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THE IMPACT OF THE ASSESSMENT OF REMUNERATION TRANSPARENCY ON ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to analyse the relationship between the assessment of remuneration transparency and three key attitudes toward work: job satisfaction, proactivity and employee engagement.
Design/methodology/approach: The research model was verified in a quantitative study conducted in March 2025 using the CAWI method on a nationwide sample of 600 working people in Poland, using structural equation modelling (SEM) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).
Findings: The positive impact of perceived remuneration transparency on job satisfaction, proactivity and employee engagement was confirmed, with the strongest relationships observed for satisfaction and proactivity. The strength of the relationship varies depending on the type of activity and contract.
Practical implications: Enhancing transparency can help to increase job satisfaction, proactivity and engagement, and the effects of these measures should be designed taking into account the specific nature of the type of activity and employment.
Originality/value: The paper contributes to the remuneration transparency literature by showing its positive links with job satisfaction, proactivity and engagement, offering value to both researchers and HR practitioners.
Keywords: remuneration transparency, job satisfaction, proactivity, employee engagement.
Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

The implementation of a sustainable development strategy in today's operating environment, determined, among other things, by new models of work organisation and new forms of work in the digital world, requires a cultural change in management. The foundation of the desired value-based organisational culture is remuneration transparency, understood as the transparency of the principles, criteria and decision-making processes for determining wages. It constitutes a dimension of the quality of the remuneration system and an element of

the organisational culture that promotes trust, satisfaction and employee engagement (Juchnowicz et al., 2025). This phenomenon is undoubtedly the result of changes in worldview, expressed in the pursuit of gender equality, as well as changes in the expectations of successive generations of employees. To this end, it is essential to ensure job satisfaction. Achieving this among employees is not only a component of well-being, but also a prerequisite for achieving business benefits in the form of proactivity and optimal employee engagement (Juchnowicz, Kinowska, 2018).

Therefore, the aim of this article is to analyse the relationship between pay transparency and job satisfaction, proactivity and employee engagement.

2. The relationship between remuneration transparency and job satisfaction, proactivity and employee engagement

Under the influence of social pressure, growing employee expectations and legal requirements, organisations are increasingly recognising the need to disclose information about remuneration, the principles of determining it and the rules for communicating these issues (Avdul et al., 2024; McMullen, Dahle, 2024). This is driven by increasing social and political expectations regarding pay equality. Research findings indicate that greater transparency helps to reduce inequality and strengthens the sense of organisational justice (Joelle, 2018).

The literature identifies four dimensions of pay transparency: transparency of results, processes, communication, and archival transparency (Henn et al., 2024). The first concerns the disclosure of remuneration amounts, the second - the rules and criteria for determining them, the third - the possibility of exchanging information between employees, and the fourth - access to remuneration data outside the organisation.

Effective performance in conditions of uncertainty and digital revolution requires employees to have specific attitudes towards work, such as proactivity and engagement. These are strongly contextual and dependent, in particular, on job satisfaction, which is treated as an emotional and cognitive attitude towards work (Armstrong, Taylor, 2014). It means a positive attitude of employees towards the tasks entrusted to them, working conditions, superiors and colleagues, requiring that work creates intellectual challenges, a sense of success, joy from professional development and self-fulfilment, and identification with the work performed and/or the organisation (Juchnowicz, 2014).

Transparency in remuneration is associated with higher job satisfaction, lower turnover and stronger identification with the organisation's goals (Hartmann, Slapničar, 2012; McMullen, Dahle, 2024), which results in a number of economic consequences, including the level of proactivity and engagement of employees (Gutierrez et al., 2025, Juchnowicz, 2014). This impact is indirect and conditional. It occurs through perceptions of organisational justice

(especially procedural and distributive) and affective reactions triggered by social comparisons and the assessment of one's own pay position (Siman-Tov-Nachlieli, Bamberger, 2021). Research shows that the factor shaping job satisfaction is information about wage relations, i.e. one's position relative to others, rather than absolute wage amounts (Juchnowicz, Kinowska, 2018, 2020).

Job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee proactivity. This relationship is bidirectional. A proactive attitude indicates a relatively stable tendency of employees to actively influence their environment. It is characterised by:

- acting without external coercion, orders or situational pressure,
- anticipation and future orientation – recognising upcoming opportunities/risks and acting "before the fact",
- a focus on changing work methods, procedures, influencing others, and developing one's own resources or competencies for future requirements (Grant, Ashford., 2008).

To date, there has been no broader research directly analysing the relationship between proactivity and pay transparency. It occurs indirectly, with mediators (fairness, climate, trust) or as part of broader models of organisational behaviour (Brown et al., 2022).

Employee engagement is an attitude towards work that is of fundamental importance from the organisation's point of view. The literature takes a perspective rooted in psychology, according to which engagement is understood as a positive state related to work, manifested in vigor, dedication and absorption in the tasks performed (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

In a broader sense, engagement is sometimes described as an attitude expressing identification with the organisation, a willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty, and loyalty to the employer (Juchnowicz, 2012). It is a relatively stable orientation of the employee towards work and the organisation, developed on the basis of experiences related to honesty, respect and trust. Building engagement is facilitated by clear organisational rules, including remuneration policies, as well as a sense of agency and influence on the work environment.

Transparency of remuneration can influence engagement in several ways. It is part of a systemic approach in which the level of engagement is the result of consistent motivational practices and consideration for employee well-being (Kinowska, 2025). Transparent rules reinforce the perception of organisational justice, which helps to build trust in the employer (Van den Bos, Lind, 2002; Van den Bos et al., 1997). Clear criteria and rules for remuneration make it easier for employees to understand the relationship between their workload and the remuneration they receive, which can strengthen their internal motivation and willingness to make additional efforts (Inayat, 2018; Jiang, Luo, 2018).

In this sense, remuneration transparency can be seen as a component of an organisation's offer that includes not only the financial aspect, but also elements of respect and recognition (Juchnowicz, 2012). People who believe that they are treated fairly and transparently are more

likely to engage in the pursuit of organisational goals, are more willing to cooperate and take initiatives that go beyond their formal duties.

Based on an analysis of the literature describing the relationship between remuneration transparency and job satisfaction, proactivity and employee engagement, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Transparency in remuneration has a positive impact on job satisfaction.

H2: Transparency of remuneration has a positive impact on employee proactivity.

H3: Transparency of remuneration has a positive impact on employee engagement.

3. Methods

In March 2025, a quantitative study was conducted to validate the model of the relationship between remuneration transparency and attitudes towards work. It was carried out on a sample of economically active people working in Poland (N = 600), using the CAWI method, on a nationwide accredited research panel.

In the sample obtained, men accounted for 53% and women for 47% of respondents. People aged 35-44 accounted for 33%, 45-59 - 34%, 25-34 - 27%, the youngest (18-24) - 4%, and the oldest group (60 and over) accounted for 2% of the sample. Respondents with higher education dominated (56%), 36% had secondary education, 7% had basic vocational education, and 1% had primary education. Most of the respondents held non-managerial positions (68%), 28% held managerial positions, and 4% were self-employed. The vast majority of respondents worked full-time (91%), while 9% worked part-time. Employment contracts predominated – 89% of the sample, 7% of respondents were employed on the basis of civil law contracts, and 4% ran their own businesses (b2b contracts). Employees of micro-enterprises accounted for 32% of the sample. The remaining respondents worked in small companies (17%), medium-sized companies (19%), large companies (12%) and very large organisations (20%). Respondents were mainly employed in the service sector (51%) and manufacturing (31%), while 18% worked in public administration. Most of the respondents worked in the private sector (71%), 27% in the public sector, and 2% in non-governmental organisations.

Analyses of the impact of remuneration transparency on attitudes towards work were conducted using IBM SPSS AMOS software (version 29).

The research model consisted of four variables (Table 1): "Remuneration transparency" (explanatory variable; Cronbach's alpha = 0.891), "Employee engagement" (explained variable), "Job satisfaction" (explained variable) and "Employee proactivity" (explained variable; Cronbach's alpha = 0.791). The scale measuring "Remuneration transparency" was adapted based on the proposal by Henn, Neck and Houghton (2024). The measurements of

"Employee engagement" and "Job satisfaction" were based on individual statements of a general assessment nature, based on the approach proposed by Juchnowicz (2012, 2014). Respondents rated each statement on a five-point Likert scale, where "1 = strongly disagree", "5 = strongly agree" and "3" was the midpoint.

Table 1.
Variables in the model

Variable	Statement	Path weight
Remuneration transparency	My organisation provides employees with information about remuneration levels for individual positions.	0.628
	My colleagues openly discuss their remuneration with me.	0.554
	My employer has no objection to discussions about remuneration within our organisation.	0.601
	I am familiar with the principles used to determine my salary.	0.824
	I know how decisions about remuneration are made.	0.902
	I have a good understanding of how remuneration is determined for individual positions in my organisation.	0.893
Job satisfaction	My job gives me satisfaction.	1
Employee proactivity	At work, I am happy to share my knowledge and experience with other employees.	0.715
	I am happy to take on additional tasks beyond my mandatory duties.	0.749
	At work, I suggest ways to improve how things are done.	0.784
Employee engagement	I give my all at work every day.	1

Source: own study.

4. Results

In the first stage of the analysis, the validity and reliability of the scales used to measure latent variables were checked. Both achieved a satisfactory level of CR and AVE. The AVE root values are higher than the correlation between the constructs. The scales described show convergent and differential validity, which confirms their theoretical validity (Table 2).

Table 2.
Assessment of the psychometric properties of the scales

Variable	CR	AVE	Correlations/ AVE root*	
			1	2
1. Remuneration transparency	0.880	0.559	0.747	
2. Employee proactivity	0.794	0.562	0.514	0.750

CR – Composite Reliability, AVE – average variance extracted, * The AVE root is bolded on the diagonal.

Source: own study.

The model of relationships between constructs was estimated using the SEM approach, and the measurement part was verified using the CFA method. The fit of the measurement model can be considered satisfactory (Table 3).

Table 3.
Model fit to data

Indicator	Value
Chi-square and df	199.815, df = 38
GFI	0.943
AGFI	0.901
NFI	0.944
CFI	0.954
SRMR	0.059
RMSEA	0.084 (90% CI RMSEA = [0.073; 0.096])

*p<0.001

Source: own study.

In order to test the relationships between "Remuneration transparency" and "Job satisfaction", "Employee proactivity" and "Employee engagement", path coefficients were estimated (Table 4).

Table 4.
Path coefficients for the examined relationships between variables

Structural path	β	Est.	S.E	C.R.
Remuneration transparency -> Job satisfaction	0.563	0.587	0.039	15.026
Remuneration transparency -> Employee proactivity	0.536	0.410	0.036	11.516
Remuneration transparency -> Employee engagement	0.464	0.438*	0.037	11.839

*p < 0.001.

β - standardised coefficient; Est. - unstandardised coefficient; S.E. - standard error; C.R. -Est./S.E.

Source: own study.

The variables in the analysed model explained approx. 31.7% (R2 = 0.317) of the variance in "Job satisfaction", approx. 28.7% (R2 = 0.287) of the variance in "Employee proactivity" and approx. 21.5% (R2 = 0.215) of the variance in "Employee engagement".

The results of the structural model estimation provide empirical support for the three research hypotheses. "Remuneration transparency" has a significant and positive impact on "Job satisfaction" (H1; $\beta = 0.563$, $p < 0.001$). Its positive impact on "Employee proactivity" (H2; $\beta = 0.536$, $p < 0.001$) and "Employee engagement" (H3; $\beta = 0.464$ ($p < 0.001$).

In order to verify whether the strength of the impact of "Remuneration transparency" on the attitudes under study differs depending on employment characteristics and organisational characteristics, a multi-group analysis (MGA) was conducted. The analysis did not reveal any significant differences for: organisation size and sector, position and working hours.

A comparison of the baseline model (without restrictions) with a model imposing equality of structural paths between groups revealed marginally significant differences between types of organisational activity: $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 11.281$, $p = 0.08$ (at a significance threshold of $p < 0.1$). This means that the relationships in the model may differ between groups, although the effect

has limited evidential strength. Changes in fit indices were minimal (ΔCFI = -0.001; ΔRMSEA = -0.001; ΔGFI = -0.003; ΔNFI = -0.003).

The analysis of path coefficients (Table 5) indicates that the relationships are strongest in manufacturing organisations, weaker in services, and weakest in administration.

Table 5.
Path coefficients for the examined relationships between variables for types of organisational activity

Structural path	β	Est.	S.E	C.R.
	Production (n=183)			
Remuneration transparency -> Job satisfaction	0.609	0.695	0.078	8.947
Remuneration transparency -> Employee proactivity	0.626	0.541	0.069	7.793
Remuneration transparency -> Employee engagement	0.568	0.584	0.071	8.165
	Services (n=307)			
Remuneration transparency -> Job satisfaction	0.541	0.523	0.050	10.487
Remuneration transparency -> Employee proactivity	0.538	0.360	0.044	8.095
Remuneration transparency -> Employee engagement	0.426	0.370	0.047	7.813
	Administration (n=110)			
Remuneration transparency -> Job satisfaction	0.464	0.507	0.103	4.923
Remuneration transparency -> Employee proactivity	0.314	0.284	0.102	2,791
Remuneration transparency -> Employee engagement	0.320	0.322	0.099	3.271

*p < 0.001, **p < 0.05, β - standardised coefficient; Est. - unstandardised coefficient; S.E. - standard error; C.R. -Est./S.E.

Source: own study.

In order to identify differences between the types of activities of the organisation, CRD indicators were used in a free model, assuming a significance threshold of $p < 0.10$ ($|CRD| > 1.64$). The analysis showed that the type of activity differentiates the strength of the impact of "Remuneration transparency" on "Employee proactivity" and "Employee engagement" - manufacturing differed significantly from services and administration, while services and administration did not differ significantly from each other (Table 6).

In the case of "Job satisfaction", a difference was only noted between manufacturing and services. The effects were strongest in manufacturing organisations, weaker in services and weakest in administration.

Table 6.
Critical Ratios for Differences (CRD) for the examined relationships between variables for types of organisational activity

Path	Services vs. manufacturing	Administration vs. manufacturing	Administration vs. services
Remuneration transparency -> Employee engagement	-2,487	-2.147	-0.439
Remuneration transparency -> Job satisfaction	-1.859	-1.460	-0.146
Remuneration transparency -> Employee proactivity	-2.204	-2.088	-0.680

$p < 0.05$ ($|CRD| > 1.96$), $p < 0.10$ ($|CRD| > 1.64$).

Source: own study.

A comparison of the baseline model with the model with imposed structural path equality showed a deterioration in fit after applying the restrictions, confirming the moderating role of contract type: $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 15.323$; $p = 0.018$. Changes in the fit indices were minor (ΔCFI = -0.002; ΔRMSEA = 0.000; ΔGFI = -0.001; ΔNFI = -0.004), suggesting that the differences between the groups concern selected paths.

In each group, positive relationships were found between "Remuneration transparency" and the attitudes studied, although their significance and strength varied (Table 7).

Table 7.
Path coefficients for the examined relationships between variables for contract types

Structural path	β	Est.	S.E	C.R.
	Employment contract (n=534)			
Remuneration transparency -> Job satisfaction	0.563	0.591	0.042	14.136
Remuneration transparency -> Employee proactivity	0.511	0.387	0.038	10.195
Remuneration transparency -> Employee engagement	0.450	0.425	0.039	10.757
	Civil law contract (n=40)			
Remuneration transparency -> Job satisfaction	0.390	0.398	0.162	2.458
Remuneration transparency -> Employee proactivity	0.568	0.463	0.147	3.145
Remuneration transparency -> Employee engagement	0.271	0.265***	0.159	1.662
	B2b contract (n=26)			
Remuneration transparency -> Job satisfaction	0.632	0.585	0.149	3.930
Remuneration transparency -> Employee proactivity	0.843	0.805	0.130	6.18
Remuneration transparency -> Employee engagement	0.804	0.857	0.140	6.127

*p < 0.001, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.1, β - standardised coefficient; Est. - unstandardised coefficient; S.E. - standard error; C.R. -Est./S.E.

Source: own study.

The results of |CRD| indicated that economic activity differs from other forms of employment in terms of the impact of "Remuneration transparency" on "Employee proactivity" (Table 8). A significant difference was found between b2b contract and an employment contract, and a marginal difference between b2b contract and a civil law contract. The effect was highest for b2b contract.

B2b contracts differed from other forms of employment in the strength of the impact of "Remuneration transparency" on "Employee engagement". The effect was strongest for b2b contract, weaker for an employment contract and weakest for a civil law contract.

However, for the path "Remuneration transparency" -> "Job satisfaction", no significant differences were found between the forms of employment.

Due to the smaller size of the civil law contract (n = 40) and b2b contract (n = 26) groups, the interpretation of the differences should take into account the greater uncertainty of estimation in these groups.

Table 8.
Critical Ratios for Differences (CRD) for the examined relationships between variables for contract types

Path	Employment contract vs civil law contract	B2b contract vs employment contract	B2b contract vs civil law contract
Transparency of remuneration -> Employee engagement	-0.974	2.976	2.795
Remuneration transparency -> Job satisfaction	-1.153	-0.037	0.850
Transparency of remuneration -> Employee proactivity	0.502	3.081	1.737

$p < 0.05$ ($|CRD| > 1.96$), $p < 0.10$ ($|CRD| > 1.64$).

Source: own study.

5. Discussion

The results of the study indicate that perceived transparency of remuneration is a predictor of employee satisfaction, proactivity and engagement. The strongest correlations were observed for job satisfaction and proactivity, suggesting that transparency affects the assessment of work as such and the willingness to take initiative, change and pursue personal development.

Remuneration transparency can be understood as a mechanism that reduces uncertainty and reinforces the belief in the predictability of rules. The study showed that the assessment of transparency is most strongly manifested through knowledge of the mechanism and rules of remuneration formation, as well as the method of its differentiation for individual positions, i.e. job evaluation. Significantly less through conversations and the provision of information about remuneration levels for individual positions.

The results indicate that perceiving the work environment as fairer and more understandable promotes positive attitudes and behaviours that go beyond the minimum requirements. Transparency can act as a motivating factor, especially in the area of proactivity.

A multi-group analysis showed that the relationship between pay transparency and attitudes towards work varies between organisations with different business profiles. In manufacturing organisations, the impact of transparency on proactivity and engagement was stronger than in services and administration, while the differences between services and administration were insignificant. In the case of job satisfaction, a difference was noted between manufacturing and services.

This can be interpreted as meaning that in manufacturing companies, transparency in remuneration more often translates into engagement and proactivity, because in their typical working environments, the mechanisms linking performance, standards and the remuneration system tend to be more measurable and unambiguous. In administration, where remuneration frameworks tend to be more formalised and regulated, transparency may have less potential to

shape attitudes, as clarity of remuneration rules does not necessarily mean that it is possible to influence remuneration levels in practice.

The results of the multi-group analysis indicate that the type of contract affects some of the relationships in the model. The most pronounced difference concerned the impact of remuneration transparency on engagement. The relationship was strongest in the group of persons cooperating within the b2b framework and weaker in the other groups. In the case of proactivity, differences were also noted, indicating a stronger effect of transparency for b2b contracts. However, no differences were found between forms of employment in terms of job satisfaction.

A possible explanation is the different psychological contract and sources of security in different forms of employment. For people on b2b contracts, transparency of remuneration rules can play an important informational and security role – it facilitates the assessment of the profitability of cooperation, reduces the risk of arbitrary decisions on remuneration, and strengthens the belief in partnership-based treatment. This, in turn, can translate into a willingness to invest effort and take initiative. At the same time, the lack of differences in satisfaction may suggest that transparency influences the assessment of work in a more universal way.

The results of the study are relevant to human resource management practice. They indicate that transparency should be treated as a tool for shaping attitudes, and not just an element of legal compliance. In particular, if an organisation expects proactivity and behaviour that goes beyond formal duties, clear remuneration rules can be a signal that reinforces the willingness to act.

The diversity of effects suggests that transparency should be tailored to the specific nature of the organisation and employment. In manufacturing, it can bring particularly significant benefits in the area of proactivity and engagement, while in administration it is worth combining it with human resource management tools that increase agency, e.g. clear promotion criteria and development paths. With regard to people working on b2b contracts, transparency can be an element of building long-term cooperation and stable relationships.

Certain limitations should be taken into account when interpreting the results. The use of a questionnaire in a single measurement may contribute to common method bias, overestimating the observed relationships. Job satisfaction and engagement were included as single items, which may affect the accuracy of the estimation. The RMSEA value is at the limit of the generally accepted level of model fit. In the multi-group analysis, the groups of civil law contracts and b2b contracts were relatively small, which increases standard errors and the risk of instability in parameter estimation.

6. Summary

The results obtained indicate that employees' opinions on various aspects of remuneration transparency are an important factor related to attitudes towards work. At the same time, the strength of these links depends on the context. Differences related to the type of organisation and form of cooperation are particularly noticeable. This means that remuneration transparency can be an effective tool for shaping employee attitudes, but its effects are strongest where it is accompanied by predictability, agency and a clear link between rules and real consequences.

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