



## ORIGINAL ARTICLE


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## Determinants of job satisfaction in a transport company: a Polish case study

**JEL Classification:** J28; D22; D91; R15

**Keywords:** work environment satisfaction; satisfaction conditionings; employee satisfaction survey

### Abstract

**Research background:** This article concerns job satisfaction considered as an important impulse affecting employee behavior, with particular emphasis on the analysis of the significance of the factors that shape it.

**Purpose of the article:** The purpose of this paper is to analyze and evaluate environmental factors shaping job satisfaction in a company from the TSL industry. This article addresses the problem of job satisfaction, considered as an important impulse influencing employee behavior, with particular emphasis on the analysis of the importance of the factors that underlie it. The search for an answer to the question of what determines the satisfaction of the employee and whether the employees are diversified based on their preferences in this area, relied on own research carried out among employees of a transportation company.

**Methods:** First of all, for each factor indicated in the questionnaire a measure was calculated — weighted average number of points. Using the criterion of decreasing value of this measure, a ranking of the importance of factors shaping job satisfaction in the surveyed company was prepared. Secondly, in order to supplement the analyses, the correlation between general job satisfaction and particular factors of job satisfaction was examined. The values of Spearman's rank correlation coefficients and Kendall's tau coefficients ( $\tau$ -Kendall) were calculated. The correlation analysis allowed us to examine the strength and direction of the influence of 20 factors on the overall job satisfaction.

**Findings & Value added:** The conducted research shows that the two most important factors necessary to achieve job satisfaction are access to information necessary for proper performance of work and independence in performing the entrusted tasks. The correlation analysis confirmed that in the surveyed company job satisfaction is shaped primarily by factors that influence the employees' needs related to affiliation. On the other hand, the correlation coefficients between general satisfaction and factors shaping the need for respect and recognition and self-fulfillment turned out to be statistically insignificant. Building job satisfaction requires identification of its sources and recognition of the nature of the relationship between general satisfaction and its determinants. Without knowledge of these factors and the extent to which they are responsible for employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction, actions taken by employers may turn out to be misguided and become only a source of costs and not the expected benefits. In conditions of limited resources, employers should optimize activities aimed at building employee satisfaction and focus their efforts on those attributes of the working environment, the modification of which will have the most desirable consequences.

## Introduction

Job satisfaction is one of the central areas of social research (Abdelmoteleb, 2019; Ashraf, 2019; Dhamija *et al.*, 2019; Erro-Garces & Ferreira, 2019; Garcia *et al.*, 2019; Magnier-Watanabe *et al.*, 2019; Mahmood *et al.*, 2019; Reçica & Doğan, 2019; Wu *et al.*, 2019; Stater & Stater, 2009). At the root of this interest lies the premise that the phenomenon of job satisfaction can help explain the essence and dynamics of the potential of individuals and groups working in organizations, and thereby provide, among other things, valuable guidance for people management practices with a view to supporting more effective functioning of an individual within the organization, and potentially contributing to a better understanding of the individual's well-being bordering his or her professional and personal life (Chrupała-Pniak, 2012, pp. 13–14).

Satisfaction is a largely subjective category, depending on individual perception (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000, p. 518). Individual expectations and value systems make it impossible to universally, uniformly for all, design activities aimed at increasing the intensity of positive feelings. The importance of job satisfaction is primarily due to the fact that work is one of the basic determinants of quality of life and its subjective evaluation. Juchnowicz (2012, p. 62) stresses that better satisfaction was treated in the model of interpersonal relationships as a variable that prompts better work performance. In subsequent management schools, the relationship between satisfaction and work is perceived differently. The human resources model assumes an autonomous relationship between satisfaction and work. Higher employee satisfaction is not considered in the context of factors affecting work efficiency. Satisfaction in this model is not a means, but rather the outcome of a significant contribution to the success of the organization as

a whole, with the results of employee satisfaction surveys seen as a source of management information about work conditions, interpersonal relationships, management style, etc.

It has become common to believe that taking care of the employees' professional satisfaction brings the organization measurable benefits. Satisfied employees are especially valuable because of their initiative, loyalty to their employer, favorable working conditions, and significantly decreased absenteeism. There is also a positive relationship between satisfaction and engagement, job stability, service quality, customer loyalty and business development (Porter *et al.*, 1974, pp. 603–609; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001, pp. 557–569; Harter *et al.*, 2002, pp. 268–279; Wright & Bonett, 2007, pp. 150–151; Zhang & Zheng, 2009, p. 335; Lee & Way, 2010, p. 350; Kaźmierczyk & Wyrwa, 2017; Kaźmierczyk & Żelichowska, 2017). While satisfaction does not need to be directly correlated with productivity, dissatisfaction is a potential threat to the functioning of the organization as a whole. For modern organizations, the problem of job satisfaction becomes both a goal and an indicator of organizational effectiveness. Employee satisfaction is an indicator of management effectiveness, described mainly in the context of the motivation of employees.

In studying satisfaction as a source of human motivation, two approaches can be distinguished. Initially, research projects were conducted primarily on the order of employers and therefore dominated the organizational perspective, according to which the researchers looked for answers to what and why motivates individuals to more productive work and how that could contribute to increased organizational effectiveness. The assumption of a direct shift in the growth of human motivation to increase the profitability of the organization was part of the Neo-Taylorism paradigm of scientific management and instrumental treatment of employees. Research perspective is now different and it tends to refer to humanistic and positive psychology. The researchers usually focus their efforts on the individual and try to find the reasons for motivation at work, help create organizational conditions in which individuals can first and foremost self-actualize and develop professionally, as well as feel personal satisfaction, which can potentially lead to greater organizational effectiveness (Chrupała-Pniak, 2012, p. 15).

This article addresses the problem of job satisfaction, considered as an important impulse influencing employee behavior, with particular emphasis on the analysis of the importance of the factors that underlie it. The ambiguous and difficult to measure impact of employee satisfaction on employee behavior necessitates conducting the relevant research study. The search for an answer to the question of what determines the satisfaction of the em-

ployee and whether the employees are diversified based on their preferences in this area, relied on own research carried out among employees of a transportation company.

An important element of the success of modern enterprises is to achieve the greatest possible efficiency in relation to the resources involved. One of the actions in this direction should be to increase employee satisfaction. In numerous publications related to the employee satisfaction survey, there is a lack of agreement on the role of environmental and individual factors in the process of shaping satisfaction (Nair, 2007, pp. 42–44). The question is still open as to how much satisfaction is the result of the working environment in which the employee is staying, and to what extent it results rather from the employee's characteristics and individual predispositions. Leaving aside the discussion about the superiority of one factor over another, in this paper the subject of interest are environmental factors of job satisfaction.

The aim of the article is to analyze and evaluate environmental factors shaping job satisfaction in a company from the TSL industry. In order to achieve the above goal, a questionnaire survey was conducted based on a specially constructed questionnaire. The study took place in December 2018. On the basis of the information obtained from the survey, the analysis and assessment of the importance of environmental factors influencing job satisfaction in the surveyed company was carried out. Statistical methods were used for this purpose.

The article presents synthetic results of the literature review, and then presents the results of qualitative research, which allowed to formulate theoretical and practical implications. The article consists of two parts — theoretical and empirical. In the first part, various ways of defining job satisfaction are presented and different approaches to the factors that shape job satisfaction are identified. This is also where the most important determinants of job satisfaction in the TSL sector (transport, shipping and logistics) in Poland are discussed. The second part of the article presents the results of the research on environmental factors determining job satisfaction in a selected TSL company. The results of the conducted research made it possible to indicate the directions of improvements in the analyzed enterprise and possible directions of research in this area.

The article was developed by applying the methods of systematic literature review while the analysis of empirical material was carried out using the methods of descriptive statistics as well as those of multivariate comparative analysis. The section containing conclusions was prepared using the logical analysis method, the identification of cause-effect relationships and the synthesis of the observed trends.

## **Literature review**

### *The concept of job satisfaction*

Job satisfaction is a concept that can be analysed from the standpoint of different research perspectives. The way of understanding the term "job satisfaction" significantly influences the proper selection of study components and constitutes the foundation for research. In the initial period of research, "job satisfaction" was defined inconsistently, due to the diversity of concepts presented by the researchers. Therefore, an attempt was made to systemize and clarify this concept, as a result of which the definitions proposed over the last few decades are free of major substantive discrepancies (Wudarzewski, 2016, p. 130). Factors common to most definitions include the occurrence of cognitive and emotional (affective) aspects as well as subjectivity resulting from individual perception and feelings. On the other hand, some differences in approaches concern the scope of taking into account various situational components to which job satisfaction relates (e.g. environmental factors, roles and tasks within the organization and the extent to which they are tailored to people, results obtained — in particular comparison of results with expectations, organizational value system) and the degree of durability and dynamics of reacting to work conditions.

The origins of systematized research on job satisfaction date back to the 1930s. The first concepts of job satisfaction define this category as a short-term emotional response to work resulting from satisfying needs; others identify its essence with an attitude that consists of relatively persistent feelings experienced at and towards work, which can be defined as "approach to work". Attempts to determine the causes and effects of this phenomenon have taken into account the circumstances where the employee experiences unequivocally positive or negative feelings at work and towards work (Wudarzewski, 2013, p. 329). One of the precursors to employee satisfaction was Hoppock, who defined this concept in 1935 as "any combination of psychological and environmental conditioning that a person with true conviction could say was happy with his or her job" (Hoppock, 1935, p. 44). This approach demonstrates that satisfaction is conditioned by many factors (both internal and external to the individual) which need to be identified and measured. It can therefore be said that this definition includes the imperative of examining the conditions in which satisfaction arises (Kosiorek & Szczepańska, 2012, p. 200).

When reviewing the literature, it can be argued that many authors define job satisfaction in both cognitive and emotional terms. For example, ac-

According to Robbins (after: Borowska-Pietrzak, 2014, p. 11), satisfaction is a general positive attitude towards work, which consists not only of specific behaviors, but also opinions and evaluations, as well as feelings. In turn, Juchnowicz (2014, p. 11) defines satisfaction as a specific attitude towards work, that is both cognitive, i.e. providing objective information about the studied aspects of work, and affective, as it presents feelings towards work, and also behavioral, indicating the potential behavior of employees in the work process. Including both these elements is also posited by Berry, for whom job satisfaction is an attitude (meaning internal state), i.e. an evaluation expressed in the form of affective reactions and cognitive judgments about the extent to which performed work is either favorable or unfavorable to the person (after: Wudarzewski, 2016, pp. 130–133).

In the light of the above definitions, the broad issue of employee satisfaction is an important topic to be discussed. It is determined by the varied conditions associated with the process of job satisfaction. Examples of these can be: motivation and employee motivation processes, elements of organizational culture along with the whole spectrum of resulting norms and values (they constitute a specific canon for organizational behavior), unwritten principles and norms in the work environment, selection of employees into the organization (Sipa, 2019). In other words, the practice of recruiting, selecting or developing employees, managing them, planning and organizing work is the organizational conditioning of satisfaction. This means that job satisfaction is linked to different organizational variables and is manifested through "job dedication, organizational commitment, civic behavior in the organization, [...] innovation" (Ahmad *et al.*, 2011, p. 577), and each of them can be related in a variety of ways to how employees perceive satisfaction (Kosiorek & Szczepańska, 2012, p. 202).

### *Determinants of job satisfaction*

Factors determining job satisfaction support the thesis that measuring and building employee satisfaction is a crucial component of the development and success of a business organization. Due to the importance of job satisfaction as a topic, numerous studies are undertaken to identify the factors that have the greatest impact on its level. For over 50 years research on job satisfaction has been attracting social science practitioners and theorists alike (Williams & Anderson, 1991; Porter *et al.*, 1974). In spite of this abundance of insights however, job satisfaction remains to this day a popular research area. Having said that, there is still no agreement as to the importance of specific factors influencing job satisfaction (Springer, 2011, p. 166; Nair, 2007, pp. 38–47). To begin with, the set of these determinants

varies considerably from study to study, with the authors indicating the role of both objective (situational) and subjective (individual) factors in this process (Bednarska, 2016, p. 100). While the former are shaped by the employer and have an impact on the level of base satisfaction, the latter affect the perception of work environment's characteristics and differentiate the strength of their impact (Borowska-Pietrzak, 2014, pp. 15–16). The objective factors are directly related to work environment and include work content (internal rewards) and work conditions (external rewards).

The current research concerns mainly the internal and external factors influencing employee satisfaction and job satisfaction, meaning factors related to the employee's internal characteristics and their broadly understood work environment. Despite the significant role of personality factors in shaping satisfaction, research has shown (Lambert *et al.*, 2001) that factors related to work environment — such as fair remuneration, positive relationships with co-workers, lack of conflicts, and a sense of autonomy — are indeed more important. This, however, has not stopped researchers from emphasizing the importance of individual factors (Jasiński & Derbis, 2019, p. 14). It is assumed that the individual level of job satisfaction is determined by personality factors (ranging from 10 to 30%), situational factors related to one's professional field (ranging from 40 to 60%), and the interaction between these two categories of variables (ranging from 10 to 20%) (Makin *et al.*, 2000, p. 86). Personality factors include the individual's baggage of professional experience and their traits (Judg & Klinger, 2008; Piccolo *et al.*, 2005; Saari & Judg, 2004; Heller *et al.*, 2002; Judge *et al.*, 2000). However, in what concerns the professional field, attention is paid to: working conditions, job characteristics (including the nature, type and scope of duties), organizational climate, organizational culture, management system quality (determined, among others, by the level of the administration system's efficiency or lack thereof), hourly workload, the level of stress at work, remuneration, co-workers (the quality of interpersonal relations and the level of skills possessed by co-workers and superiors), ambiguities and conflicts in distributing assignments, and job market prospects (Winkler, 2009, pp. 80–81; Kuskü, 2003, pp. 348–352; Makin *et al.*, 2000, pp. 82–86; Gordon, 1993, p. 644).

Leymann (1996) argues that personality factors are much less important and should not be taken into account at all. In his view, research on job satisfaction should focus instead on working conditions and relationships within the organization. A study involving over 98,000 employees of enterprises spread across 41 countries showed that the internal characteristics of work are more important for job satisfaction among employees from more affluent countries, where the welfare system is well developed, where indi-

vidualism is valued more than collectivism, and where there is a lower power distance (Huang & Van De Vliert, 2003).

Some researchers claim that one of the most important determinants of job satisfaction is attitude towards work (Celik, 2011). In this approach, job satisfaction is a type of emotion that results from a person's embedding in organizational culture, how the company is managed, and what the conduct of executives is. An analysis of findings from international studies showed that, regardless of organizational culture, the amount of remuneration remains the key driver of satisfaction (Warr, 2008). Other studies add to it, along with employment stability and fair remuneration, the possibility of personal growth (Juchnowicz, 2012), as well as a good atmosphere at work and good performance of duties by co-workers (Hajdukova *et al.*, 2015). Employment stability and relations with supervisors and co-workers are also very important for job satisfaction (Białas & Litwin, 2013). Combinations of different factors were also proposed by A. Springer (2011), who put forward a set of 16 factors potentially influencing employee satisfaction grouped into four variants corresponding to the categories of four needs — security, affiliation, power and recognition, and growth.

In summary, the growing interest in job satisfaction among researchers and the fact it is increasingly included in economic analyses should be linked to the detection of a relationship between employees' subjective views on work environment and their objective behavior, which translate directly into the company's performance on a larger scale.

### *The TSL industry in Poland*

In 1990 the process of transformation began in Poland, i.e. the process of transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. In September 1989, the first non-communist government after 45 years was formed. The new authorities began the process of system reconstruction with the adoption of a package of new legal acts at the end of 1989, including the Act on economic activity (Act of 23 December 1988 on economic activity, JoL. of 1988, No. 41, item 324), which eliminated or significantly reduced political and legal barriers to starting business activity in Poland. These changes resulted in dynamic development of Polish entrepreneurship. While in 1989 there were 831 thousand small and medium-sized private companies in Poland, in 1992 this number doubled, reaching 1701.3 thousand (Hejduk, 1994). During this period, mainly service enterprises were established in Poland, as well as enterprises dealing with renovation, construction and transport services. It can therefore be assumed that the beginning of the 1990s was the first important stage in the development of



the TSL industry in Poland. However, it should be noted, that during this period mainly companies dealing with domestic transport were established, which resulted from the fact that the Act on economic activity introduced the necessity to apply for a concession in the case of some types of activity. This requirement was applicable, among others, to sea and air transport, as well as foreign trade in certain goods and services.

In the following years, many changes were introduced with regard to legal regulations in Poland, which led to the liberalisation of the transport market, but a significant change occurred only after Poland's accession to the European Union. Since Poland's accession to the EU, i.e. May 2004, it has been possible to speak of unrestricted access of Polish transport companies to the EU market, which probably had an impact on the equalization of the share of international transport with domestic transport (Figure 1.).

Poland's accession to the EU can therefore be considered as the second important stage in the development of the TSL industry in Poland. The opening of borders had a positive impact on the development of the TSL industry, mainly due to medium and large transport and logistics companies. However, the growing competition related to Poland's accession to the EU structures could not be coped with by small and family businesses (Krajewska & Łukasik, 2010). Good economic situation and the increase in foreign trade turnover then translated into positive changes in the TSL sector — an increase in the number of enterprises, an increase in the number of employees and an improvement in the financial results of enterprises (Table 1.).

Another important period in the activity of Polish enterprises from the TSL sector was the global crisis initiated in mid-2007 in the United States, which affected most of the countries of the world. This crisis also had an impact on the Polish TSL sector. The first symptoms of this crisis began to be felt by Polish enterprises in the middle of 2008, and at the end of this year it recorded, among others, a negative net financial result and a negative profitability ratio of net turnover. In turn, the next year brought, among other things, a decrease in the number of enterprises, a decrease in the number of employees and a decrease in revenues from the sale of products and services. The fact that the TSL industry quickly adapted to the new, difficult economic reality should be assessed positively. The companies undertook actions that allowed them to improve their economic and financial situation, which resulted in, among others, an increase in sales revenues, an increase in the net financial result and an increase in the net turnover profitability ratio. On the other hand, an increase in the number of enterprises and employees was noted in the whole industry (Table 1.).

In recent years, the TSL industry has recorded satisfactory results — each year there are several thousand new companies, the number of employees in the industry has been increasing, and the companies have recorded satisfactory economic and financial results (Table 1.).

The Logistics Performance Index (LPI), developed by the World Bank Group, can be used to assess the TSL industry in Poland in other countries. This indicator is an interactive tool for comparative analysis. Based on it, countries can identify challenges and opportunities they face in their logistics activities. It provides guidance on what actions need to be taken to improve their performance. It consists of both qualitative and quantitative elements and helps to create country-friendly profiles from a logistics perspective. It measures efficiency along the logistics supply chain in a given country and offers two perspectives — international and national.

In 2018, LPI was able to compare 167 countries. The Logistics Performance Index is a weighted average based on six key areas (The Logistics Performance Index and Its Indicators, 2018): customs clearance, infrastructure, international shipments, logistics competence, tracking & tracing, punctuality.

In 2018, Poland was significantly below the average for highly developed countries, taking the 31st position. When the ranking was created, i.e. in 2007 — Poland was on the 40th position, then in 2010 and 2012 it advanced to the 30th position, to record a decrease by one position in 2014, and in 2016 it took the 33rd position. This information indicates low utilization of the advantage of Poland's geographical location in order to achieve systemic superiority in the TSL sector.

Important information, which gives the possibility of in-depth analysis of selected areas, is shown in the data of individual components of indicators. The strongest point of the Polish TSL sector is international shipments and punctuality, while infrastructure is the weakest.

The condition of road, rail and port infrastructure is the most serious barrier that hinders the functioning and development of the TSL sector in Poland. However, it should be noted that the condition of transport infrastructure in Poland is systematically improving. Since 2005, 2638 km of new expressways, including 1086.8 km of motorways and 1551.2 km of expressways, have been put into operation. For comparison, 25 years ago the total length of roads of the motorway standard in Poland was 100 km.

## **Research methodology**

The study took place in December 2018 and was conducted using the survey method. The research was carried out in one of the companies operating in the Lubuskie Voivodeship (western Poland), which is related to the TSL industry. All employees (84 people) were surveyed, of which 38% were women and 62% men. The median age of study participants was 45 years. At the time of conducting the study, 17,6% of respondents worked at the company for less than a year (short work experience), 36% — from 1 to 4 years (average work experience), and 46,4% — for more than 4 years (long work experience). The company offers comprehensive and professional transport and logistics services throughout Europe, including:

- express transport of goods in Europe (the goods are delivered within 24 hours of loading to most EU countries),
- comprehensive logistics service for the furniture market throughout Europe,
- the so-called daily group age line between Poland and Germany,
- forwarding services in the field of road, air and sea transport,
- services in the field of warehouse logistics, including rental of warehouses,
- e-commerce warehouse logistics (comprehensive logistics service for online shops).

Transport services of the surveyed company are provided by many reliable and verified subcontractors, with whom the company has been cooperating for years (e.g. express transport is based on a fleet of over 120 vehicles). Moreover, the company has its own logistic warehouse.

The development of the company, including the planned change of legal form, change of location, extension of the scope of transport and logistic services, have become a direct cause of the research, which was to provide the managers with a lot of important information related to the performance of work in the surveyed company. This study presents a part of the research on satisfaction issues.

The aim of the survey was to assess the level of satisfaction of employees in the transport sector and to analyse factors determining job satisfaction, in particular:

- recognition of the degree of job satisfaction,
- research into the factors that have the strongest and most demotivating impact on employee satisfaction.

In empirical surveys focused on job satisfaction measurement, the model of quantitative surveys with the use of a questionnaire dominates in the vast majority (Mazurek-Kucharska, 2012, p. 34). Quantitative surveys with

the use of a questionnaire are usually carried out within a correlation model, at the level of statistical inference, using primarily correlation analysis and factor analysis. The authors of the research pay due attention to the accuracy and reliability test procedure. In general, they present the process of validating and checking the reliability of the questionnaire technique (method) in detail, including the values of the Alpha-Cronbach index.

It was considered justified to create a questionnaire to measure job satisfaction, including a cognitive and emotional assessment of job satisfaction, as well as the frequency of positive and negative experiences at work. The questionnaire included, among others, questions aimed at determining the importance of factors shaping job satisfaction and factors determining the decrease in job satisfaction. The majority of job satisfaction determinants were identical to those commonly used in the most popular scales (for) job satisfaction measurement<sup>1</sup>.

The survey was conducted among all employees of the company. The questionnaire indicated 20 potential factors influencing job satisfaction and asked the employees to assess the extent the indicated factors influence their job satisfaction. The respondents assessed the indicated factors, assigning a weighting of 1 to 5 to them<sup>2</sup>. In addition, employees also assessed overall job satisfaction (also on a scale from 1 to 5)<sup>3</sup>. Then, on the basis of information obtained from questionnaires, the analysis and evaluation of the importance of factors influencing job satisfaction in the surveyed enterprise was carried out. Statistical methods were used for this purpose.

First of all, for each factor indicated in the questionnaire a measure was calculated — weighted average number of points. Using the criterion of decreasing value of this measure, a ranking of the importance of factors shaping job satisfaction in the surveyed company was prepared. Moreover, the factors influencing job satisfaction (20 variables) indicated in the questionnaire were connected with the possibility of meeting one of the four basic human needs. Therefore, five variables in the organization were identified, which may contribute to the fulfilment of needs: security, affiliation, respect and recognition, and self-fulfilment (Table 2.). For each group of factors influencing the indicated needs a measure was also calculated —

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<sup>1</sup> There are many ways to measure job satisfaction, and more than 29 tools of this type have been identified in the literature. Seven tools were found to be reliable and accurate. In Polish literature an accurate and reliable questionnaire to measure the cognitive evaluation of work was presented by A.M. Zakrzewska. The author emphasises the need for separate measurement of the cognitive and emotional aspect of job satisfaction.

<sup>2</sup> The higher the weight, the greater the factor influencing job satisfaction.

<sup>3</sup> The higher the weight, the higher the job satisfaction.

weighted average number of points. Measurements obtained in this way became the basis for evaluation of each group of factors (Table 2.).

Secondly, in order to supplement the analyses, the correlation between general job satisfaction and particular factors (determinants) of job satisfaction was examined. The values of Spearman's rank correlation coefficients and Kendall's tau coefficients ( $\tau$ -Kendall) were calculated. The correlation analysis allowed us to examine the strength and direction of the influence of 20 factors on the overall job satisfaction (Table 3.).

## **Results**

The conducted research shows that the two most important factors necessary to achieve job satisfaction are access to information necessary for proper performance of work (4.21 points) and independence in performing the entrusted tasks (4.20 points). The following places were taken by: the possibility of learning from one's own mistakes (4.11 points), the feeling of influencing the company's success (4.06 points), the possibility of applying one's own working methods (4.05 points) and good relations with superiors (4.05 points) (Table 2.). The results of the research indicate that supervisors take care to ensure that employees have access to information that allows them to perform their work properly. Moreover, supervisors have confidence in their employees, they do not impose rigid rules and principles on them, but they give them the opportunity to implement their own ideas and solutions, and even if they do not always end in success, this is not negatively assessed in the surveyed company. However, it is important for managers to ensure that employees are able to draw conclusions from possible failures and that in the future they do not make similar mistakes. Employees value the fact that they have access to appropriate information and such independence of action and believe that this is the main source of their job satisfaction. This in turn is connected with the fact that employees identify themselves with their company and feel that they influence its success, which is also an important factor in their job satisfaction. The results of the survey also indicate that such a way of managing and managing the company is appropriate, which is confirmed by good relations between employees and their superiors, as well as by the growth and development of the company.

On the other hand, the respondents believe that their job satisfaction is least affected by factors such as the possibility of promotion (2.47 points), a satisfactory system of awarding prizes and bonuses (2.71 points) and attractive non-wage benefits (2.93 points) (Table 2.). The low rating given

to these factors is probably due to the fact that these factors are rarely used in the surveyed company and, therefore, employees probably did not consider them to be of much importance in shaping their job satisfaction. It should be an indication for managers that these are areas that need to be changed and improved so that they are also a source of employee satisfaction. The conducted research shows that the respondents assessed the overall job satisfaction in the surveyed enterprise quite well (4.20 points). The introduction of changes and improvements in the indicated areas may, however, further increase job satisfaction, and thus increase the productivity and effectiveness of employees.

According to the conducted research, the highest score was given to a group of factors shaping employees' needs related to affiliation (3.98 points). The next place was taken by factors related to safety (3.80 points) and self-fulfilment (3.77 points). On the other hand, the lowest score was given to factors related to the need for respect and recognition (3.18 points). Therefore, these results confirm that the source of job satisfaction in the surveyed company consists mainly in factors which indicate that the surveyed company has a friendly and good atmosphere. On the one hand, trust and independence, which is allowed by supervisors, and on the other hand, their support influences the fact that employees are satisfied with their work. However, a group of factors that shape the need for estimation and recognition, i.e. the system of rewarding, promoting and change, require improvement and change.

As already indicated above, the overall job satisfaction in the surveyed company is at a fairly high level (4.20 points). In order to supplement the analyses presented above, the correlation between overall job satisfaction (a dependent variable) and individual factors (determinants) of job satisfaction (independent variables) was also examined (Table 3.).

The research shows that only 10 out of 20 calculated correlation coefficients (both Spearman and  $\tau$ -Kendall ranks) are statistically significant. Taking into account these results, one may conclude the presence of high (significant) relationship between overall job satisfaction and factors, i.e. clear and understandable measures/criteria for assessing the quality of work, the possibility of learning from one's own mistakes. On the other hand, a moderate (significant) relationship exists between general job satisfaction and seven factors, i.e. clearly defined scope of duties, taking into account ideas/solutions indicated by employees, adequacy of assigned tasks to the employee's capabilities, freedom of expressing one's own opinions, feeling of influencing the company's success, good relations with supervisors, reflecting the quality of work at the level of remuneration. On the

other hand, there is a low correlation between general job satisfaction and positive relations with co-workers.

Therefore, the correlation analysis confirmed that in the surveyed company job satisfaction is shaped primarily by factors that influence the employees' needs related to affiliation. On the other hand, the correlation coefficients between general satisfaction and factors shaping the need for respect and recognition and self-fulfilment turned out to be statistically insignificant. Factors belonging to these two groups should, therefore, be of particular interest to the company's supervisors, who should care about increasing employee satisfaction, and thus their efficiency and effectiveness.

## **Discussion**

Determinants of job satisfaction have been the subject of many studies and publications, and yet, there is still a lack of consensus as to the impact of specific factors on job satisfaction (Sánchez-Sellero *et al.*, 2018; Yuen *et al.*, 2018; Capecchi & Piccolo, 2016; Wilczyńska *et al.*, 2016; Springer, 2011; Westover, 2010; Nair, 2007; Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000). Most often, two groups of factors are examined, namely personal and environmental (Jasiński & Derbis, 2019). Research results so far indicate the strong influence of environmental factors in shaping job satisfaction (Błoński & Burlita, 2018; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Makin *et al.*, 2000; Gordon, 1987). The factors directly related to the work environment encompass mainly the content of the work and the conditions of its performance, and they are the ones that have been looked into. Previous studies have largely focused on analyzing just one or two factors, making it difficult to map out potential correlations and relationships between different factors and the degree of impact that each of these may have on the overall level of job satisfaction. To fully grasp the environmental conditions for job satisfaction, a multi-level research study was conducted that took into account the mutual connections between individual factors.

The study was embedded in a domestic and international road-transport company belonging to the SME sector. Transport companies are currently a crucial element of modern economies, and so transport, being one of the branches of a national economy, can be an important factor contributing to economic development but also indirectly to the development of each department of tangible output and of services. Considering some of the economic data from the years 2008–2017 on the so-called H sector — Transport and Warehousing, it can be seen that the number of companies in

this industry has been on the rise in recent years (Duraj *et al.*, 2020; Kowalska, 2019; Zysińska, 2019).

The study presented in this article only included the employees of the transport company and that is because previous research into the level and determinants of job satisfaction already revealed that the impact of individual conditions may differ depending on the profession (Matveichuk *et al.*, 2019; Neves Pacheco da Silva & Ferreira dos Santos Potra, 2019; Wang & Jing, 2018; Hyttia *et al.*, 2013; Nandan & Krishna, 2013). In the analysis, consistent tendencies are seen in employee responses to the prevailing conditions for shaping the work environment. Based on the findings, the gap was identified between employee expectations and the working conditions offered to them. A valuable organizational perspective was also obtained by collecting feedback from the employees of the same enterprise.

The conducted research confirms the findings signaled by other authors that environmental factors have a significant impact on job satisfaction (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Winkler 2009; Lambert *et al.*, 2001). Analyzing numerous studies conducted in different countries (e.g. Mysíková & Vecernik, 2013; Vinas-Bardolet, 2020; Rabbanee *et al.*, 2012; Zhang *et al.*, 2019; Sokolová *et al.*, 2016; Borooah, 2009) and in different sectors of the economy (Viseu *et al.*, 2020; Biafas & Litwin, 2013; Kumar, 2020; Chordiya *et al.*, 2019), including TSL (Mitonga-Monga, 2018; Sila & Širok, 2018; Chhetri *et al.*, 2018), it is difficult to identify just one decisive factor determining job satisfaction. Based on our research, the most important determinants of job satisfaction seem to be access to information necessary for the proper performance of work and independence in performing assigned tasks. A study conducted in a different TSL company in Slovenia indicates that the most important factors of job satisfaction are supervision (employees are satisfied with the management's instructions and guidelines and believe that their superiors are competent and honest), the nature of work (employees perceive their work as pleasant, meaningful and satisfactory) and co-workers (satisfaction with cooperation, mutual trust, and good working relationships) (Sila & Širok, 2018). On the other hand, there is also research carried out in logistics companies which shows that the correlations between IT performance, internal relationships, transport and job satisfaction are significant and positive. Importantly, this means that by improving employee satisfaction, performance in areas such as IT, internal relations, and transport can also be improved, and vice versa (Guloglu *et al.*, 2014).

Moving on, there are also researchers who argue that the most important factor determining job satisfaction is attitude towards work (Celik, 2011; Dhir *et al.*, 2020; Stamolampros *et al.*, 2019;). In this approach, job satis-



faction is a kind of emotion that results from a person's embedding in organizational culture, how the company is managed, and what the conduct of executives is. In the enterprise under examination, these factors — although not the most important — still rank high among job satisfaction determinants. We have found in our research that the analyzed company is managed correctly, as confirmed by the good relations between employees and superiors as well as the company's propensity for growth

Many studies highlight a close correlation existing between job satisfaction and commitment to work. Increased work engagement is positively correlated with organizational effectiveness, which in turn leads to a sense of personal fulfillment and a feeling of high job satisfaction (Saridakis *et al.*, 2020; Mitonga-Monga, 2018; Chordiya *et al.*, 2019). Similar conclusions can also be drawn from this study, given that factors such as the possibility of learning from mistakes, the feeling of contributing to the company's success and freedom to choose own working methods all rank high among job satisfaction determinants. Employees in the surveyed enterprise identify with the company and feel that they influence its success, which is an important driver of job satisfaction for them.

In the analyzed company, good relations with superiors and positive relationships with co-workers are also important for job satisfaction. Similar results can be found in other studies conducted both in Poland (Biafas & Litwin, 2013) and abroad (Hajdukova *et al.*, 2015; Guloglu *et al.*, 2014).

Having analyzed these findings from around the world, which also span different sectors of the economy, including TSL, it can be said that fair remuneration and employment stability are key to job satisfaction (Sokolová, 2016; Warr, 2008; Springer, 2011; Tri *et al.*, 2020). Other studies add to this list the possibility of personal growth (Juchnowicz, 2012; Zhang *et al.*, 2019). However, our research shows that these factors are not in fact significant determinants of job satisfaction. In the analyzed enterprise, the factors such as the reflection of the quality of work in the amount of salary or employment stability ranked as low as tenth among the determinants of job satisfaction, with the possibility of promotion located at the very bottom of the list. These low scores may be due to the fact that the organizational structure of the surveyed enterprise does not provide great opportunities for promotion and therefore the employees may have considered promotion to be of little importance in shaping their job satisfaction.

Due to the small number of available scientific publications and studies, the line of thought assumed in this article is purely exploratory and descriptive. As shown earlier, the debate on job satisfaction among scholars has been going on for years across different fields of science. The growing interest in this topic, and therefore its inclusion in economic analyses,

should be sought in a relationship having been found between subjective views on the work environment and the objective behavior of employees which drives business performance. Having said all that, there has not been much systematic research to identify the determinants of job satisfaction in transport companies. This study was, therefore, an opportunity to shed more light on this narrow topic and lay the groundwork for future researchers. The results show that employees in a TSL company enjoy a high level of job satisfaction, with this assessment resulting primarily from their satisfaction with the intangible aspects of work. However, given the fact there are very few studies addressing job satisfaction in a transport company, comparing these results with findings from other studies is, at best, difficult.

The study also has some limitations that may have affected the results and therefore also the conclusions. Being a case study, its findings cannot be generalized to the industry as a whole, while the study sample itself was non-random and relatively small. Let us also note that respondents came mostly from just one geographical area. The use of a subjective measurement scale should also be perceived as a limitation to the research proceedings. However, applying perception-based measures to complex theoretical constructs such as job satisfaction is prevalent in social science research (Kim *et al.*, 2009).

With all that in mind, caution should be exercised when generalizing these results and they should instead be treated as merely preliminary findings.

Despite these limitations, however, certain theoretical and practical implications still arise from the study. First of all, it confirms the key role of environmental factors in shaping job satisfaction, making the results a potential reference board to be used for employee management, emphasizing the need to monitor employee needs and satisfaction with work as a way to boost efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, insight derived from the analysis does not only condense the existing knowledge and research on job satisfaction in a transport company, but it also indicates a potential pathway for future research. The importance of building on these results cannot be stressed enough, especially the need to highlight the individual components of job satisfaction.

## **Conclusions**

Building job satisfaction requires identification of its sources and recognition of the nature of the relationship between general satisfaction and its

determinants. Without knowledge of these factors and the extent to which they are responsible for employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction, actions taken by employers may turn out to be misguided (inappropriate) and become only a source of costs and not the expected benefits.

In conditions of limited resources, employers should optimize activities aimed at building employee satisfaction and focus their efforts on those attributes of the working environment, the modification of which will have the most desirable consequences. The selection of such attributes is based on the assessment of the degree of fulfilment of expectations and the scope of impact on overall job satisfaction, determined by the ability to generate satisfaction and dissatisfaction. First of all, we should strive to reduce negative attitudes towards work and implement solutions in areas which are perceived the worst and at the same time have a strong negative impact on job satisfaction. Then it is possible to implement projects aimed at stimulating positive attitudes towards work and introduce changes in areas which are assessed negatively and at the same time have a strong positive impact on job satisfaction. At the same time, areas which are perceived positively cannot be neglected, in order to prevent a decrease in the satisfaction felt by employees.

Since the impact of employee satisfaction on their behavior is still ambiguous and difficult to measure, there is the need for further research on this issue. One of the important areas in this respect is the identification of factors influencing employee satisfaction. Information about these factors, their influence on employee satisfaction may have a significant impact on the shaping of their productivity and effectiveness. The conducted research shows that in the surveyed company job satisfaction is shaped primarily by factors that affect the needs of employees related to affiliation. In the case of factors influencing the remaining needs of employees, changes and improvements should be introduced, so that they influence employee satisfaction to a greater extent in the surveyed organization.

While drawing conclusions from the conducted research, one should remember about a limited number of analyzed environmental variables (the research does not include individual and personality variables). The above limitation is an incentive to undertake further work aimed at getting to know even better the process of shaping employee satisfaction, and then to verify the impact of the satisfaction level on their behavior.

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## Annex

**Table 1.** Selected data characterising the TSL industry in Poland in the years 2005–2017

Year	Number of enterprises	Number of employees (in thousands PLN)	Revenues from the sale of goods and services (PLN million)	Net financial result (PLN million)	Net turnover profitability ratio (%)	Current financial liquidity ratio
2005	261520	633.1	84 501	5 474.5	5.7	
2006	259423	669.7	118 201	6 833.1	6.4	1.06
2007	263423	701.7	102 001	2 627.0	3.8	1.04
2008	269154	733.2	128 840	-38.5	-0.1	1.22
2009	262967	712.9	118 410	365.1	0.5	1.24
2010	265203	701.4	122 824	1 290.5	1.6	1.3
2011	252820	727.9	147 432	1 547.8	1.7	1.33
2012	253086	732.9	156 425	1 588.2	1.7	1.31
2013	252909	737.0	166345	2 193.9	2.3	1.39
2014	253191	738.2	175757	2 181.0	2.2	1.42
2015	256648	767.3	187803	3 562.3	3.4	1.52
2016	260156	818.6	204890	4 198.8	3.6	1.62
2017	264382	869.4	220170	5 085.6	3.9	1.52

Source: own elaboration based on CSO data.

**Table 2.** Importance of factors influencing employee satisfaction

The needs of man	Research factors of job satisfaction	Factor assessment	Rank	Group assessment	Group position
Safety	Stability of employment	3.79	10	3.80	2
	Access to information necessary for proper work performance	4.21	1		
	Clearly defined responsibilities	3.53	13		
	Suitable physical working conditions	3.83	9		
	Clear and understandable measures / criteria for assessing the quality of work	3.65	11		
Affiliations	Positive relationships with colleagues	3.85	8	3.98	1
	Good relations with supervisors	4.05	5		
	Taking into account ideas / solutions pointed out by employees	3.83	9		
	The feeling of influencing the company's success	4.06	4		
	The opportunity to learn from own mistakes	4.11	3		
Respect and recognition	Reflecting the quality of work in the amount of remuneration	3.79	10	3.18	4
	Attractive non-wage benefits	2.93	15		
	A satisfactory system for awarding prizes and bonuses	2.71	16		
	A promotion opportunity	2.47	17		
	Adequacy of assigned tasks to the employee's capabilities	3.89	7		
Self-realization	Freedom to express own opinions	3.90	6	3.77	3
	Possibility to use own work methods	4.05	5		
	Independence in the performance of entrusted tasks	4.20	2		
	Possibility of development (raising qualifications, promotion)	3.00	14		
	Flexibility of working time	3.61	12		

**Table 3.** Correlation coefficients between overall job satisfaction and individual factors influencing job satisfaction

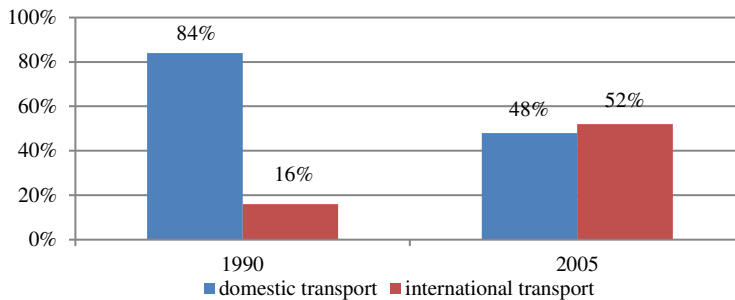
The needs of man	Research factors of job satisfaction	Overall job satisfaction	
		Spearman's rank coefficients	$\tau$ -Kendall's coefficients
Safety	Stability of employment	0.253	0.236
	Access to information necessary for proper work performance	0.23	0.22
	Clearly defined responsibilities	0.57 (**)	0.529 (***)
	Suitable physical working conditions	0.131	0.114
	Clear and understandable measures / criteria for assessing the quality of work	0.675 (***)	0.634 (***)

**Table 3.** Correlation coefficients between overall job satisfaction and individual factors influencing job satisfaction

The needs of man	Research factors of job satisfaction	Overall job satisfaction	
		Spearman's rank coefficients	$\tau$ -Kendall's coefficients
Affiliations	Positive relationships with colleagues	0.389 ( <sup>*</sup> )	0.356 ( <sup>**</sup> )
	Good relations with supervisors	0.445 ( <sup>*</sup> )	0.426 ( <sup>**</sup> )
	Taking into account ideas / solutions pointed out by employees	0.559 ( <sup>**</sup> )	0.527 ( <sup>**</sup> )
	The feeling of influencing the company's success	0.453 ( <sup>*</sup> )	0.419 ( <sup>**</sup> )
	The opportunity to learn from own mistakes	0.612 ( <sup>***</sup> )	0.589 ( <sup>***</sup> )
	Reflecting the quality of work in the amount of remuneration	0.444 ( <sup>*</sup> )	0.409 ( <sup>**</sup> )
Respect and recognition	Attractive non-wage benefits	0.063	0.051
	A satisfactory system for awarding prizes and bonuses	0.098	0.086
	A promotion opportunity	0.002	0
	Adequacy of assigned tasks to the employee's capabilities	0.521 ( <sup>**</sup> )	0.487 ( <sup>**</sup> )
Self-realization	Freedom to express own opinions	0.492 ( <sup>*</sup> )	0.468 ( <sup>**</sup> )
	Possibility to use own work methods	0.247	0.232
	Independence in the performance of entrusted tasks	0.284	0.266
	Possibility of development (raising qualifications, promotion)	0.293	0.263
	Flexibility of working time	0.088	0.076

significant correlation at the level\* p <0.10, \*\* p <0.05, \*\*\* p <0.01

**Figure 1.** Share of domestic and international transport in total transport in 1990 and 2005



Source: compilation based on Slubowski (2007).