Determinants of commitment - context of employee recruitment

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to analyze the basic determinants of employee commitment, as well as their reference to the elements of the personnel function and above all the employee acquisition carried out by the organization. The research hypothesis is as follows: "The recruitment of employees conducted by companies is not related to the determinants shaping their commitment". The added value of the article is the reference of employees' commitment to activities resulting from human resource management, especially recruitment, which is often not given sufficient attention in organizations. The study uses Polish and foreign-language literature and experts' research was used in order to verify the research hypothesis.

Key words: Employee commitment, determinants of commitment, theories of commitment, elements of human resource management, employee recruitment.

INTRODUCTION

Shaping the commitment of employees in the high-level implementation of tasks set out in the organization's strategy is the main goal of activities carried out as part of human resource management. The correct implementation of individual elements of the personnel function may affect the fuller use of employees' potential, as well as increase their identification with the company, its goals, mission and vision, affecting the competitive advantage achieved in the functioning processes. The above assumption is a consequence of the dynamic changeability of the organization's environment in which it is forced to operate, which contributes to the need to pay more attention to the importance of human capital as - at present - the main factor building the organization's market advantage. Those companies that recognize this dependency, and take action in this regard, may be more successful on the market.

THE NATURE OF EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT

Nowadays, there are many approaches to commitment, but in traditional terms, there are three most common approaches to this issue (Kulikowski, 2015): the concept of Schaufeli and others, the concept of Shirom's vigor, and Britt’s theory of commitment. In the first one, commitment to work is understood as a positive state of mind related to work, which consists of three factors: vigor during work, dedication to work and preoccupation with work. Shirom is critical of such a broad approach to work commitment and postulates focusing attention only on vigor, because - in his opinion - only this dimension can be relatively distinct from other employee characteristics. On the other hand, Britt understands commitment as a sense of responsibility for the work performed. The above-mentioned concepts result in the fact that the concept of commitment is a very broad and ambiguous term. In the literature on the subject, numerous definitions of this issue can be found, which at the same time contributes to the formation of interpretation misunderstandings. It should be noted that in the English-language literature there are at least a few approaches that refer not only to employee commitment to the work performed, but also refer to their commitment to the professional role, attachment to the profession, as well as attachment to the organization (organizational commitment).

From the point of view of the aim of the study, the subject
of interest will only be the commitment of employees to the work performed (work engagement, work involvement, employee engagement). According to the author, this is the proper commitment to work, influencing the way and efficiency of the company’s operations, identified with the degree to which individuals personally and directly engage in the activities of the organization, performing entrusted tasks better than it would result from the necessity related to maintaining the occupied position (Smyth, 2009). Employee commitment understood in this way is the most common way of defining this concept in the literature and includes many elements influencing the positive emotional state of an employee, namely (Schaufeli et al., 2002):

1. High level of energy while working.
2. Resistance to disruptive factors and persistence in the face of difficulties (vigor).
3. Belief in the meaning and value of work.
4. Positive feelings while working (dedication to work).
5. Concentration and focus on the work performed (preoccupation with work).

In the case of organizational commitment of employees, what is important is the degree to which employees identify with the enterprise and involve it in its functioning, by using their knowledge and competences to achieve the assumed goals (Poczowski, 2007). It is therefore a consequence of the intellectual capital owned by employees, which strengthens personal involvement in the processes carried out by the company. Such a two-dimensional perception of employee commitment can be found in the definition by M. Juchnowicz, for whom employee commitment means intellectual and emotional devotion to the organization or the amount of effort put into work, which may also mean the way of performing the entrusted tasks and the levels of energy, dedication and devotion that characterize it (Juchnowicz, 2010). Therefore, it expanded the division of the commitment dimensions, distinguishing cognitive involvement (high level of concentration on tasks), emotional commitment (passion and enthusiasm), physical commitment (high activity in action) and identification (positive attitude towards organization and/or work performed) (Juchnowicz, 2012)1.

A similar level of detail in the breakdown of commitment can be found in the case of the study of Ch. Boshoff and G. Mels, who relate employee commitment to four following levels (Boshoff, Mels, 2000)2:

1. Organizational commitment, that is, identification of the employee with the mission and goals of the company.
2. Commitment to work, enabling the employee to perform tasks at a high level.
3. Commitment to the profession, characterized by a strong identification with the goals of personal development.
4. Managerial commitment, consisting in identifying one's own values with the values that dominate the managerial staff.

T. Brag, while defining commitment, pays particular attention to the degree of voluntariness and distinguishes commitment according to three types. The first is the so-called "want" type. It refers to employees who want to work for an organization, achieve its goals, who want to feel needed and, who are ready to take responsibility and carry out new tasks at the same time. The second dimension is the so-called "must" type, referring to employees who are "trapped" in their own organization (in fact they would like to leave, but have nowhere to go or are - for unknown reasons - associated with the organization too strongly). Finally, the third type is the so-called "should" type, which refers to people convinced that they are obliged to work in a given organization (Boshoff, Mels, 2000). In addition, the literature also includes definitions of commitment, linking this concept with the social environment. In this context, commitment means identification of the employee with superiors and colleagues (Juchnowicz, 2012).

This kind of approach is represented by Borkowska, as well as Laguna and co-authors. According to this approach, commitment means the fulfillment of the associated tasks and is directly based on the principle of participation. It is based on the involvement of employees in the affairs of the company that is, identifying with the goals and values of the organization, which translates into the willingness to belong to the organization and reporting the willingness to voluntarily take actions to achieve the adopted values and goals of the company (Borkowska, 2010). On the other hand, according to the second definition, involvement in professional activity "refers to the relationship of a given person with work and the place where it is performed", while emphasizing the high level of commitment to professional activity, bringing many tangible benefits both for the organization and the employee himself/herself (Laguna et al., 2015). The presented review of selected definitions3 proves that employee commitment leads to taking beneficial actions not only for the employer, but also for the entire organization (Juchnowicz, 2010). The employee's feeling that he or she is part of a whole and that their work contributes to the success of this whole is essential. It should be remembered that commitment cannot be treated as a synonym for the concept of employee satisfaction, which can be understood today as the quality of life at work (the resultant of positive and negative effects and attitudes towards work) (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012).

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1 Usually there are three dimensions in the literature: cognitive, emotional and behavioral (Milokosiewicz, 2017).
2 M. Bugdol thought similarly (Bugdol 2006).
3 More definitions of employee commitment can be found in the following works: (Khan, 1990; Roberts, Davenport, 2002; Vance, 2006; Saks, 2006; Britt et al. 2007; Maslach.Leiter, 2008; Simpson, 2009; Harter et al., 2010; Andrew, 2012).
A committed employee performs their tasks, often with great willingness, and in the event of more difficult situations in the company, they are motivated, look for solutions and present their ideas. On the other hand, a satisfied employee often simply performs his/her duties without looking for new opportunities to improve their work. It is the benefits of work, and not team work and activities that give him/her the satisfaction (Juchnowicz, 2010). At the same time, commitment is multi-factorial and should not be identified also with employees' motivation to work, which is rather a factor influencing the level of commitment. In practice, the level of employee commitment varies, which means that its gradation can be discussed. The organization through specific activities, is also able to influence the level and direction of employee commitment. This commitment can be shaped by a number of areas in which an organization functions (Szabowska-Walaszczyk, Zawadzka, 2010). In general, the variety of definitions of employee commitment and the possibility of its multi-threaded analysis contribute to the fact that the considerations should adopt the broadest possible definition of this concept, taking into account many of the above-mentioned aspects, as a combination of positive emotional and cognitive factors that generate a greater frequency of positive emotions, which translate into better job performance in the workplace (Kuklowski, 2014). Other researchers of this phenomenon are of the same opinion (Kmiotek, 2016).

**DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT**

Many determinants that affect the commitment of an employee can be found in the literature, but their effective involvement is possible only with appropriate organization of work. Employee commitment is primarily influenced by the knowledge of the purpose of the work performed and the purpose of the company's operation. This aspect, however, should be understood more broadly, because in this case it should also be taken into account whether the employee performs the work for which they prepared and trained themselves, as well as whether they wanted to work in a position designated in the organizational structure and whether they like their job. Therefore, it is important to have the sense of meaningful work (differentiation of competences, identification and importance of tasks and a sense of responsibility) (Guryń, 2009). The relationship between the employee and their superior is a key factor in building employee commitment.

Trust between superiors and subordinates increases the level of job commitment and satisfaction, and the manager should be an example for lower-level employees. The superior should be: inspiring, opening new opportunities, demanding, enjoying trust among employees, creating conditions for development and accountability employees for their work fairly. It is also important that the superior knows how to encourage employees to work and identify themselves with the company.

Clear remuneration rules, consistently implemented in a given period, are another element that builds and maintains employee commitment. An employee who is aware of what they receive the remuneration for and at the same time receive it in a timely manner and in accordance with the rate agreed in the contract, feel well and fairly treated by the management, and thus by the entire organization. Financial motivation has a positive effect on the attitude and actions taken by the employee, including the effort that they put into the work performed. It follows that the area of reward is one of the most important levels in the management of employee commitment. The attitude of the employee, that is, their commitment, forces to define gratification as a set of benefits achieved by the employee for the work performed, in a comprehensive and at the same time individualized manner (Juchnowicz, 2010). Likewise, the workplace atmosphere is also important in generating employee commitment. However, it seems that misunderstandings (the so-called differences of opinion between employees) at the workplace are not uncommon. Quarrels are unpleasant, tedious and they annoy not only those involved but also affect other colleagues. Such situations causes tension in the atmosphere, lead to quarrels between other employees, lack of kindness and sometimes even aggression. In an extreme case, there is a problem of limiting the creative role of discussion in favor of misunderstandings and escalating conflict. Such conditions at work cause frustration, lack of motivation and often affect the efficiency of the employee.

The problem of the sense of security provided by professional work is often raised in the analysis of the emergence and increase of the employee commitment (Wójcick-Turek, 2009). In this case, the positive correlation between the employee's commitment and the stability of their employment is clearly emphasized (Griffin, 2008). The observations prove that employees with long service in a given organization are much more involved in the implementation of tasks. Employee commitment is also the result of the behaviors that characterize them. A set of such features can also be treated as a determinant of commitment. Committed employees are characterized by great enthusiasm and a positive attitude to their work, which increases the level of their motivation to work and thus their effectiveness. In addition, committed people involved are optimists and eager to develop, which makes them feel more satisfied with their work and at the same time want to contribute to the development of the

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1In recent years, the GALLUP TEST, developed in 1988 and based on 12 selected questions (12Q), has been very popular in measuring employee commitment. These questions characterize the basic factors that build commitment and thus affect the indicators of the organization's effectiveness (customer satisfaction, employee rotation, productivity, profits)(Mrówka, 2010).
organization. Committed employees are also characterized by: enormous enthusiasm, a sense of influence and showing initiative, as well as going beyond the minimum duties. Committed employees are also more often focused on the task being carried out and not on their individual scope of duties. A committed employee is proud to work in a given company, which is why they care so much about its future (Juchnowicz, 2010). Laguna also adds that from the organizational point of view, employee commitment is associated with going beyond the entrusted duties and taking the initiative, which leads to an improvement in the efficiency of the organization, as well as a reduction in absenteeism and the number of cases of leaving work (Laguna et al., 2015).

All these elements have a direct impact on the efficiency and innovation of employees, as well as translate into the company’s success. The employee commitment is also proven by the willingness to sacrifice, dedication and voluntary effort for the employer (Juchnowicz, 2010). Taking this into account, it can be assumed that one should fully agree with the three-component model of organizational attachment (commitment), identifying three different categories of internal motivation in employees⁵ (Figure 1). Employee commitment and its determinants can also be considered from the point of view of human resource management implemented in the organization. Undoubtedly however, it must be a broader approach, taking into account the human resources management procedures existing in the organization. It should also be emphasized that not all elements of this management have the same impact on employee commitment (Table 1). As can be seen from the Table 1, the activities/procedures carried out as part of individual elements of human resource management require the consideration of the previously described determinants of employee involvement to a varying degree. However, the most important factors that should be present in the performance of a personnel function are: the employee-supervisor relationship, the atmosphere at the workplace and a sense of security. These determinants are the main factors influencing the employee’s identification with the goals pursued by the organization.

Therefore, the knowledge of these goals must be treated as the starting point for all activities related to human resources management, despite the fact that the particular importance of this factor has been emphasized only in three elements of the personnel function. However, when looking at the recruitment of employees, the potential employee should be familiarized primarily with the company’s goals, as well as obtain information about the possibility of pursuing the designated career path at the moment of the first contact. Undoubtedly, it can affect their sense of security. The very form of conducting the interview may also be a reason for a potential employee to be interested in working in the organization. Of course, such determinants are important primarily for employees recruited from the company's environment. In the case of recruitment carried out on the internal market, the employee’s interest in changing the position held is caused by the determinants of commitment observed in the current practice of human resources management. Generally, from the point of view of the effects of human resource management, relating to increasing the level of employee commitment, this process should result from the organizational culture, activities aimed at creating an optimal work environment in which the employee not only feels good, but also actively participates in achieving the goals set by the organization (Krzyżak and Motyka, 2015).

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study uses the method of the analysis of literature sources. The literature was reviewed both in the theoretical context and in terms of research carried out by experts. The choice of sources was subordinated to the purpose of the study. The subject of the analysis are scientific works (individual and collective), which were created in academic centers and other institutions, which comply with scientific standards, as well as articles in scientific journals of various scopes. The study also used foreign-language literature and materials from websites. The analysis was carried out in several stages. The first one formulates the aim and research hypothesis. Next, the basic conceptual categories applicable in the research procedure were distinguished and characterized. Finally, the content of individual sources was interpreted adequately to the assumed goals and the research problem posed and consequently the results of selected studies were presented. In order to present the attitudes of employers towards the need to shape the attitudes of committed employees, research conducted in the Lodz Voivodship was used (Sochańska-Kawiecka et al., 2020; Kryńska (ed.), 2017; Sochańska-Kawiecka et al. 2018; Sochańska-Kawiecka et al., 2018). The following reasons determined the choice of employers operating on this market. First of all, the stability of the registered unemployment rate over the past years (changes have been within 1% point since 2018, to reach the level of 6.4% in January 2021) (GUS, 2021). Secondly, the structure of the economy is changing too slowly, despite the different assumptions and programs adopted for implementation⁶.

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⁵ T. Chirkowska-Smolak developed an expanded model based on the three-component model (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012). Another proposal to explain behaviors based on commitment is the self-determination theory by R. M. Ryan and E. L. Deci (Krzyżak, Motyka, 2015).

⁶ In the ŁódzkieVoivodship, the implemented knowledge-based economy should be based on smart specialization of the regions (Regionalna Strategia Innowacji dla Województwa Łódzkiego - „LORIS” 2030) (Sochańska-Kawiecka et al. 2020).
Table 1: Elements of human resource management and the determinants of employee commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HRM elements</th>
<th>Actions/procedures aimed at supporting employee commitment</th>
<th>Employee commitment determinants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning human resources</td>
<td>Taking into account the expectations of the staff resulting from individual career paths</td>
<td>- Paying attention to the employee’s personality traits,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Reliable information about the goals pursued by the company,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruitment of employees</td>
<td>Using internal recruitment as the main instrument for acquiring employees for the offered jobs</td>
<td>- Atmosphere in the workplace,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sense of security,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Employee-superior relationship,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Reliable information about the goals pursued by the company,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee appraisal</td>
<td>Correct formulation of the appraisal system, openness of appraisal criteria, possibility of individual verification of the appraisal</td>
<td>- Atmosphere in the workplace,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sense of security,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Employee-superior relationship,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivating employees</td>
<td>Correct formulation of the employee motivation system, based on the openness of criteria and comparability of jobs</td>
<td>- Principles of remuneration,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee development</td>
<td>Submitting training plans and structure to clearly formulated criteria, allowing for taking into account both the needs of the organization and the expectations of employees</td>
<td>- Reliable information about the goals pursued by the company,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Employee-superior relationship,</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Atmosphere in the workplace,</td>
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<td>- Sense of security,</td>
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Source: author’s own.

Thirdly, the bad assessment of the situation on the labor market, which appears systematically in each of the cited studies, and above all paying attention to the inability to obtain an employee adequate to the expectations of the employer, drainage of the labor market (due to the lower level of remuneration compared to the surrounding areas) etc. The indicated conditions contributed to the fact that the aim of the study is to analyze the basic determinants of...
employee commitment, as well as their reference to the elements of the personnel function, and above all, the employee recruitment carried out by the organization. The research hypothesis adopted in the study is as follows: “Recruitment of employees by companies is not related to the determinants shaping their commitment”. Thus, at the very beginning of the implementation of human resource management procedures, the basic factor generating the cohesion of the employed staff and their interest in the company’s activities, identification with its goals are omitted.

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT – RESEARCH RESULTS

The research enabling the verification of the research hypothesis was carried out in the years 2017-2020, which means that it meets the criterion of being up-to-date. A total of 4,049 employers from the Łódź Province took part in the research. The tool used in the research was an interview questionnaire. In addition, qualitative research was also carried out using the technique of individual in-depth interviews (IDI) and the technique of focus group interviews (FGI). The task of the qualitative research was to deepen the inference processes carried out on the basis of the obtained results of quantitative research. As the research shows, employers hardly take into account the need to shape committed attitudes of employees. Above all, they care about competences related to the type of activity. Such a conclusion results from the job offers presented in the research, which constitute the nature of the recruitment processes (Kryńska (ed.), 2017) and declarations describing the skills of candidates for work expected by employers. Among the factors that may affect employee commitment, only the motivation to work appears which is perhaps equated with employee commitment by the respondents. This type of expectation was reported by 38% to 7.1% of the respondents (Kryńska (ed.), 2017; Sochańska-Kawiecka et al., 2020).

However, this is a great simplification on their part because already in the process of recruitment of employees, other determinants of commitment, such as information about the evaluation system, motivation (level and scale of remuneration, bonuses), as well as training opportunities should appear. Employers who disregard the premises of shaping employee commitment in the future, resulting from the restriction of information provided at the time of recruiting a new employee, may ignore a whole range of determinants that are significantly related to employee expectations. It is all the more important because as the research shows employers expectations which include the stability of the staff, who have already proven themselves in the organization’s activities. The reason for this is the laboriousness of the process related to the recruitment of employees from the local and regional labor market (Kryńska (ed.), 2017; Sochańska-Kawiecka et al., 2018).

Such expectation should encourage employers to undertake comprehensive efforts to increase employee commitment. It should also be emphasized that the necessity to recruit committed employees appeared in employers’ declarations, although this situation was sporadic and mainly related to young people or foreigners (Kryńska (ed.), 2017; Tkocz-Piszczek et al., 2018). Such declarations, however, occurred primarily in the IDI or FGI interviews.

This situation also applies to most of the psychophysical features of the desired employee. Such features as the willingness to work (observation only in one report, 26% of indications), honesty, loyalty, flexibility (observation in two reports, 9% of indications) and creativity (observation only in one report, 4% of indications) are of an individual character (Sochańska-Kawiecka et al., 2020). In the case of one report, the importance of personality traits was emphasized (17% of responses), as well as the importance of employee flexibility as an important condition for taking up a job (Sochańska-Kawiecka et al., 2018). Moreover, one of the reports emphasized that future employees lack flexibility the most (19% of responses) (Kryńska (ed.), 2017). The results of the conducted research which are necessarily quite general show that:

1. In the recruitment processes, employers pay little attention to the characteristics of the employee, which may contribute to increasing the level of his involvement,
2. The general nature of the statement results from the fact that in economic practice the level of employee involvement is mainly shaped in the process of the organization’s functioning.

The above conclusions clearly indicate the necessity to take into account the determinants of employee involvement from the beginning of the implementation of the human resource management process. Hiring an employee who already possesses these features would guarantee the employer greater interest in the tasks performed. Otherwise, efforts should be made to implement human resource management procedures related to shaping committed attitudes of employees.

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted analysis shows that shaping committed attitudes among employees is an activity that should be implemented from the very beginning in human resource management procedures. However, if the research hypothesis is confirmed, there is a high probability that actions in this direction begin only after hiring an employee. This may have unpleasant consequences for the employer, because an employee may resign from working for a given organization, not fulfilling his tasks even until the end of the probationary period. Therefore, the first contact of the employer with a potential employee,
especially one that originated from the organization’s environment, should contain elements constituting the premise for achieving his committed attitude. As the research of the Gallup Institute shows, the combination of positive emotional and cognitive factors generates a greater frequency of the emergence of positive emotions, which in turn translate into better work performance in the workplace. Experts from this Institute also emphasize that enterprises that employ committed employees derive real benefits from it, because there were 60% more accidents among uninvolved employees than among the committed ones (committed employees had 27% fewer days off than their non-committed colleagues).

In addition, the productivity of organizations with the majority of committed employees was nearly 20% higher than in organizations where a significant part of the staff were people not involved in the performance of the entrusted duties (nearly 20% of non-committed employees could consciously act to the disadvantage of their organization and almost 90% of them would not recommend own-brand products to their friends). Besides, only 17% of non-committed employees actually understand the needs of their customers (Kulikowski, 2014). Summing up, it is worth emphasizing that diagnosis, measurement and influencing the level of employee commitment is important as it influences the efficiency and results of the organization. Managers should not only take care to develop an appropriate level of commitment of their employees, but also try to maintain it at the highest possible level and for the longest possible time.

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