Motivation and Challenges of Teleworking Employees of Educational Institutions in Latvia During COVID-19

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Abstract

This study reflects motivation as one of the most important resources for achieving the goals of sustainable education. Motivation is a challenge as well as an important goal for the sustainability of education. The impact of COVID-19 has reached such proportions that the professional life of educators may never be the same again. Some of the key questions to consider in the context of educational sustainability: What are the most effective tools for motivating educators? What are the most important mechanisms for supporting telework?

The aim of this study was to find out the motivation and challenges of teleworking employees of educational institutions in Latvia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data of the study were obtained using an employee survey of 495 remote-working respondents in the period from September to October 2020. The main sources of theoretical data were the analysis of literature, policy documents and publications. For quantitative data processing, IMB SPSS and MS Excel software were used.

The authors found remarkable differences and similarities in motivation and challenges between the employees of educational institutions and the rest of the group of employees. The results showed that the main work motivations were salary, good working conditions, social guarantees, stable work, career opportunities, training opportunities and the interesting job.

Key words: educational institutions, teleworking, motivational tools, challenges, COVID-19

Introduction

Educational institutions influence the intellectual level and motivation of all employees in the country. From this point of view, the article focuses on what motivational tools are most effective and what challenges educational institutions face in moving to distance work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Educators' job motivations are defined as the motives that cause employees to choose, remain committed to or leave the profession. Research on the motivation of teachers is important, as the shortage of teachers is a serious problem in many countries, posing a serious threat to sustainable development (Kelchtermans, 2009; Wang & Zhang, 2021).

Researchers have studied the motivation for choosing a pedagogical career from different perspectives – internal, external and altruistic. The most important external motives include salary, longer holidays, job guarantees, job security, social security, but the most important internal motives are self-esteem, interest in teaching and passion for the profession, while altruistic motives refer to serving the community (OECD, 2005; Wang & Zhang, 2021).

The knowledge society needs a new approach to education. The increasing use of technical means not only requires technological knowledge, but also poses challenges to pedagogical impact, especially in the e-learning environment (Kapenieks & Salite, 2012).

The aim of the study is to study and analyze which motivational tools are most effective in the educational institutions of Latvia during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing an opportunity to integrate the results of the study into the motivational systems of educational institutions in the transition to remote work. Based on the aim of the study, two research questions have been formulated:

1. What motivational tools help employees of educational institutions to successfully adapt to remote work?
2. What challenges have employees of educational institutions faced in switching to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The object of the research is employees in Latvia (N = 495) who have worked remotely (focusing on employees of educational institutions and their comparison with other sectors). The subject of the research is their motivational tools and challenges in the transition to remote work.

In order to select the motivational tools and identify the challenges to be included in the questionnaires, the authors analyzed the latest policy planning documents and the previous research on motivation issues, with a particular focus on academic motivation and aspects of teleworking.

Employee motivation has always been the focus of researchers and employers. Although there are many factors that influence the employee motivation, the present article will focus on the challenges of teleworking at educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

E-learning is a powerful tool for the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Previous experience during the COVID-19 crisis has shown that e-learning is an indispensable set of competency education tools (Kapenieks, 2020).

COVID-19 crisis showed how prepared educational institutions were for the digital world and teleworking. Quality education helps adapt to changes and it must be valued more, especially during and after the crisis. However, COVID-19 has rapidly changed the processes of education and the necessary competences. This was time for new paradigms, new approaches and solutions.

There is a broad consensus among authors that motivation is crucial in academic and work activities and that motivation involves a set of psychological processes based on the perceived costs and benefits of different activities (Kanfer et al., 2017). Motivation

to work can be defined as an individual's desire to engage in structured employment in exchange for a set of typical outcomes (e.g., remuneration, affiliation). For younger people, salary and career development are more often the motivating factors. As age and work experience increase, a positive relationship between age and the strength of social and security motives is often predicted (Kooij et al., 2011).

The extensive study on Sustainable Academic Motivation (Blaskova et al., 2019) is noteworthy. The article looks at motivation in higher education and how it relates to the concept of sustainability. It consists of a theoretical presentation defining the concepts of "sustainable motivation" and "academic motivation", as well as explaining the concept of "sustainable academic motivation". The sustainable academic motivation is defined as the predictable and manageable interaction between the basic ideas of sustainability and academic motivation. The authors of the article have conducted a survey of Polish and Slovak educators (N = 181) to define motivational factors. Some of these factors, such as salary, career development, professional development opportunities, good relationship with colleagues, bonuses and premiums were included in this study, complemented by the factors influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapid transition to telework.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations around the world have been forced to organize remote work, raising questions about its impact on the motivation of employees. The research has shown that the skills required for an employee to move to remote work require the development of new technical, physical and mental competencies, while the management should seek motivation tools to motivate employees to develop these skills (Baruch & Nicholson, 1997).

The transition to remote work includes various stress factors, including family responsibilities, health problems and general uncertainty about safety. Previous studies on remote work during COVID-19 highlight the role of employers in addressing worker welfare, maintaining open communication, and providing technical support. The feeling of isolation and labor/family conflicts are typical of remote work, but they will intensify during the pandemic as isolation is not limited to hours of work and overall stress factors exacerbate conflicts (Prasad et al., 2020; Carnevale & Hatak, 2020).

The protection factors that reduce the stress of employees and contribute to welfare include: regular management communication, positive organizational climate and enterprise policy, organizational support for training opportunities to facilitate the adaptation period to work from home (Costa & Tumagole, 2020; Prasad et al., 2020; Carnevale & Hatak, 2020).

This pandemic has brought along insecurity, the unknown, and higher levels of stress and anxiety. However, the experience has also showed that academic personnel can work together better by sharing the ways to adapt to and redesign educational systems and research in the new circumstances. In response to numerous challenges, academicians and researchers come together as a community, remotely, to find ways to survive the moment and to envision life and changes in a post-pandemic world (Heasly et al., 2021).

The issues related to the negative effects of stress, among other challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as an increase in expenditure in household budgets, loss of work-life balance, the need to buy extra equipment to perform work duties, less time to spend on family and hobbies, the acute need to disconnect digital devices, etc. were included in the questionnaire.

This study is unique as it will contribute to the achievement of the sustainability goals of education when making the transition to telework and will provide practical advice to the leaders of educational institutions in choosing motivational tools and ideas on how to overcome the challenges of telework.

Methods and Materials

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to gather information. Ethical approval for the study was granted before the recruitment of any participants.

First, based on the literature analysis and previous research, the motivation theories were analyzed to identify motivational factors and tools that could work most effectively in the short term, as was necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic when working conditions and organization changed rapidly by switching to telework. A monographic (descriptive) approach, which creates interpretations from the available information and data, was used to accomplish this task. As a result, 15 motivational tools were identified (see Table 2), as well as possible challenges for remote work were defined.

Secondly, based on the selected motivational tools, survey questions were developed with the aim to experimentally determine the motivational tools needed for those working at educational institutions when switching to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents were asked about the importance of such conditions and factors as salary, bonuses and premiums, additional benefits (for example, insurance policy, paid mobile phone, parking), social guarantees (paid taxes), interesting work, relationship with colleagues, etc. The e-survey was disseminated via a link on publicly available sites, social networks, as well as through direct e-mails from 28 September 2020 to 27 October 2020. Anyone with access to the Internet could complete the e-survey, but it had a filter question that allowed selecting employees who had access to the full version of the survey (for example, people who had not worked during the last year or were housewives at the time of completing the questionnaire were not asked all the questions). Using a method similar to that used in Eurofound research, the so-called snowball effect and social network advertising were used as the method of disseminating the survey, adapting the advertisement to maximize the recruitment of missing groups of respondents. A total of 1823 people completed the survey; however, given that the questionnaire was rather long, all questions were answered by 1006 respondents which allowed analyzing the data from various perspectives (for example, by age group, occupation, main activity of the company/institution, type of residence, etc.). The characteristics of the respondents were as follows: occupational group (defined according to the classification of occupations based on the international standardized classification of occupations ISCO-08 (2010 – ISCO-88 (COM))), industry of the company (according to NACE 2 classification), age group (under the age of 34, age 35 to 54, over the age of 55) and type of residence (Riga, other city, rural area). The survey data were collected and managed using the REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture) electronic data collection and compilation tool. REDCap is a secure, web-based software platform designed to support data collection for research.

The task of the respondents:
   a) The respondents were asked to evaluate the proposed motivational tools as follows: "completely unimportant", "rather unimportant", "rather important", "very important", "difficult to say".

b) The respondents were asked what challenges they had to face when working remotely, offering answer options such as increased expenditure in the household budget, lack of self-discipline, work-life balance, etc.

c) The respondents were asked about the perceived level of stress, work during free time and the provision of social support and necessary equipment by the employer.

Thirdly, the study used econometric research methods – mathematical statistics, factor analysis, data input quality control, data cleaning and weighing. The sample structure of the study was based on the latest data of the Latvian Central Statistical Bureau. The target group of the study was the remotely working population of Latvia (180,000 employees). A statistical approach was used to assess the size of the sample and the confidence level of the result. The recommended selected sample was, according to statistical calculation, 384 respondents, the confidence level 95 % and margin of error 5 %. Using the number of respondents (495) decreased the estimation of error to 4.4 %. The obtained survey data were analyzed with the data processing program IMB SPSS version 26 and visualized with MS Excel. First, the respondents who worked remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic were selected; there were 495 such respondents, of which 141 were employed by educational institutions in occupational groups such as teacher, lecturer, assistant, principal, head of unit (75 % teachers) and 354 respondents were employed in other sectors. This sample was further analyzed by comparing educators and those working in other sectors by age group. The characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Analysis of the Respondents

Variable	Level	Employees of education sector		Employees of other sectors	
		N	%	N	%
Gender	Female	123	87.23	292	82.49
	Male	18	12.77	61	17.23
Age	Up to 34	20	14.18	91	25.71
	35–54	95	67.38	203	57.34
	55+	26	18.44	60	16.95
Type of residence	Riga (the capital)	50	35.46	154	43.50
	Other city	59	41.84	116	32.77
	Rural area	32	22.70	84	23.73
Position	Principal	5	3.55	25	7.06
	Head of unit	25	17.73	84	23.73
	Teacher, lecturer, researcher	88	62.41	114	32.20
	Laboratory assistant, assistant	18	12.77	101	28.53
	Other	5	3.55	29	8.19
Remote work	Worked before the pandemic	20	14.18	20	5.65
	Started working during the pandemic	121	85.82	121	34.18
Total		141		354	

Data source: Employee survey from 28 September 2020 to 27 October 2020, n-495.

For the evaluation of the effectiveness of the motivational tools, the evaluation "very important" was taken into account which was given two points, and the answer "rather important" – one point, thus the first evaluation gained two times more weight than the second one. As the number of employees in the education sector was different from the number employed in other sectors, the number of responses received for each evaluation was expressed as a percentage of the total number of respondents in each subset. The percentage obtained was multiplied by the number of points given for each assessment, then summed and expressed in decimal numbers.

$$MT_{efficacy} = 2V_1 + V_2,$$

where

$MT_{efficacy}$ – effectiveness of the motivational tool;
V_1 – proportion of respondents whose evaluation was "very important";
V_2 – proportion of respondents whose evaluation was "rather important".

Thus, the effectiveness evaluation can range from 0 to 2, where 2 is the maximum and 0 is the minimum evaluation.

The calculation and results are shown in Table 2. The impact assessment of the motivational tools was performed in the following stages: identification and grouping of the motivational tools, distribution of impact, determination of the effectiveness of the internal and external motivational tools. The challenges of teleworking were summarized, and a percentage assessment was made in each subgroup comparing the results (see Figures 2 and 3). The study ensured anonymity of participants involved in the survey.

Results

Examining the effectiveness of the motivational tools, it was found that for both groups (employees of the education sector; those of other sectors) the most important motivational tool was social guarantees (paid taxes) (1.90; 1.85) and stable, secure work (1.85; 1.79). Analyzing the effectiveness of this motivational tool by age groups of the employees of the education sector, it was found that stable and secure work reached the maximum rating (2) for respondents over 55 years, while social guarantees were rated the highest (1.95) by the respondents under 34 years of age (see Figure 1).

The third most effective motivational tool for the employees of the education sector was interesting work (1.84), while other sectors ranked it in the fourth place (1.72), evaluating by 0.11 lower than the employees of the education sector.

Salary which took the fourth place was an important motivational tool for both groups of the respondents (1.82; 1.79).

The fifth most important motivational tool was good and safe working conditions, an orderly work environment (1.66; 1.55), which was one of the biggest challenges for the employees of the education sector when switching to remote work.

The sixth most important motivational tool for the employees of the education sector was the relationship with colleagues (1.65), while those employed in other sectors rated it by 0.11 lower (1.54); in addition, the employees of the education sector over the age of 55 rated it higher than the other two age groups (1.71).

The seventh most important motivational tool for the employees of the education sector was the organization of working time (1.60), and this assessment was similar to

those working in other sectors (1.57). It was relatively much higher rated by the employees of the education sector in the age group under 34 (1.85), and it was the second most effective motivator after social guarantees in this age group.

In both groups, various free health promotion measures at work (1.08; 0.97), such as fresh fruit, sports and influenza vaccination, were identified as the least effective motivational tool, but their effectiveness increases with the age of the respondents.

A more detailed assessment of the effectiveness of the motivational tools can be seen in Table 2 where the motivational tools are ranked according to their degree of importance.

Table 2

Motivational Tool Effectiveness on a Scale of 1 to 2 (Employees of the Educational Institutions and Employees of Other Sectors)

|	Sector	Education sector			Other sectors			Difference
	Motivational tool	2^*, %	1^{**}, %	Effecti-veness	2, %	1, %	Effecti-veness	in effecti-veness
1	Social guarantees (paid taxes)	90.78	8.51	1.90	88.42	8.47	1.85	0.05
2	Stable, secure work	85.82	13.48	1.85	82.20	14.97	1.79	0.06
3	Interesting work	84.40	14.89	1.84	74.58	23.16	1.72	0.11
4	Salary	82.27	17.73	1.82	81.92	15.54	1.79	0.03
5	Good and safe working conditions, orderly working environment (e.g., adequate workplace area, technical support)	68.79	28.37	1.66	59.04	37.01	1.55	0.11
6	Relationship with col-leagues	69.50	25.53	1.65	58.47	36.72	1.54	0.11
7	Organization of work time	67.38	25.53	1.60	65.82	24.86	1.57	0.04
8	Additional benefits (e.g., insurance policy, paid mobile phone, parking)	63.12	32.62	1.59	56.21	38.14	1.51	0.08
9	Career development opportunities	52.48	40.43	1.45	42.94	46.89	1.33	0.13
10	Bonuses, premiums	48.23	43.26	1.40	44.35	42.37	1.31	0.09
11	Training opportunities (courses, seminars and other professional development)	46.10	43.97	1.36	40.40	49.72	1.31	0.06
12	Possibility to freely plan your working hours (e.g., start work at 7.00 and finish at 16.00 or start at 10.00 and finish at 19.00)	49.65	36.17	1.35	54.52	35.03	1.44	-0.09
13	Interesting, attractive work environment	43.97	44.68	1.33	36.16	48.02	1.20	0.12

| 14 | Possibility to work from home (e.g., telework/remote work) | 35.46 | 39.72 | 1.11 | 40.11 | 41.24 | 1.21 | -0.11 |
| 15 | Various free health promotion measures in the workplace (e.g., fresh fruit, sports, flu vaccination, etc.) | 33.33 | 41.13 | 1.08 | 25.99 | 44.92 | 0.97 | 0.11 |

*Answer "Very important", coefficient 2; **Answer "Rather important", coefficient 1.

Data source: Employee survey from 28 September 2020 to 27 October 2020, n-495.

Figure 1

Effectiveness of the Motivational Tools by Age Groups (on a Scale of 1 to 2)
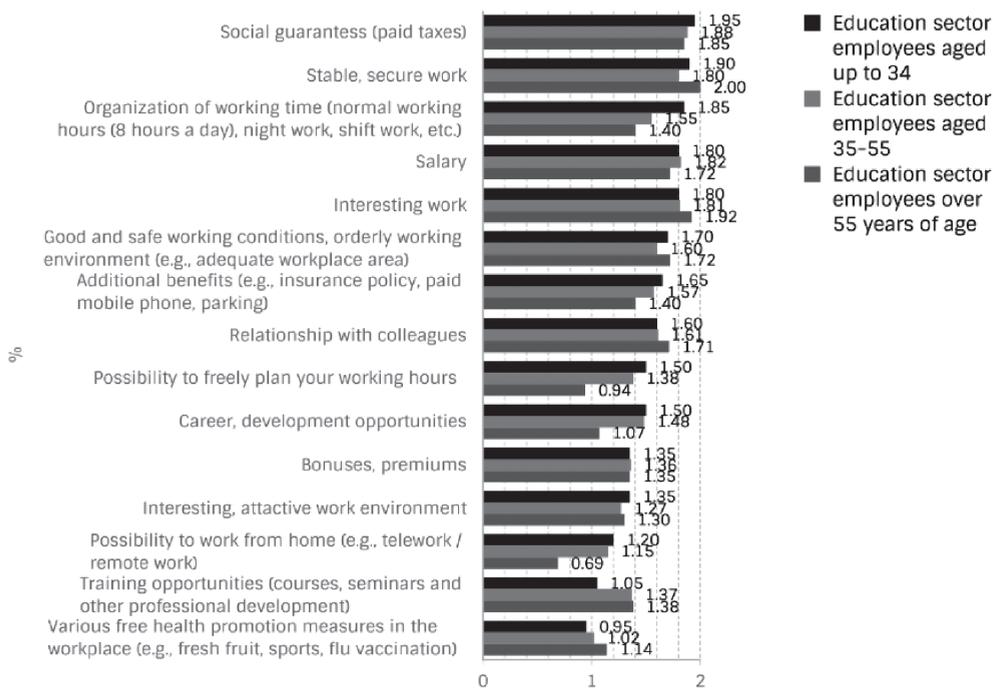
Data source: Employee survey from 28 September 2020 to 27 October 2020, n-495.

Analyzing the respondents' answers, it turned out that the main challenges in moving to telework during the COVID-19 pandemic were the lack of communication and socialization in both groups of the respondents. It was experienced by 58.16 % of the employees of the education sector and by 52.26 % of the employees of other sectors (see Figure 2).

The second biggest challenge in both groups of the respondents was the unregulated work regime, when the work-life balance disappeared. This was disturbing for 48.23 % of the employees of the education sector and for 37.01 % of those working in other sectors (see Figure 2).

The employees of the education sector more often than those working in other sectors noted an increase in expenditure in the household budget, such as food, communication services, outsourcing, expenditure on electricity, etc. (35.46 %; 24.29 %), while 27.12 % of those working in other sectors were challenged by self-discipline, while there were only 19.86 % indicating such answer among the teachers (see Figure 2).

The employees of the education sector were able to devote less time than others to family and children (19.86 %; 9.60 %), hobbies and entertainment (e.g., sports, walking, TV, cinema, board games, etc.) during teleworking (23.40 %; 9.60 %) and more often had to purchase equipment to perform their job responsibilities (20.57 %; 16.23 %) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Challenges of Switching to Telework During the COVID-19 Pandemic
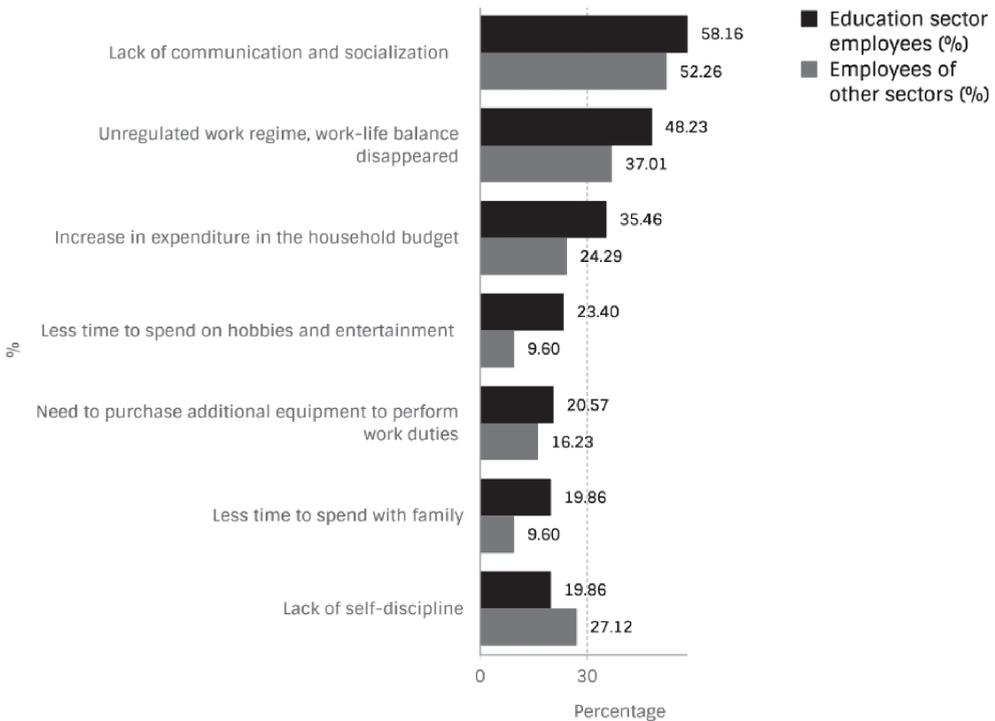
Data source: Employee survey from 28 September 2020 to 27 October 2020, n-495.

The analysis of the survey data revealed that when working remotely employees had felt stress and anxiety, and at educational institutions it was in 28.37 % of cases, and in other sectors only in 16.38 % of cases. The employees of the education sector needed training/a seminar on how to reduce stress (43.97 %), but it was not provided. The employees of the education sector also had additional expenses for the Internet and electricity which were not reimbursed (59.57 %).

The employer of an educational institution often did not find out the conditions in which the employee worked remotely (39.01 %), as well as did not provide a computer

and other necessary IT equipment (18.44 %), a computer desk and a computer chair (26.24 %) when needed.

Communication and socialization are the most important tools for ensuring professionalism and quality in the academic sphere. Teleworking created obstacles in this area, and the employees of the education sector noted that their staff needed remote employee engagement events (common breakfast, lunch, professional games, etc.), but such events were not organized (31.21 %).

Figure 3

Perceived Occupational Hazards by Employees When Working Remotely
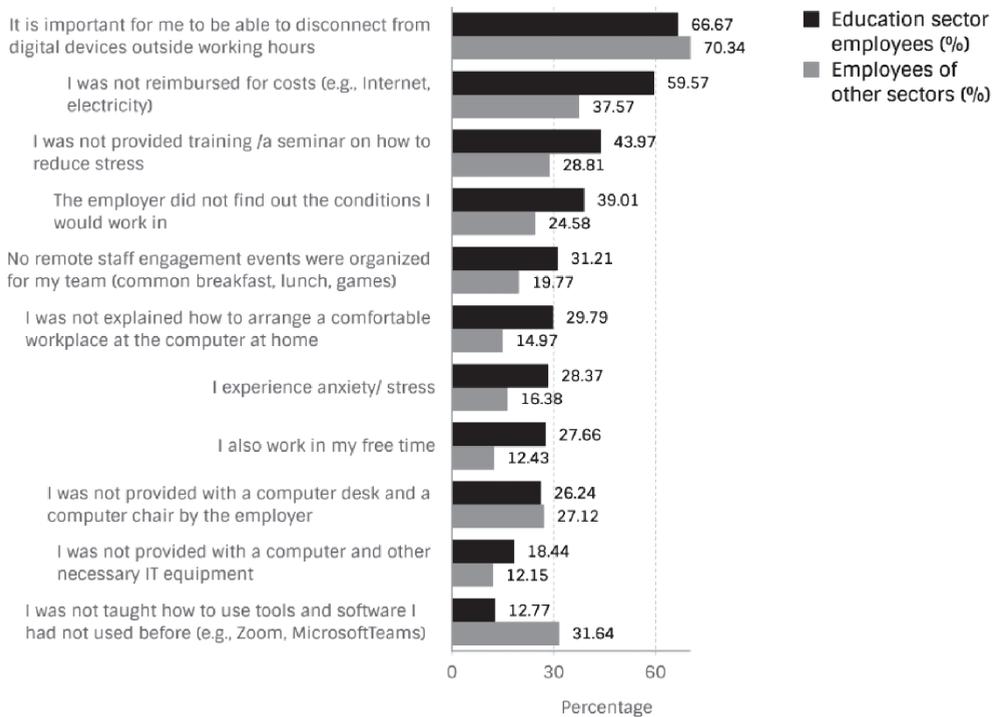
Data source: Employee survey from 28 September 2020 to 27 October 2020, n-495.

Discussion

Studies show that telework creates a change in the expectations and needs of educators, and motivation appears to be an important research theme.

The data of our study showed that for both groups (employees of the education sector and those of other sectors) the most important motivational tool was social guarantees (paid taxes). This factor was not directly present in the previous studies considered. It can be concluded that the factor has become relevant with the threat to employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than ever, this has proved important when there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding downtime in the labor market and taxes paid provide an opportunity to receive downtime benefits as well as other social guarantees.

It was found that the importance of stable and secure work was increasing for respondents over 55 years. This result supports the research by other authors on a positive relationship between age and the strength of social and security motives (Kooij et al., 2011).

The third most effective motivational tool for the employees of the education sector was interesting work, while employees of other sectors ranked it in the fourth place, evaluating by 0.11 lower than the employees of the education sector, and it was the second largest difference in the evaluation by the two groups. In the breakdown by age groups of the employees of the education sector, the importance of interesting work increased with the age of the respondents.

To compare the results obtained in the empirical part of the study with other studies, we can consider the study "Sustainable Academic Motivation" (Blaskova et al., 2019), which shows that academic motivation is generally characterized by enthusiasm, positivism, which is closely related to interest in one's work.

This aspect needs to be respected and promoted when developing sustainable academic motivation. Teachers invest a great deal of enthusiasm and empathy in their work, but this often turns into apathy and general exhaustion after years of struggling with administrative constraints and students' lack of motivation (Blaskova et al., 2019a).

Analyzing the survey data by age groups, it was revealed that in the <= 34 age group the first two most effective motivational instruments were social guarantees and paid taxes, stable and safe work. The representatives of this age group valued stable and secure employment, as many of them entered the labor market during the 2008 crisis and were the first to be dismissed and the last to be recruited because of their little experience. Now that we are experiencing the job insecurity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the desire for stable, secure employment and social guarantees is understandable.

The third highest motivator in this age group was the organization of working time, which included the desire to plan one's own working time and work remotely.

While salary is an important motivator for all age groups, its effectiveness decreased slightly after the age of 55.

In the middle age group (35–54), the first three most effective motivational tools were social guarantees and paid taxes, salary and interesting work. The importance of the salary is related to the fact that the representatives of this age group are the most active in making savings.

In the age group >= 55, the first three most important motivators were stable, secure work, interesting work and social guarantees (paid taxes). In this age group, as the retirement age approaches, stable, secure work is again important. As the age of the respondents increases, the importance of interesting work increases, which is generally characteristic of the employees of the education sector. Social guarantees and paid taxes were important in all age groups.

Similar findings are provided in the study "Strategic Instrument for Sustainability of Human Resource Management in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Using Management Data" (Lorinkova et al., 2018). It provides information on ways to motivate employees who differ in terms of occupational classification and age. The researchers conclude that there are significant differences with regard to occupational classification and age in the areas of motivation analyzed.

Managers need to motivate employees in different ways, which makes it more difficult to manage human resources related to the achievement of organizational goals. Thus, the issue of individual motivation programs designed for individual employees and tailored to the needs of employees needs to be discussed.

Analyzing the respondents' answers, it turned out that the main challenges of the employees of the education sector in moving to telework were the lack of communication and socialization. Academic work in general is related to the desire to share experience and maintain contacts with colleagues, which allows working more professionally and qualitatively.

The authors of the article "Motivation and Development of University Teachers' Motivational Competence" come to similar results as in this study regarding the role of creative discussion and communication in academic work (e.g., creative discussions with colleagues, acceptance and use of motivational influence by leaders, colleagues and students, etc.) (Blaskova et al., 2015).

The results of this study showed that the transition to teleworking caused stress and the need to disconnect from digital devices outside working hours, unregulated work-life balance, reduced family and children time, and time spent on hobbies, which could cause a burnout syndrome in the long run.

The study "Workaholism and Technostress during the COVID-19 Emergency: The Crucial Role of the Leaders on Remote Working" indicates an increasing level of stress in the transition to remote work. "Although remote working can involve positive outcomes both for employees and organizations, in the case of the sudden and forced remote working situation that came into place during the COVID-19 crisis there have also been reports of negative aspects, one of which is technostress. In this context of crisis, leadership is crucial in sustainably managing and supporting employees, especially employees with workaholic tendencies who are more prone to developing negative work and health outcomes" (Spagnoli et al., 2020).

In all the positions of challenges, the employees of the education sector were in a worse position than those working in other sectors, with the exception of training in the use of tools and software that had not been used before (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.).

It cannot be unequivocally stated that the employers of educational institutions are more insensitive or less responsive to the needs of employees; however, the results show the importance of these factors in the transition to remote work by the employees of the educational institutions. If employers do not heed these signals, there is a high chance of employee burnout.

All the above-mentioned research results emphasize the importance of motivation of the employees of the educational institutions, which is the main condition for high-quality professional work, and provide suggestions on how to increase the effectiveness of the educational process.

Sustainable development, including sustainable educational development, is the focus of a large number of studies containing important ideas on the sustainability methods and concepts that require a systemic and multi-level approach.

The development of educational research is not possible without a more holistic framework for the sustainability phenomenon (Salīte et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The motivation of the employees of educational institutions plays an important role in the further progress and sustainability of higher education. The rapid shift of staff from face-to-face to distance learning and work in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic required new skills and knowledge, as well as left an impact on work culture and employee motivation. While the overall academic motivation needs to be systematic and sustainable, the non-traditional conditions call for a focus on short-term solutions and an adaptation strategy when looking for simple tools and instruments to motivate employees, promote self-motivation and address challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the education system, and digitalization must continue also after the crisis, but the research shows that some employees of educational institutions were not ready to switch to teleworking. Teleworking requires improving digital skills, digital materials, better stress management, the ability to maintain work-life balance, finding and arranging a suitable workplace at home. During the transition period, it is important for the employer to be involved in overcoming these challenges by providing a suitable working environment for employees working remotely, such as providing a computer, a computer desk, a computer chair, training in tools and software which were not previously used, reimbursing the Internet and electricity costs, providing advisory assistance, eliminating unnecessary administration and bureaucracy.

In academic work, one of the dominating motivating factors is creative discussions with colleagues, the leader, and students. One of the biggest challenges for teleworking at educational institutions has been limited socialization and exchange of ideas. As a solution, remote employee engagement events could be organized, as well as specially developed idea exchange platforms at educational institutions. Informal solutions also seem useful when employees meet in various courses and seminars, which is an integral part of academic life. Given that academic motivation in general is characterized by enthusiasm, positivism, which is closely related to interest in one's work, the principle that enthusiasm successfully moves from a motivated person to an unmotivated one also works here.

Highly self-motivated and enthusiastic academic staff need to be inspired to rejuvenate and cope with stress, plan work and leisure, and devote time to learning new skills in both the digital and academic field. It is especially important to maintain a high level of self-motivation of academic staff also because it is closely related to the motivation of students.

In order to successfully implement the process of creating sustainable academic motivation, it is necessary to analyze the current motivation systems of educational institutions in order to obtain proposals for appropriate motivational measures (material, financial, time related) from all categories of employees, developing motivational strategies of educational institutions, and ensure that they provide continuous feedback on the effectiveness of motivational tools.

These views were expressed on the basis of the authors' own experience and the results of the survey presented in the Methods and Materials section, and were supported by the views of other theorists and higher education policy makers. Future research should definitely include a larger number of motivational tools, taking into account the external, internal and altruistic factors, and compare the results obtained between different educational institutions, such as universities, and at the national level, providing additional scientific input to researching this problem.

Acknowledgements

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