

## FACTORS DEMOTIVATING TO WORK IN DIGITAL ECONOMY. GENERATION Z PERSPECTIVE

Bernard BIŃCZYCKI<sup>1\*</sup>, Wiesław ŁUKASIŃSKI<sup>2</sup>, Sławomir DOROCCI<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cracow University of Economics; Bernard.Binczycki@uek.krakow.pl, ORCID: 0000-0003-2214-362X

<sup>2</sup> Cracow University of Economics; Wieslaw.Lukasinski@uek.krakow.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-8757-0190

<sup>3</sup> University of the Commission of National Education in Cracow; Slawomir.Dorocki@uken.krakow.pl,  
orcid.org/0000-0001-6083-0346

\* Correspondence author

**Purpose:** The purpose of the paper is to present the results of research on expectations of young people entering the workforce for the first time in their lives. The research was conducted in order to identify factors influencing the shape of motivational systems offered to them.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The research was designed as an online survey. It was conducted among 693 representatives of Generation Z (18-26 years old). To analyze the results of the survey the following methods of statistical analysis were used: descriptive measures such as measures of mean and variance, statistical tests and measures of dependence (canonical correlation). Statistica 13.3 software was used.

**Findings:** The highest demotivating importance for respondents is low pay, unpleasant atmosphere at work and job stress. In the second group of importance are such factors as uninterrupted free time (working outside of working hours), lack of raises or financial bonuses, job insecurity, constant control and monitoring and excess responsibilities.

**Research limitations/implications:** Some limitations of the survey were that it was conducted among young people only in Poland. Thanks to the cooperation established in May 2025 with Professor Thomas Steger (University of Regensburg), future research directions include a Polish-German comparative analysis of the gap between the demands of today's labor market and the skills that young workers possess.

**Practical implications:** The results of the study can provide valuable guidance for employers (entrepreneurs and HR managers) in shaping modern HR strategies (approach to recruitment, development programs, construction of incentive systems, as well as working conditions and effective use of employee potential).

**Social implications:** The article provides an understanding of young people's expectations, values and preferences regarding working conditions and new knowledge valuable for public institutions responsible for shaping the model of professional education.

**Originality/value:** The formulated re-search conclusions can be used to build strategies for the professional development of the younger generation. There is an apparent research gap in the identification of demotivating factors for Generation Z employees (negative impact).

**Keywords:** HRM, Motivation to work, Gen Z.

**Category of the paper:** Research paper.

## Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays a key important role in the economic development of Europe and the world. It leads to improvements in living standards, generates capital, raises the level of prosperity, and boosts employment and national income. The development of Industry 4.0 and the Covid-19 pandemic has introduced significant changes in the organization of work.

Key elements of the digital economy are data, referred to as the “new oil” of the digital economy. The economy is driven by platforms such as Amazon, Google, Facebook and Alibaba, which connect users to services, products and information. These platforms create ecosystems where companies and consumers can interact in unprecedented ways. E-commerce is revolutionizing traditional retail.

The purpose of this article is to present the results of a study on the expectations of young people regarding the shape of incentive systems offered to those taking up their professional challenges for the first time. The authors considered that gaining knowledge in the given field can be valuable both for employers and for public institutions responsible for shaping occupational safety and vocational education. As it seems, the formulated research conclusions can also serve to build a strategy for the professional development of young people. The importance of the issue undertaken is important in the context of the changes that have occurred in recent years in the labor market, including the interest of young workers in working outside the country.

The authors' review of the domestic and foreign literature showed that a significant part of the research conducted concerns the identification of factors affecting the increase in the level of motivation (positive impact). There is an apparent research gap in the identification of demotivating factors for Generation Z employees (negative impact). In this context, the authors of this publication decided that an interesting research task would be to identify an important area of shaping employee motivation, which is the configuration of demotivating factors for work.

The importance of the issues undertaken in this paper is important in the context of the changes that have been occurring in recent years in the labor market, including the high interest of young workers in working outside the country.

The role of work motivation is particularly relevant in the context of Industry 5.0 as the next stage of industrial development. It extends the concept of Industry 4.0, focusing on humans and their role in production processes. While Industry 4.0 relies on automation, digitization and artificial intelligence, Industry 5.0 brings humans back into the spot-light, emphasizing collaboration between humans and intelligent machines. Industry 5.0 seeks harmony between modern technology and humans, creating a more sustainable, flexible and ethical manufacturing environment.

Digital technologies make it possible to work from anywhere in the world, contributing to the growth of the so-called on-demand economy (gig economy). Platforms such as Uber, Upwork and Fiverr are connecting freelancers with clients around the world. Technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, block-chain, and the development of 5G networks are the foundation of today's economy, enabling new opportunities and streamlining existing processes.

High work motivation has a significant impact on the quality of work. Motivation acts as an internal drive that influences commitment, creativity, efficiency and accuracy in performing tasks. Motivated employees put more effort into their duties, which leads to a more accurate and careful completion of tasks. High motivation fosters a sense of responsibility for work results, which in turn increases the quality of results. Motivated employees are more likely to take the initiative in solving problems, which increases the quality of processes and products. Motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, promotes the generation of new ideas and innovative solutions, which results in better quality. Motivated people are more focused on details, which reduces the risk of errors. Content of work and working conditions are main areas of the quality of working life (Wolniak, 2019).

The next generation of young people is entering the labor market under such conditions, which are quite different from those of the previous century. By 2025, Generation Z will make up 27% of the global workforce. This Generation is made up of individuals who strongly identify with issues of diversity, equality, inclusion and belonging, with as many as 68% of those representing Generation Z dissatisfied with their employers' efforts to create a diverse and inclusive work environment (Trends Report 2023. Compensation and the Labor Market).

The article includes a brief description of the research area of human resource motivation. In the following part, the characteristics of Generation Z will be described and an analysis of studies of domestic and foreign literature on the subject will be presented. The results of our own research and discussion will be presented. The conclusions of the survey will be formulated using methods of statistical analysis, including descriptive measures such as measures of mean and variance, statistical tests and measures of dependence (canonical correlation). Statistica 13.3 software was used.

It should be noted that in this publication the authors continue the presentation of the research results of their project, limiting them to the issue of demotivating factors for work. The research conclusions covering the determinants of work and factors of work quality in today's digital economy, along with a discussion of the competencies of the future, were included by the authors in their last papers.

The research approach of the Authors is in line with the concept of the trichotomy of motivation factors at work, which is an extension of Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory. It was developed by one of the main Polish researchers in labor economics - Professor Leszek Koziol. He distinguished three groups of factors: "motivators", which when present, cause satisfaction; 'hygiene factors' - when they do not occur, cause dissatisfaction;

and “demotivators” - when they occur, they cause dissatisfaction. As the aforementioned author notes, “their vectors of influence on job satisfaction differ dramatically, although they occur simultaneously in the work environment. Therefore, this concept is a methodological directive suggesting the extension of the field of analysis of the conducted re-search to factors that reduce motivation at work” (Kozioł, 2011).

## Literature review

In 2022, 83% of companies raised salaries for their employees, and despite the cost optimizations implemented in some organizations, as many as 81% of employers plan further increases in 2023. Other key challenges on the labor market include:

- the continuing instability of employment, causing financial insecurity and difficulties for workers in planning for the future,
- strong demographic changes, determining the structure of the human resources of economy 4.0,
- the need to match the competencies of the workforce to technological transformation, including increasing robotization and automation,
- lack of flexibility in the organization of work in some sectors and industries lack of flexibility in the organization of work in the context of growing expectations among employees to be able to provide work remotely,
- growing wage inequality,
- expectations about the need to maintain a work-home balance, occurring in an in-creasing number of employees, especially the younger generation now supplying the labor market on the supply side.

In this context, it is worth noting that an important role in the development of enterprises is played by having sufficiently competent and motivated human resources (Koradecka, 2010). Work motivation can be seen as a person's need, his desire to take action. It is important, managers motivated employees, providing them with motives to take action. It can also be said that motivation is the result of a need, prompting behavior, or some kind of reward (Pettinger, 2018). The process of motivation requires influencing a person with forces (factors), resulting in his behavior oriented towards achieving planned goals. Encouraging a person to act requires identifying his expectations, desires, identifying needs of psychological nature, activating his behavior in order to effectively achieve the chosen goal (Edun, Adenuga, 2011).

Work motivation is also defined by a positive emotional state as a result of the work experience. It requires an employee's attachment to his or her job, which heightens the sense of fairness of the employer's assessment (Badubi, 2017). This includes a set of forces stemming from both inside and outside the individual that are capable of initiating the employee's

behavior, determining its forms, directions, intensity and duration (Meyer, Becker, Vandenberghe, 2004). Sometimes it is necessary to encourage the employee to make an effort, which may be due to his internal pleasure in the task or the result achieved (Emily, Yawson, 2021). It is also important to effectively determine the direction a person is aiming for, the effort (level of effort) and persistence in pursuit of the goal (Armstrong, 2014).

Employees' level of motivation and job satisfaction is reflected in their commitment and level of performance. Supervisors should take care of employees' attitudes, through the implementation of motivational activities, in order to reduce the inefficiency of existing organizational arrangements (Lohela-Karlsson, Jensen, Björklund, 2022). The level of efficiency of human resource management depends largely on the motivation of employees. This means that the existing motivational system, including the optimality of the selection of motivational factors, by shaping the attitudes and behavior of employees plays a key role in the success of the organization (Roslon, 2020, p. 327).

The research conducted by Moczydlowska shows that the following are important for employees: the possibility of constant contact with people (51%), a sense of stability in employment and the security obtained thanks to it (45%), the atmosphere in the team (39% of respondents), or the need to feel the sense of the tasks performed (37%). This means that non-material factors motivate respondents to get involved and perform their work effectively. It has been confirmed that stimuli with a negative impact on people and material non-material factors only slightly motivate them to work (Moczydlowska, 2007, pp. 70-73). This is confirmed by the results of a study conducted by Dolot, which shows that respondents considered the following factors as important: atmosphere at work (93%), salary (91%), stability of employment (88% of respondents) (2018, pp. 232-236).

Failure to select the right motivational factors means that an employee may feel discouraged at work. Demotivation is the result of actions in the organization leading to the fact that the individual psycho-physical or moral needs of the employee are not met. This leads to a state in which he feels disappointment and frustration. The lack of appreciation of his achievements or a sense of fairness of evaluation discourages him from engaging in the activities undertaken.

Demotivation is often the result of inappropriate attitudes and behavior of managers, their lack of managerial skills and experience. In fact, it can also be a deliberate action, leading to discouragement of further cooperation and departure of the employee. Thus, the success of an organization depends not only on competence in designing and improving motivational systems, but also on neutralizing the impact of demotivators on the feelings of employees (Radecka, 2022, pp. 297-317). Demotivators can arise at the following levels (Stelmach, 2005):

- economic (e.g., lack of clear criteria for bonuses, awards, promotions, increase in duties performed during unpaid overtime),
- organizational (e.g., non-ergonomic workstation, undermining employee competence, lack of participation in decisions, limiting employee independence, excessive control, ineffective delegation of tasks),

- psychological (e.g., lack of support from the supervisor and co-workers, bad atmosphere, constant competition, unconstructive criticism and ignoring the employee's achievements, monotonous work, lack of development opportunities),
- external (e.g., lack of consideration for the interests of employees, lack of a sense of job stability, selection of penalties inadequate to the situation).

In business practice, the following causes of employee demotivation can be identified: the organization's policies, lack of precise definition of the employer's expectations (scope of duties), ineffective communication and information management system, failure to pay attention to the employee's input and suggestions for improvement, frequent need for change. Thus, demotivating factors often arise from the lack of effectiveness and efficiency of the system, inefficiency of procedures or situations that discourage the employee from working (Mikolajczewska, 2018, pp. 123-131).

Demotivation of an employee can be temporary. Its source is, among other things, the need to perform excessive or too difficult tasks that exceed the employee's capabilities. The combination of such a work situation with personal problems can result in prolonging and strengthening the level of employee demotivation. This is very dangerous, since the result of prolonged demotivation is usually the achievement of a state of incapacity or job burnout (Clutterbuck, 2003).

The sources of demotivation can be found both in the total duties performed and in individual tasks. Performing tasks that frustrate an employee for a long time leads to a loss of motivation to perform them. Certainly, then the employee does not use the potential he or she possesses, as he or she is not engaged in performing duties or does not report opportunities to improve existing organizational arrangements (Sidor-Rządkowska, Sienkiewicz, 2023, pp. 11-16).

A demotivated employee does not strive to effectively achieve the set goals, and his behavior may be characterized by passivity or even a tendency to take actions that harm the interests of the employer (sabotage). Demotivation of an employee is the result of the negative impact of both external and internal factors, and most often their accumulation. In the practice of organizational functioning, an employee can also adopt an indirect attitude (neutral in action), when he performs tasks in accordance with the guidelines, with-out showing positive or negative behavior (Dobrosielska, 2019, pp. 6-9).

Representatives of Generation Z, who take their first job, are characterized by certain distinctive features in the labor market, both of a personal and sociological nature. It is worth pointing out some of them here (Bińczycki, Łukasiński, Dorocki, 2023):

- ability to find oneself in the world of the Internet and modern digital technologies (growing up with a smartphone in hand),
- good knowledge of foreign languages (language education from kindergarten),
- positive attitude towards mobility (Erasmus), which allows young people to easily find their way outside the country,

- positive attitude to the challenges of professional development and seeking a work-place that allows them to develop their passion,
- preference for electronic communication (employee portals),
- diversity of interests and desire for self-development,
- an assertive attitude, resulting in a quick desire to have what they want,
- pragmatic approach to life,
- ability to multitask, which sometimes conflicts with the need to focus on one thing,
- openness to other cultures and ecology,
- expectation of work-life balance (the role of the employer).

The presentation of the above characteristics reveals that researchers' interest in the factors affecting Generation Z's work motivation also stems from its difference from previous generations.

## Method

In order to achieve the set research goal of identifying the factors that demotivate representatives of Generation Z to work, it was decided to make a study of domestic and foreign literature and conduct a survey. The following research questions were formulated for the research objective thus defined:

- what are the key demotivators for representatives of Generation Z?
- are there significant differences in the assessment of the importance of demotivating factors for work between men and women?
- can Generation Z's demotivating factors to work be grouped into certain categories?
- do working and non-working people similarly assess the role of individual demotivating factors to work?

The survey was conducted among 693 representatives of Generation Z (18-26 years old). Among the respondents, 390 are working and there is a noticeable slight surplus of women. Residents of cities, including those with more than 500,000 residents and those working for more than a year, predominated among the respondents (Tables 1 and 2). The survey was conducted by the authors of the article mainly among students of three Polish economic universities in the academic years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. It was considered particularly valuable to obtain responses from part-time students who already have some work experience.

The analysis of the survey results used statistical analysis methods, including descriptive measures such as measures of mean and variance, statistical tests and measures of dependence (canonical correlation). Statistica 13.3 software was used.

## Results

This section of the article will provide answers to the research questions posed. The analysis of the data will be carried out with a distinction between the results obtained in the working group and the non-working group. The importance of demotivators, as indicated by working respondents, is shown in Figure 1, while a full summary of demotivators and indications by respondents (working and non-working) is presented in Table 3.

**Table 1.**

*Structure of respondents by place of residence and length of service (working)*

Seniority	City			Village	Total
	up to 100.000 residents	100.000-500.000 residents	above 500.000 residents		
up to 12 months	12	5	38	27	82
1-5 years	27	19	101	81	228
6-10 years	3	3	22	9	37
above 10 years	6	2	27	8	43
Total	48	29	188	125	390

Source: results of own study.

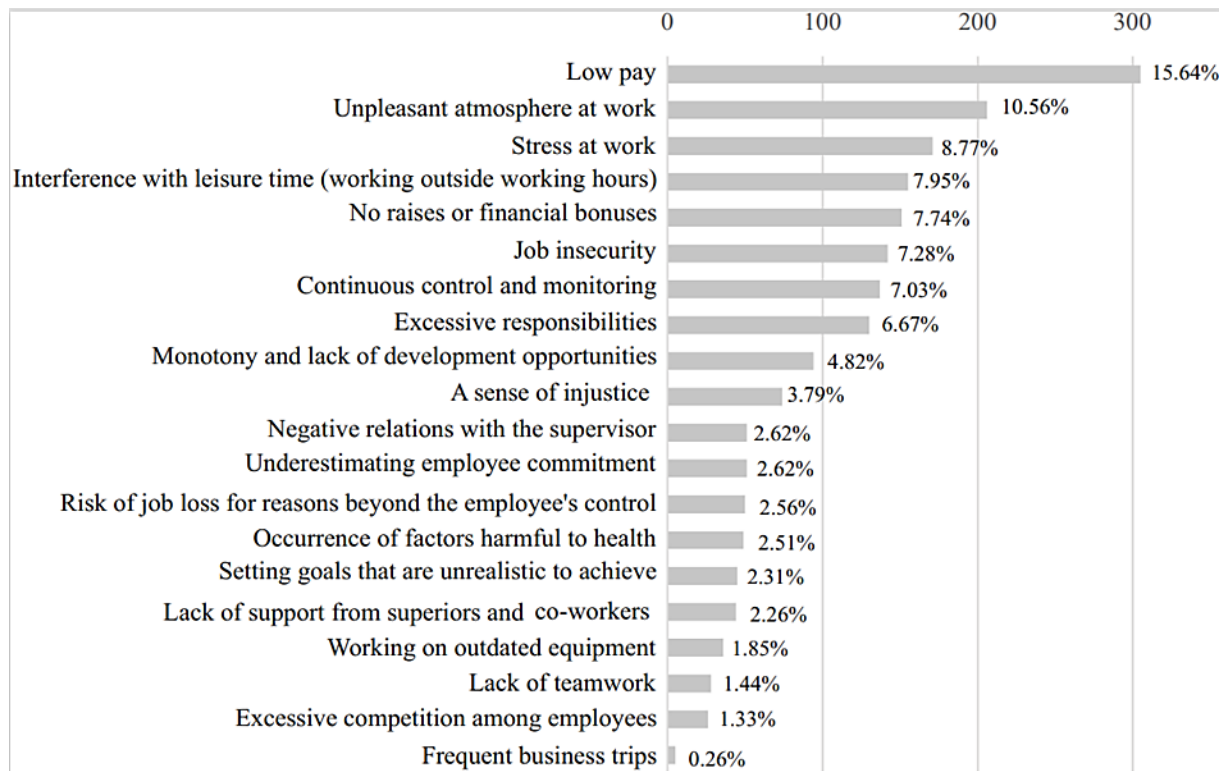
**Table 2.**

*Structure of respondents by place of residence and gender (not working)*

Gender	City			Village	Total
	up to 100.000 residents	100.000-500.000 residents	above 500.000 residents		
Woman	34	18	60	92	204
Male	25	10	25	39	99
Total	59	28	85	131	303

Source: results of own research.

Answering the first research question, the highest demotivating importance for respondents is low pay (15.64% share among all indicated factors), unpleasant atmosphere at work (10.56%) and job stress (8.77%). In the second group of importance are such factors as uninterrupted free time (working outside of working hours), lack of raises or financial bonuses, job insecurity, constant control and monitoring, and excess responsibilities (between 6.67% and 7.95%).



**Figure 1.** Role of demotivators as identified by working people (share of each factor).

Source: results of own research.

With regard to non-working people, the hierarchy of demotivators was similar to that of working people, however, it is possible to notice clear differences confirmed by the Chi2 structure test, which ruled out the similarity of the two groups of respondents at the 0.05 confidence level. Working people were more likely than non-working people to point out the lack of raises or financial bonuses. Also, constant control and monitoring and underestimation of the employee's commitment were more often indicated by those with work experience.

**Table 3.**

*Demotivators indicated by respondents (working and non-working) in absolute numbers*

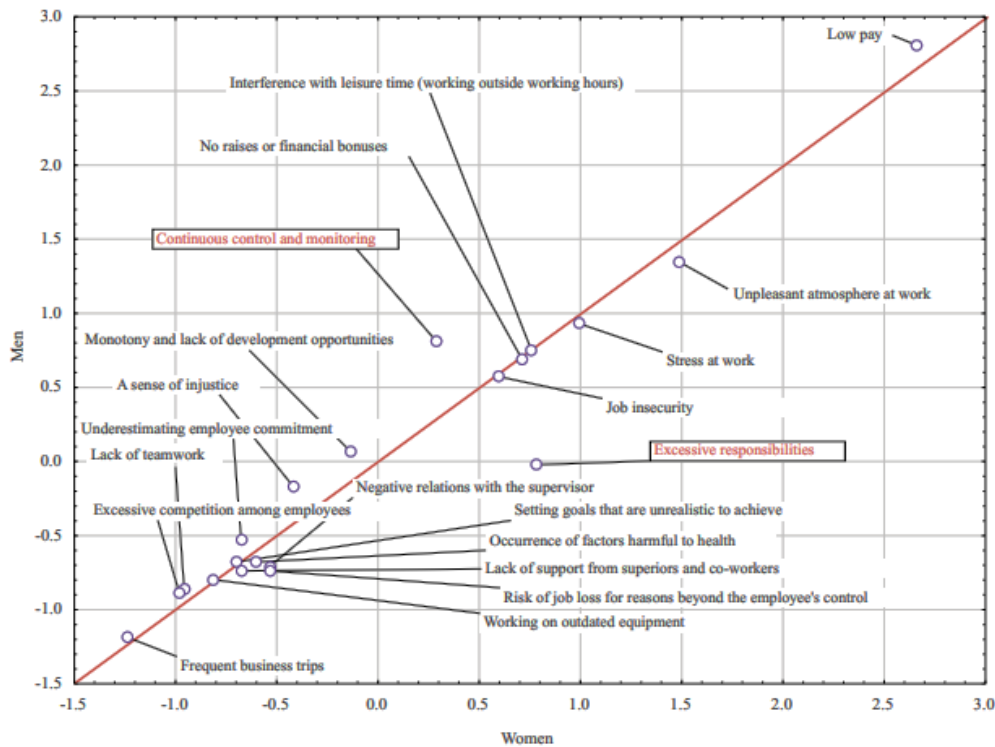
Demotivators	Not working	Working	Difference standardized by the number of non-workers
No raises or financial bonuses	98	151	-20.09
Continuous control and monitoring	93	137	-14.14
Underestimating employee commitment	27	51	-12.88
Job insecurity	104	142	-7.05
Lack of support from superiors and co-workers	29	44	-5.41
A sense of injustice	54	74	-3.87
Working on outdated equipment	25	36	-3.15
Low pay	236	305	-2.53
Lack of teamwork	22	28	0.10
Excessive responsibilities	102	130	0.33
Interference with leisure time (working outside working hours)	122	155	0.78
Frequent business trips	5	5	1.09
Excessive competition among employees	22	26	1.67
Occurrence of factors harmful to health	41	49	2.68

Cont. table 3.

Monotony and lack of development opportunities	78	94	4.49
Stress at work	142	171	8.27
Risk of job loss for reasons beyond the employee's control	49	50	9.90
Unpleasant atmosphere at work	174	206	12.90
Negative relations with the supervisor	53	51	13.12
Setting goals that are unrealistic to achieve	49	45	13.81
Total	1525	1950	0.00

Source: results of own research.

Other demotivators more often indicated by those who were working were Job insecurity and Lack of support from superiors and co-workers. On the other hand, non-working people were more likely than working people to indicate Setting goals that were unrealistic to achieve, Negative relations with supervisor and Unpleasant atmosphere at work. The normalization values of the demotivators indicated by men and women are given in Figure 2.



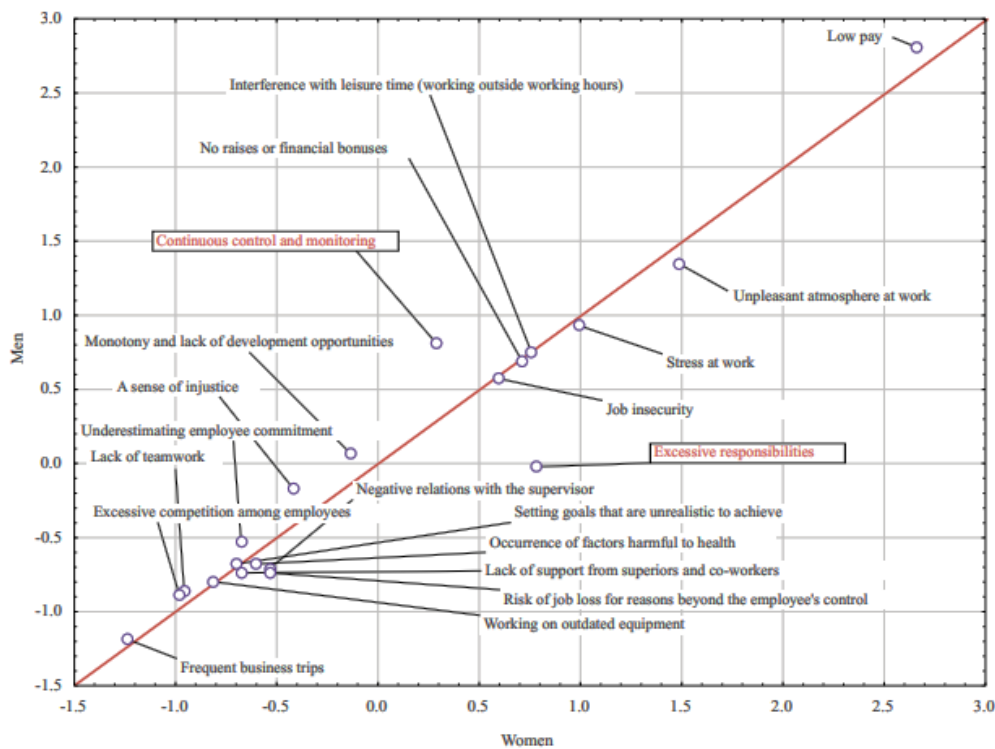
**Figure 2.** Normalizing values of demotivators indicated by women and men.

Source: results of own research.

At a significance level of  $p = 0.002$ , we can conclude that responses between men and women based on the Chi-square test are different. Of all the variables, the biggest difference was in the area of excessive responsibilities, which was indicated by women to a much greater extent than in the case of men. However, these were variables that were among half of all demotivators indicated.

As for the most frequently cited demotivator, which was low pay, it was indicated more often by men, while an unpleasant atmosphere at work was indicated more often by women. Other variables indicated more often by men than women included monotony and lack of

development opportunities, a sense of injustice, and undervaluation of employee commitment. In contrast, women were more likely to indicate negative relations with their supervisor and lack of support from superiors and co-workers (Figure 3).



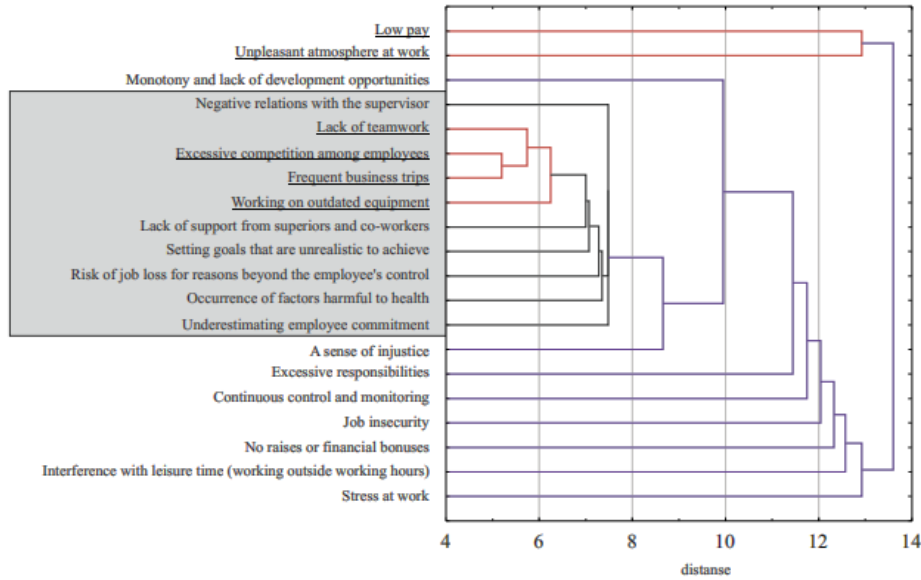
**Figure 3.** Normalization values of demotivators indicated by men and women in relation to the difference between working and non-working people.

Source: results of own research.

Comparing the responses for working and non-working people, the biggest differences for women are in the case of frequent business trips and excessive competition between employees, when working women showed these traits more often than non-working women, while they more often indicated monotony and lack of development opportunities.

Experienced women were also more likely to indicate setting goals that were unrealistic to achieve and interference with leisure time (working outside of work hours). In the case of working men, they were less likely to indicate setting goals that were unrealistic to meet, the risk of losing their jobs for reasons beyond the employee's control, or negative relations with their supervisor than those without work experience. In contrast, they were more likely to indicate a lack of raises or financial bonuses, constant control and monitoring, and low pay than those without work experience.

Referring to the question about the possibility of combining factors into certain groups, doing the grouping on the basis of Euclidean distances confirms the earlier analysis: low work and unpleasant atmosphere at work clearly stand out - while there is a block of 10 variables that did not receive a large number of indications (Figure 4).

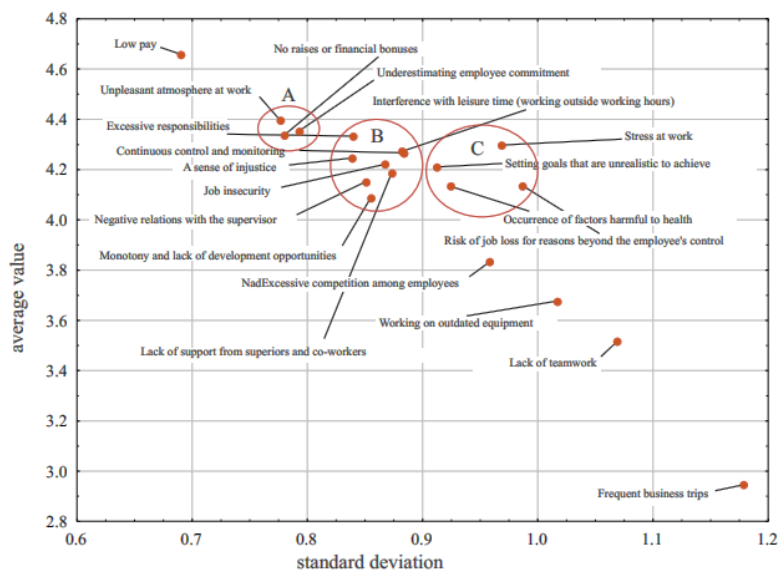


**Figure 4.** Grouping of demotivators.

Source: results of own research.

In the next question, respondents were asked to indicate the value of each variable, which are demotivators, on a scale of 1 to 5. As with the number of indications, low pay reached the highest average (4.66). This was followed by the group named A, which includes: unpleasant work atmosphere, undervaluing the commitment of the vaporizer, and lack of raises and bonuses.

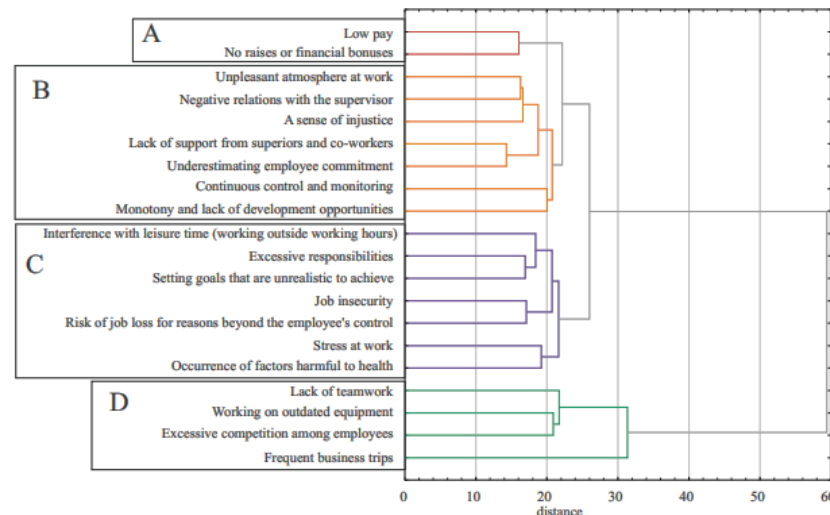
Next are two groups of variables that have a similar mean value of the variables, but differ in the value of the standard deviation. In the case of group C, the variation among the weight given was significantly greater than in the case of group B. The lowest weight among demotivators was assigned to frequent business trips (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Average demotivators and standard deviation.

Source: results of own research.

For the cluster analysis, four groups were distinguished based on the weight of each demotivating factor. The first A is financial. Group B refers to an unpleasant atmosphere at work. Group C is nuisances that occur frequently at work. Group D are demotivators related to cooperation and working conditions (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Cluster analysis of demotivator values.

Source: results of own research.

When comparing the importance of individual variables, only the lack of raises or financial bonuses, monotony and lack of development opportunities, and frequent business trips show no gender differences. Women assigned significantly more weight to individual demotivators than men. This is particularly evident in the case of the risk of losing one's job for reasons beyond the employee's control and excessive responsibilities (Table 4). In contrast, for education and other characteristics, the differences are not statistically significant (Table 5).

**Table 4.**

*Average indications of demotivating factors among men and women*

Variables	Average		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Male	Woman		
Risk of job loss for reasons beyond the employee's control	3.85	4.37	-5.3054	0.0000
Excessive responsibilities	4.10	4.53	-5.1711	0.0000
Job insecurity	4.00	4.40	-4.6449	0.0000
Lack of support from superiors and co-workers	3.97	4.36	-4.5045	0.0000
Excessive competition among employees	3.61	4.02	-4.3214	0.0000
Setting goals that are unrealistic to achieve	3.99	4.39	-4.3052	0.0000
Negative relations with the supervisor	3.95	4.31	-4.2094	0.0000
Underestimating employee commitment	4.17	4.50	-4.1797	0.0000
A sense of injustice	4.06	4.40	-3.9614	0.0001
Stress at work	4.10	4.46	-3.7426	0.0002
Occurrence of factors harmful to health	3.97	4.27	-3.2674	0.0012
Unpleasant atmosphere at work	4.26	4.50	-3.0572	0.0024
Lack of teamwork	3.34	3.66	-2.8999	0.0039
Working on outdated equipment	3.51	3.81	-2.8723	0.0043
Interference with leisure time (working outside working hours)	4.14	4.38	-2.7401	0.0064
Continuous control and monitoring	4.15	4.36	-2.3935	0.0172

Cont. table 4.

Low pay	4.57	4.73	-2.2699	0.0238
No raises or financial bonuses	4.27	4.39	-1.4081	0.1599
Monotony and lack of development opportunities	4.05	4.12	-0.8628	0.3888
Frequent business trips	2.89	2.99	-0.8258	0.4094

Source: results of own research.

**Table 5.**

*Mean values of indications of demotivating factors among working and non-working people*

Variable	Average		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	I work	I don't work		
No raises or financial bonuses	4.34	4.18	2.56566	0.010507
Occurrence of factors harmful to health	4.13	4.30	-2.40496	0.016435
Risk of job loss for reasons beyond the employee's control	4.14	4.29	-2.16895	0.030426
Stress at work	4.30	4.45	-2.14757	0.032094
Lack of teamwork	3.52	3.35	2.09325	0.036689
Continuous control and monitoring	4.27	4.14	1.93564	0.053318
Underestimating employee commitment	4.35	4.24	1.84525	0.065428
Negative relations with the supervisor	4.15	4.23	-1.21704	0.224002
Job insecurity	4.22	4.30	-1.21504	0.224766
Lack of support from superiors and co-workers	4.19	4.11	1.21313	0.225495
Excessive responsibilities	4.33	4.40	-1.09974	0.271829
Monotony and lack of development opportunities	4.09	4.02	0.9613	0.336735
Low pay	4.66	4.62	0.76688	0.443415
A sense of injustice	4.25	4.20	0.7564	0.449667
Working on outdated equipment	3.68	3.62	0.75215	0.452215
Setting goals that are unrealistic to achieve	4.21	4.26	-0.72991	0.465691
Frequent business trips	2.95	2.91	0.4062	0.684722
Excessive competition among employees	3.83	3.86	-0.30943	0.75709
Interference with leisure time (working outside working hours)	4.27	4.29	-0.25824	0.796301
Unpleasant atmosphere at work	4.39	4.40	-0.14084	0.888035

Source: results of own research.

Referring to the averages for working and non-working people, only in the cases of lack of raises or financial bonuses, the presence of factors harmful to health, the risk of losing one's job for reasons beyond the employee's control, stress at work and lack of teamwork showed significant statistical differences. Those who were working paid more attention to the lack of financial raises or bonuses, while in other cases it was the non-working who indicated the greater importance of the demotivators highlighted.

## Discussion

It is worth referring at this point to the findings of other research teams. It should be noted, however, that they relate overwhelmingly to the study of factors positively affecting the working man, hence the comparative possibilities are limited.

Research on motivation to work among young Poles and Croats was conducted by T. Kawka (2021). It turned out that, despite cultural differences and different nationalities, representatives of generation Z from Poland and Croatia are characterized by very similar results in terms of surveyed expectations and attitudes. This author draws a conclusion about the “global, homogeneous perception of their professional role by the youngest generation entering the labor market in the studied sample of students”. Among the key determinants of work that are important to them at the initial stage of life and work regardless of where they work and what kind of offer they receive from their employer, young Croats indicated, in order: the supervisor's leadership style; the organization of work; the expression of appreciation for the employee by superiors and the organization. In the case of Polish students, the highest ratings were given to the attributes: the opportunity for professional development and competence improvement, achievements and professional success at work, clear and open communication of rules and criteria for payment and awarding of remuneration.

According to the aforementioned Manpower Group Report, “Generation Z expects their employers to take action on all global issues - from diversity, equality, inclusion and belonging, to climate change. According to 52% of representatives of this generation, those born between 1995 and 2012, companies are not doing enough to protect the environment. The role and expectations of business are the highest they've ever been, so organizations need to set a clear goal if they want to attract, develop, as well as retain Generation Z talent” (Trends 2023. Compensation and the Labor Market).

The authors' findings are in line with the conclusions of the 2022 Global Employee Survey. It shows that the top three reasons why people have changed jobs in the past 5 years include: low pay (29%), feeling undervalued (27%) and lack of promotion (23%). These researchers found that employees are less likely to leave companies offering higher wages (the average departure rate is 50% higher in the 20% of companies paying the lowest wages compared to the 20% of companies paying the highest wages). In addition, older workers (50-59 years old) are significantly less likely to switch to a job that provides better pay, compared to younger workers (Ageing and Employment Policies: Retaining Talent at All Ages, OECD, 2023).

The authors' findings are in line with the aforementioned analysis of human re-sources researcher Dolot (2018, pp. 227-242). Her respondents ranked the atmosphere at work as one of the most important factors for Generation Z. (Evaluation mainly by those with work experience.) In second place came a factor related to salary, while third place in the hierarchy of motivating factors was occupied by job security in her study. This was followed by elements such as experienced and friendly management, factors related to development (e.g., training) or work related to the employee's interests and passions.

In a study conducted by Domagalska-Gędyś on representatives of Generation Z, one in three respondents chose the value of self-realization. This was followed by interpersonal relations and atmosphere at work as well as employer ethics. The purpose of the author's study was to determine the value at work using the example of part-time students from an agricultural

university. The author found that high salaries are more important to Generation Z than to Generation Y, while for both groups, an important value is the atmosphere at work that helps their self-realization (2017, pp. 40-45).

Also in Ratajczak's research, it was found that the most frequently mentioned factor by young people was adequate pay, a good atmosphere at work, stability of employment, respect for the employee and constancy of work (2018, pp. 206-215).

On the other hand, a study by Gajda, who analyzed the expectations of students at the University of Economics, showed that the most important factors mainly included a high salary, access to modern technologies and work-life balance. The employer should show respect for the employee and his opportunities for development, offer adequate remuneration and flexible working hours, while the organization of work should allow the realization of creative thinking and rapid learning (2017, pp. 158-171). Similar results were obtained by researchers Kukla and Nowacka. According to them, young people who make up Generation Z, are a very diverse group (2019, pp. 176-181).

As Nabahaniand, Generation Z has unique characteristics that distinguish it from previous generations. According to these authors, this generation is known as "job changers". Their research confirms a high propensity to change jobs if their expectations are not met (2020, pp. 234-239).

Dwidienawati and Gandasari, on the other hand, detected that students in Indonesia are willing to work harder to earn higher wages and that Generation Z mainly expects stability and job security after graduation (2018, pp. 245-252).

The growth of digital technologies results in the economy and society in the need for competence in operating modern machines and equipment, contributing to significant changes in manufacturing processes (Sidor-Rządkowska, Sienkiewicz, 2023, pp. 11-16). The development of Economy 4.0, based on automation, robotization and digitization, triggers the need to adapt employees' competencies to the new reality, which may generate their reluctance to change. Some of them are afraid of new technologies. This necessitates the elimination of existing jobs (about 75 million) and the creation of new ones (about 133 million), which requires the development of employees' competencies, conditioning the implementation of tasks related to the automation of, for example, production processes. In the future, the following issues become important: willingness to learn and solve problems, self-awareness, flexibility, development of emotional intelligence or the ability to work in a virtual world and international teams (Dobrosielska, 2019, pp. 6-9).

Demotivating the employee may be the lack of competence among managers, who, in addition to their leadership skills, must be able to navigate the new reality. With the development of the Industry 4.0 concept, their technological competence is gaining importance. Currently, it is not enough to set goals and give instructions, as the management of an organization in Industry 4.0 is done by programming the principles and values of employees. The efficiency of the organization's functioning requires finding new solutions. The goal of

management becomes flexibility and autonomization, and decisions are made through algorithms (Moczydlowska, 2023, pp. 100-102).

Thus, the competitive advantage of the organization is provided by orientation to the use of instruments that support smart solutions, while meeting the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution requires primarily knowledge and financial resources (Masood, Sonntag, 2020). The limitations of the Industry 4.0 concept have already been recognized, as the Industry 5.0 concept emphasizes the sustainable and balanced development of the employee and the positive impact of the transformation on society (Industry 5.0...). However, this requires motivation and knowledge of employees, their openness to innovation and the elimination of the fear of change (Kumar, Singh, Dwivedi, 2021).

In order to ensure self-motivation, it is necessary to meet human psychological needs. It becomes necessary in organizations to offer employees programs and activities that promote autonomy and social ties. It is important to show support, give constructive criticism and encourage employees to make decisions on their own. One significant demotivator to work is the fear of failure. Costs resulting from stress or turnover in the workplace must be countered. It is necessary to shape a culture that promotes values such as solidarity, altruism or willingness to support colleagues. It seems that an effective solution is teamwork, which effectively affects the development of the organization (Vo et al., 2022, p. 15).

Inadequate communication between co-workers, low wages or working conditions that are different than expected should also be considered demotivating factors for work. Great importance is attributed to opportunities for career advancement. Regardless of external conditions, opportunities for promotion, are seen as recognition among co-workers and motivate a person to act, as it strengthens his sense of worth.

Appreciation by superiors and co-workers encourages commitment and development of existing competencies. It is important for managers to be able to appreciate an employee's willingness to participate in training programs and consider them important in the process of career development. Lack of progress in the development of employees' knowledge and skills usually results in a decrease in the quality of work. The success of the organization depends to a large extent on the employee's sense of worth, reinforced by the recognition expressed by his superiors (Fernandes, Santinha, Forte, 2022, pp. 14-15).

One of the key factors that demotivate employees is low wages (89% of those surveyed) and the occasional opportunity to receive a bonus or participate in training that conditions professional development. The wages earned should be adequate to both the needs of employees and the work they do. This is especially important for young people with short seniority, who, if they reach dissatisfaction with the level of salary, are willing to change it quickly (Maziarz, 2020, pp. 47-59; Kmiołek, Kopertyńska, 2018, pp. 103-113; Roslon, 2020, pp. 327-338). The availability of social benefits, e.g., Christmas packages, funds for holidays under the bushel, or mortgage subsidies or low-interest loans for housing renovation, should also be considered important factors. For seniors, trips are attractive, and for working parents, camps

for children or nurseries and kindergartens in the workplace area. It becomes important to properly match the offer to the employee's needs, as ineffective matching can negatively affect employee productivity. The organization's need to cut costs results in the abandonment of the social benefits offered, which reduces its competitiveness in the labor market (Liksza, 2022).

An ergonomic workstation makes the employee feel comfortable at work. It is important to eliminate the causes of accidents. It becomes necessary to ensure the safety of employees, eliminate the impact of harmful factors and hazards arising from the work environment (such as biological factors, radiation, noise, vibration) (Zwiech, 2022, pp. 69-76). It is also a serious problem to feel monotony or monotypical which results in discouragement, burnout and even depression. Industry 4.0 seeks to automate repetitive activities and enrich work that is considered monotonous. However, the level of feeling its monotony also depends on the employee's interests and predispositions.

In many organizations, in order to reduce the effects of monotony, elements of games, for example, are introduced in order to obtain in the employee a state of higher commitment to tasks. It is important that he obtains a high level of concentration and commitment when performing routine, repetitive activities (Silva, Rodrigues, Leal, 2019, pp. 484-507; Para, 2021, pp. 21-29; Witoszek, 2019, pp. 35-47). It is also important to strive to form positive relationships between co-workers, which improves the atmosphere at work. When employees see work only as a source of livelihood and it does not give them satisfaction, competition even in the form of gamification can be perceived negatively. It becomes important for superiors to have the right approach to employees' performance and to be able to select elements of gamification directly to employees' needs in order to be able to stimulate their intrinsic motivation through the use of external incentives (Hammedi, Leclercq, Poncin, Alkire, 2021, pp. 256-269).

The Covid-19 pandemic obliged organizations to adapt to a new reality, in which it became necessary to limit face-to-face relationships for the sake of employees' lives and health. This has resulted in the widespread implementation of remote work, and therefore also in the blurring of the boundaries between work and private life. Lack of adaptation of equipment or insufficient support from IT teams, raises stress levels and the feeling of work overload, which often results in a decrease in job satisfaction (Irawanto, Novianti, Roz, 2021, p. 96). Technological advances made it possible during the pandemic to move work to the home, resulting in difficulties in dividing time between work and home life. The development of technology has ensured that employers are in constant contact with their employees, which can disrupt the work-life balance (Nowak, 2020, pp. 473-474).

Despite the apparent source of disruption, the crisis caused by the epidemic presented an opportunity for rapid development of the organization, as it was impossible to manage it in the same way as before - at a time of imminent danger to life and health. The new situation was a test of both the character and skills of managers and employees, as well as existing organizational and administrative solutions (Okada, Hering, McManus, 2021). The effect of the

pandemic was job insecurity and fear of losing financial stability, which adversely affects not only the level of employee engagement, but also their mental health (anxiety, depression). Minimizing the effects of this negative situation is possible with the support of the supervisor and his ability to create an atmosphere. It is necessary to create an organizational culture based on trust and mutual respect (Wilson et al., 2020, pp. 686-691; Asfaw, Chang, 2019, pp. 96-110).

An important factor influencing the level of employee motivation is the possibility of flexible work, which became particularly popular during the Covid-19 pandemic. Studies show that work flexibility is more attractive to young people than seniors (Grześ-Bukłaho et al., 2022, pp. 779-799).

Aghayeva and Slusarczyk conducted a study, which shows that the group of the most significant factors demotivating employees include: lack of safe working conditions, unsatisfactory pay and unacceptable (aggressive) management style. In turn, a study conducted by the team of Fratričová and Kirchmayer shows that the most frequently cited reasons for demotivation include: lack of pleasure from work on (57% of respondents) and inadequate team atmosphere - bad relations with co-workers and pressure from the employer (49% of respondents) (Fratričová, Kirchmayer, 2018, pp. 28-37). Respondents are also demotivated by an excessive workload, too high expectations in relation to a low salary, or a lack of interest in their work. Other demotivators include: lack of training, difficulty in getting promotions, ignoring employees' ideas and lack of opportunities for professional development on the job. Lack of promotion prospects and lack of development opportunities effectively discourage an employee from engaging in the performance of daily duties (Maziarz, 2020, p. 17; Rosłon, 2020, pp. 327-338).

Referring to the aforementioned motivation theories of F. Herzberg and L. Koziol, it should be noted that representatives of Generation Z attach great importance to both factors referred to as “motivators” (increasing their level of job satisfaction) and those referred to as “hygiene factors”, which cause their dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). Motivators such as recognition, job content, and opportunities for personal development remain important. Hygiene factors such as pay and other working conditions, interpersonal relationships, job security, and social benefits are also significant.

In order to improve the incentive systems designed and implemented for young employees, it is necessary to develop L. Koziol's concept. It is important to identify the factors that most demotivate young employees. Measures aimed at reducing stress in the workplace, the need to adapt work to people's psychophysical capabilities (ergonomic approach) and their qualifications (Koziol, 2011) remain important. Demotivating factors should be eliminated in order to encourage Generation Z to engage in continuous learning and personal development. In a changing work environment, digital skills, the ability to work in a team, flexibility, and a willingness to develop in various areas are particularly important (Karpińska, Owczarczuk, 2024, p. 80).

The authors of modern HR strategies should ensure that Generation Z's technological curiosity and openness to innovation are used to their full potential. In this regard, it is worth drawing on the work of motivation researchers such as Deci and Ryan (2000) – theory of self-determination, Csíkszentmihályi (2016) - flow theory, and Hackman and Oldham (2010) - Job Characteristics Model.

It is also important to ensure conditions conducive to technology design and programming (World Economic Forum, 2023, pp. 256-286). According to Ernst&Young, professional practices are particularly important for Generation Z (Sawyer, 2021).

Future research directions include a European comparative study of the factors that motivate and demotivate people to work, as well as an analysis of the gap between the demands of today's labor market and the skills that young workers possess.

## **Conclusions**

Humanocentricity as a key feature of Industry 5.0 includes a focus on the role of the human being as the main decision-maker and creator, the personalization of production processes according to the needs of customers and employees, and the creation of work-places that promote employee well-being.

The survey and statistical post-tests conducted allowed the study to achieve its goal. Generation Z is an extremely dynamic group for whom technology, authenticity and work-life balance are very important factors. They have changed the way companies and institutions must approach consumers, employees and citizens. They are entering the job market at a time when many are worried about financial stability and the availability of well-paying jobs. The rising cost of living and education is also a significant source of worry.

Motivation improves the ability to concentrate, which leads to higher quality work, especially in tasks that require precision. Motivation encourages effective time management, which allows tasks to be completed on time without reducing their quality. Motivated employees are less likely to postpone tasks, which gives them more time to work out the details. Motivation causes employees to derive greater job satisfaction, which translates into quality work performance. Motivation can reduce work-related stress, which has a positive effect on accuracy and efficiency. Motivated employees are more cooperative, leading to better team performance. Highly motivated individuals can inspire others in the team, which increases the overall quality of work in the organization. Motivation promotes the acquisition of new skills and the improvement of those already possessed, which increases the quality of work. Motivated employees often strive to improve their own performance and quality of work.

Generation Z is characterized by several traits that distinguish it from previous generations, especially in the context of technology, work and social values. Generation Z values flexible working conditions and work-life balance. Remote work, independence and freelance opportunities are attractive to them. They often seek work that not only provides financial stability, but also makes social sense or makes a difference in the world.

Generation Z grew up with technology and the Internet from an early age. This makes them extremely adept at using digital devices, social media and modern communication tools. Gen Z is accustomed to processing a lot of information at once. They are adept at using several platforms and applications simultaneously. Generation Z is often value-driven when making consumer decisions. Companies that care about the environment, sustainability and social responsibility are more attractive. They expect products and services to be tailored to their individual needs. They value originality and personalization, especially in fashion and technology.

The functioning and development of organizations depends on their competence to meet the challenges arising from the turbulent environment. Particular attention should be paid to the growing importance of digital transformation, globalization and the impact of economic and social crises (Jaki, Ziębicki, 2021, p. 9). The high dynamics of change means that solutions considered perfect are currently becoming obsolete (Klak, 2020, p. 177). Taking advantage of new opportunities promotes the competitiveness of the organization. Efficiency determines the sustainability of success, understood as the ability to develop the organization in the long term (Grabowska, 2017, pp. 30-33). An opportunity for this is to hire motivated employees, including representatives of the younger generation, who are committed to carrying out their duties.

Professional education prepares young people not only technically, but also mentally for professional challenges. In doing so, it improves the quality of work. By developing skills, building confidence and inspiring action, it positively influences their motivation to work. To make this impact even more effective, it makes sense to invest in practice-oriented education, soft skills development and mentoring support.

Education tailored to the needs of the labor market teaches competencies that are useful in working life. Young people feel better prepared for work, which builds their confidence and increases their motivation. Professional education programs often help young people discover their talents and strengths, which encourages them to develop their careers in a particular direction. Professional education systems help young people set realistic and ambitious career goals, which provide motivation to move forward. Meetings with mentors, apprenticeships or success case studies encourage young people to achieve their goals, prepare them for the realities of work and show the value of effort. Such education motivates commitment, as students see the results of their learning. Young people who understand how their work affects society are more motivated.

Education that takes into account the development of social and emotional competence helps young people cope with professional challenges. This increases their perseverance and motivation. Inspiring educators and career counselors often act as motivators, showing young people the value of work and commitment.

The compatibility of education with the labor market is crucial to maintaining quality work. When young people see that what they are learning corresponds to the demands of the labor market, they are more motivated to learn and work later. Professional education programs provide career prospects, which motivates young people to perform better and better.

Creating a sense of belonging and meaning is also important. Education that shows how work can contribute to social development or personal fulfillment increases intrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, participation in educational programs that promote cooperation, networking and social integration increases motivation to work in teams.

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