management in the long run. Given the huge changes that industrial companies have to deal with, this issue is very topical and it is desirable to address it in further research.

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