

STUDY OF EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS ON MOTIVATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract:

Motivation plays an essential role in all organizations. For organizations to achieve their goals, they must motivate their employees. It is facile for an organization to accomplish its objectives once its employees are motivated to fulfill their personal, professional and organizational goals. Organizations must to establish motivational structures that improve motivation and therefore the performance of the organization and the employee.

The main objective of the paper is to analyze motivational factors and organizational performance, using the data collected from nine companies from various fields of activity in Dolj County. The data collection tool used was a structured questionnaire that used the Likert scale to assess the level of motivation and perceptions on performance. The result of the research will be useful to the managers of the sample companies as well as other organizational managers in Romania to determine the relationship between motivation and performance in their organizations, with the ultimate goal of building optimal motivational systems to stimulate individual and organizational performance.

Keywords: *motivation, performance, employee perceptions*

1. Introduction

Certo (2016) describes the motivation as offering incentives to people to behave in the way desired by organisation. The motivation was also described as the process of stimulating and supporting behavior oriented towards certain purposes (Nelson, 2013).

Globalization and informalization is experienced by most organizations in Romania. Management's opportunities and challenges are significantly different from past and, in particular, the past two decades. Researchers have studied factors that influence motivation and performance (Chung, 2013). As stated by Stanley (2012), on the current market where companies are looking for a competitive edge, motivation is essential for talent retention and organizational performance.. Many behavioral authors have proposed motivational needs theories, while management authors have proposed managerial theories about incentives and compensation (Riggio, 2014).

Traditionally, the job performance study was based on two rather independent assumptions: performance can be understood in terms of the individual's ability to perform tasks and performance depends only on the level of motivation (Chung, 2013; Bhuvanaiah and Raya, 2015). Motivation is generally defined as "the

psychological vectors that determine the direction of an individual's effort, as well as the resistance of the person to the obstacles" (Stanley, 2012, p. 3).

Motivating employees is challenging, and keeping motivated employees even more challenging (Levy, 2013). It is not enough to raise wages and expect performance growth (Deci, 2013).

Employee motivation affects productivity and costs due to low performance, high turnover, frequent absenteeism and weak morale (Nelson, 2013; Jobber and Lee, 2014, Barbu et al., 2019). Therefore, it is imperative that managers understand what motivates employees and also how to motivate them effectively (Constantinescu et al, 2008; Bocean, 2008, 2009).

This paper aims to examine the perceptions of motivation and performance among the employees of nine companies in Dolj County. The paper is composed of five sections. After an introduction in which the research context and the research theme are highlighted, the second section briefly presents the research methodology as well as the hypotheses built on the exploratory research on the literature and the direct observations on nine companies from different areas of activity from Dolj county. The third section presents the results of the empirical research on perception of motivation, while the fourth section presents the perception of the performance of the organization within nine companies. The conclusions synthesize the result of the research.

2. Research methodology

The research will be done using both primary data sources (applying of a questionnaire) and using secondary data (observations, documentary analysis, etc.). Respondents are both executive and management employees. Primary data is collected between May and June 2018 using a structured questionnaire. The descriptive analysis is used to determine frequency and correlations of variables. To facilitate data analysis, we used the Social Science Statistical Statistics (SPSS).

3. General elements for companies selected in the empirical study

In the research, we selected nine companies in Dolj County from the private sector. In order to ensure the reliability and viability of the data collected from these companies and the employees of these companies through the questionnaire as well as to ensure confidentiality, we proceeded to anonymize both the names of the companies and the identity of those who answered the questionnaires.

The companies were selected from the same geographic area and use the labor force from Dolj County in order to ensure the homogeneity of the sample of respondents formed by employees of these companies. In order to increase the representativeness of the surveyed population in relation to the total employed population, we selected nine companies with Romanian private capital with different sizes and different segments of activity. Table 1 shows companies surveyed by size and industry. Six micro-enterprises, 2 small enterprises, and a medium-sized enterprise were selected in the research. The 9 companies come from different areas of activity: 2 have as their field of activity the trade, 2 have as field of activity the services, 3 have as field of activity the production, 2 have as their field of activity the production and the associated services.

The questionnaires built to assess motivational factors and the impact of motivation on organizational performance were administered to 70 people employed by the nine companies.

Table 1

Companies selected in the empirical study by size and industry

Company	Company size	Business sector	Number of employees in 2017
A	Micro-enterprise	Trade	9
B	Micro-enterprise	Production	7
C	Medium-sized enterprise	Production and services	82
D	Small enterprise	Production	40
E	Micro-enterprise	Services	5
F	Micro-enterprise	Production and services	5
G	Micro-enterprise	Services	3
H	Micro-enterprise	Production	6
I	Small enterprise	Trade	42

Source: Developed by author

The number of respondents selected to conduct empirical research was selected based on the total number of employees and the willingness to answer questions. Table 2 shows the structure of the sample that was extracted from the total population of the nine companies surveyed.

Table 2

Structure of the sample selected

Company	Number of employees in 2017	Sample size
A	9	9
B	7	7
C	82	24
D	40	12
E	5	2
F	5	2
G	3	1
H	6	1
I	42	12

Source: Developed by author

The variables that characterize the socio-demographic structure of the selected sample respect the structure of the population under investigation. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of these variables.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics of socio-demographic variables

	Min	Max	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Gender	1	2	1,46	0,502	0,176	-2,028
Age	1	5	2,24	0,970	0,470	-0,239
Length of service	1	4	1,67	0,756	1,048	0,955
Age in the organization	1	4	2,14	0,728	0,469	0,386
Job position	1	2	1,76	0,432	-1,226	-0,513
Level of education	1	5	2,10	1,105	0,460	-0,940

Source: Developed by author

From the analysis of the descriptive statistical data it can be noticed that in the structure of the sample that was subjected to the research, the male respondents are more than the female. The average age among the respondents is quite low, being under 40 years of age. Also, the length of service is relatively low, being significantly influenced by the reduced average age, only 11.5% of those interviewed having a history of over 20 years. Age in the organization is influenced by both the age of the respondents, the length of service and the year of the organization's establishment. The organizations surveyed are relatively young organizations, which makes the age in the organization relatively small, only 4.3% of those surveyed having an organization seniority of more than 10 years. Age, seniority, age in the organization are also illustrated by positive asymmetric coefficients indicating a leftward inclination (low age and length of service) with more extreme values to the right.

Approximately one-quarter of respondents occupy management positions, as illustrated by the asymmetric coefficient having a negative value, indicating a right-angled distribution (execution positions), with more extreme values to the left (managerial positions). The level of studies is relatively low, the asymmetry coefficient being positive, indicating a leftward inclination distribution (high school and post-secondary studies), having several extreme values to the right (six persons have graduated the master and only one person has obtained the doctorate).

Kurtosis coefficients indicate platikurtic distributions more flat than a normal distribution having dispersed values over a larger range around the mean. The probability of extreme values is lower than in the case of a normal distribution.

4. Investigating motivation hypotheses

Main hypothesis (first rank): *MH1 Employees in the nine selected companies feel motivated at their workplace.*

Based on the analysis of the frequency of the variable representing the level of motivation, we found that the employees of the nine companies surveyed had a high level of motivation (91.4% said they felt motivated and highly motivated). A low percentage of only 8.6% said they were demotivated (Figure 1)

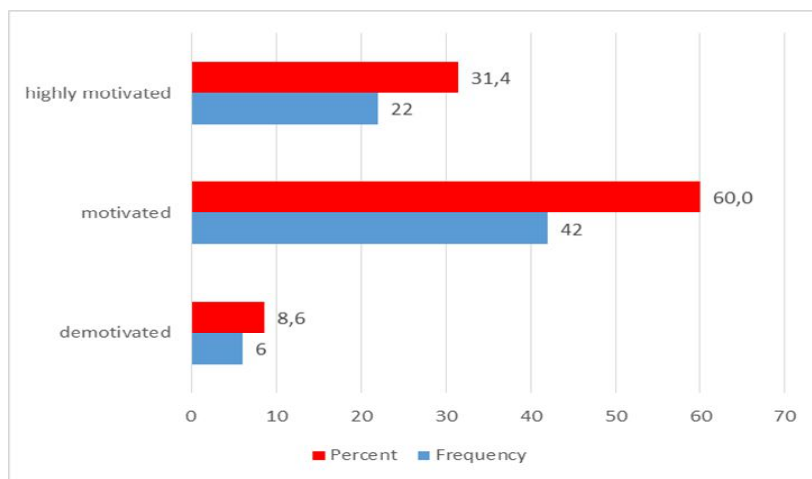


Figure 1. Employee motivation level

Source: Developed by author

As a result, we can state that the MH1 hypothesis is validated. Employees of the nine micro, small and medium sized companies feel motivated by what their employers offer. A gender-based analysis shows that females in the sample feel more motivated than male subjects. All 6 people (representing 8.6% of the total respondents) who declared themselves demotivated are male. 37.5% of the female respondents are highly motivated, while only 26.3% of the male respondents are highly motivated (Table 4).

Table 4

Level of motivation by gender

			Level of motivation			Total
			Demotivated	Motivated	Highly motivated	
Gender	Male	Count	6	22	10	38
		% within gender	15,8%	57,9%	26,3%	100.0%
		% within level of motivation	100,0%	52,4%	45,5%	54.3%
	Female	Count	0	20	12	32
		% within gender	0%	62,5%	37,5%	100.0%
		% within level of motivation	0%	47,6%	54,5%	45.7%
Total		Count	6	42	22	70
		% within gender	8.6%	60,0%	31,4%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	100.0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: Developed by author

Investigating the level of motivation depending on seniority in the organization we can see that most people demotivate come from category 1 to 5 years old (50.0%). The most motivated employees of the nine companies surveyed have a seniority in the organization more than 6 years, only one of 18 employees older having a seniority in the organization more than 6 years declare themselves demotivated (Table 5). Employees with longer seniority benefit from better motivational packages, making them feel more motivated.

Table 5**Level of motivation by age in the organization**

			Level of motivation			Total
			Demotivated	Motivated	Highly motivated	
Age in the organisation	less than 1 year	Count	2	8	1	11
		% within age in the organisation	18,2%	72,7%	9,1%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	33,3%	19,0%	4,5%	15,7%
	1-5 years	Count	3	24	14	41
		% within age in the organisation	7,3%	58,5%	34,1%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	50,0%	57,1%	63,6%	58,6%
	6-10 years	Count	1	9	5	15
		% within age in the organisation	6,7%	60,0%	33,3%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	16,7%	21,4%	22,7%	21,4%
	11-20 years	Count	0	1	2	3
		% within age in the organisation	,0%	33,3%	66,7%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	,0%	2,4%	9,1%	4,3%
Total		Count	6	42	22	70
		% within age in the organisation	8,6%	60,0%	31,4%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: Developed by author

Job position is a criterion that clearly differentiates people motivated by demotivated ones. All 6 declared demotivated occupy execution functions. Of the 17 executives surveyed, 52.9% said they were very motivated, which shows that companies offer incentive packages to those who hold leading positions (Table 6).

Table 6. Level of motivation by job position

			Level of motivation			Total
			Demotiv.	Motiv.	Highly motiv.	
Job position	Managerial position	Count	0	8	9	17
		% within job position	0,0%	47,1%	52,9%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	0,0%	19,0%	40,9%	24,3%
	Execution position	Count	6	34	13	53
		% within job position	11,3%	64,2%	24,5%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	100,0%	81,0%	59,1%	75,7%
Total		Count	6	42	22	70
		% within job position	8,6%	60,0%	31,4%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: Developed by author

Also, the level of education is a strong criterion for distinguishing between motivated and demotivated people. 5 of the 6 people who declared themselves to be demotivated have only high school education, only one of them having college (Table 7).

Table 7**Level of motivation by level of education**

			Level of motivation			Total
			Demotiv.	Motiv.	Highly motiv.	
Level of education	high school	Count	5	20	5	30
		% within level of education	16,7%	66,7%	16,7%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	83,3%	47,6%	22,7%	42,9%
	post-second.	Count	0	8	3	11
		% within level of education	0,0%	72,7%	27,3%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	0,0%	19,0%	13,6%	15,7%
	college	Count	1	13	8	22
		% within level of education	4,5%	59,1%	36,4%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	16,7%	31,0%	36,4%	31,4%
	Master	Count	0	1	5	6
		% within level of education	0,0%	16,7%	83,3%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	0,0%	2,4%	22,7%	8,6%
	PhD	Count	0	0	1	1
		% within level of education	0,0%	,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	0,0%	,0%	4,5%	1,4%
Total		Count	6	42	22	70
		% within level of education	8,6%	60,0%	31,4%	100,0%
		% within level of motivation	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: Developed by author

Of the 7 people with master and doctoral studies, 6 are highly motivated, and only one motivated, which shows that companies reward those with higher education with motivating pay packages.

The main hypothesis MH1 was then detailed to capture the motivating factors underpinning employee motivation, employee intent to look for another job, the attractiveness of the organization that would cause employees to recommend to others the possibility of work within the organization:

Secondary hypotheses (second rank):

SH1.1. The main motivating factor in the employees' opinion is the salary level.

SH 1.2. There is a low intention of abandoning the job.

SH 1.3. The organization they work in is a desirable job that employees would recommend to other people.

The analysis of employees' perception of the most motivating workplace characteristics showed that working conditions (22 of the respondents representing 31.4% of the total number of respondents) ranked first in the perception of employees as a motivating factor. Second place among the motivating factors is occupied by the development opportunities (chosen by 12 of the respondents representing 17.1% of the total respondents). 3rd and 4th place are equally occupied by relationships with colleagues and salary levels (elected by 11 of the respondents representing 15.7% of total respondents) (Figure 2).

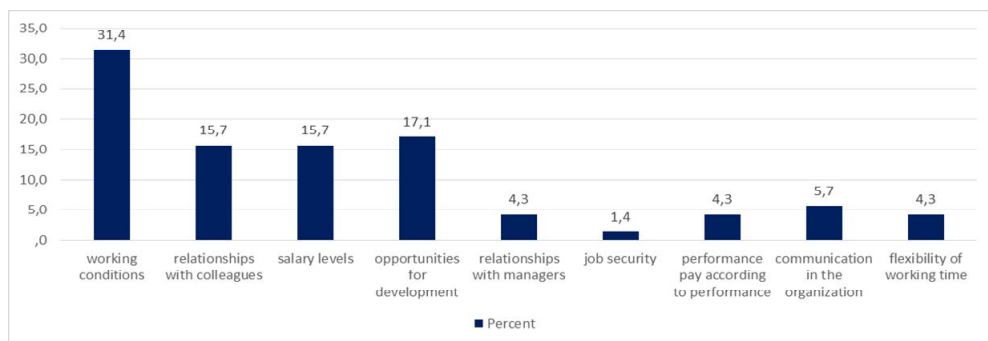


Figure 2. Employee perception of the importance of motivating factors

Source: Developed by author

The research of the motivating factors that are important in the perception of the employees of the nine companies subject of the research led to the conclusion that the secondary hypothesis IS1.1. is invalidated. The main motivating factor in the employees' opinion is the working conditions and not the salary level. This result is correlated with the direct observations and research of the financial and accounting documents of the nine companies surveyed that have revealed that their salaries are above the average of the local labor market, which makes salaries not a demotivating factor. Instead, employees consider that the most important factors concern working conditions and development opportunities, factors that address the social needs and self-realization need of employees.

At the question, "You are thinking about leaving the organization to evolve in a career or for a better salary," the employees responded mostly (71.4%) to never

or very rarely (Figure 3). Only 28.6% of employees said they sometimes think of leaving the organization to evolve in a career or for a better salary.

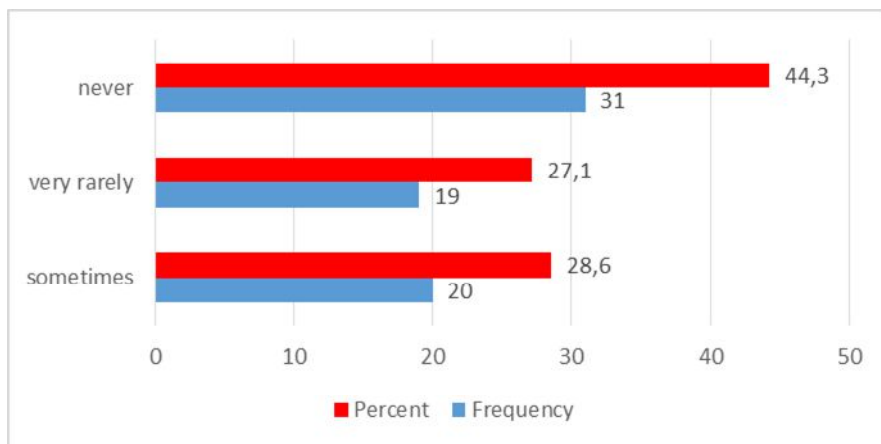


Figure 3. The tendency to abandon the job

Source: Developed by author

As a result of the researches we can assume that the secondary hypothesis SH1.2. is validated. It can be seen from the interpretation of the results that there is a low intention of abandoning the job.

To the question "You would recommend the organization where you work for others looking for a job?", the employees responded affirmatively in an overwhelming proportion (91.4%) (Figure 4). Only 8.6% of employees, representing 6 respondents, said they would not recommend their organization for work to others looking for a job.

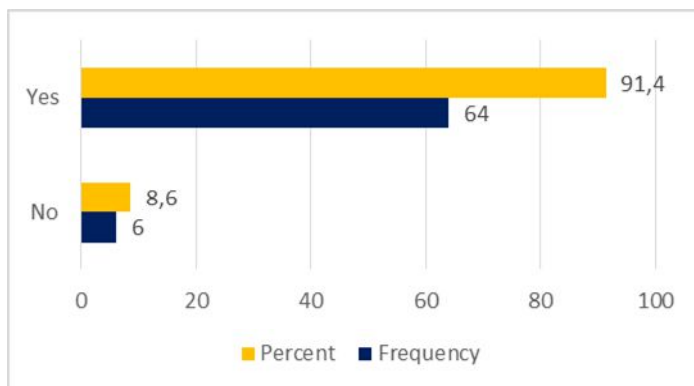


Figure 4. Propensity of employees to recommend their organization for work to others looking for a job

Source: Developed by author

As a result of the interpretation of the research results it can be stated that the secondary hypothesis SH1.3. is validated. It can be seen from the research that the

organization in which it works is a desirable job that employees would recommend to other people.

In order to ensure triangulation between the analyzes carried out on secondary hypotheses and the main hypothesis, we calculated the correlations between the items defining the respective variables (Table 8). It can be observed that there are strong correlations between the variables for which the main MH1 hypothesis was formulated and the secondary hypotheses SH1.2 and SH1.3. These hypotheses have been validated by research. The validity of the hypotheses is reinforced by the correlation found between the corresponding variables. The variable for which the secondary hypothesis SH1.1 was formulated does not correlate with any of the other variables, this hypothesis being invalidated.

Table 8. Correlations between motivation variables

		Level of motivation	Employee perception of the importance of motivating factors	The tendency to abandon the job	Propensity of employees to recommend their organization
Level of motivation	Pearson correlation	1	0,024	0,447**	0,378**
	Significance		0,842	0,000	0,001
	N	70	70	70	70
Employee perception of the importance of motivating factors	Pearson correlation	0,024	1	0,004	-0,079
	Significance	0,842		0,977	0,516
	N	70	70	70	70
The tendency to abandon the job	Pearson correlation	0,447**	0,004	1	0,240*
	Significance	0,000	0,977		0,046
	N	70	70	70	70
Propensity of employees to recommend their organization	Pearson correlation	0,378**	-0,079	0,240*	1
	Significance	0,001	0,516	0,046	
	N	70	70	70	70

** . The correlation is significant at the level 0.01.

* . The correlation is significant at the level 0.05.

Source: Developed by author

5. Researching performance assumptions of the organization

The first hypothesis formulated about employees' perceptions of organization performance refers to the performance level of the organization that employees perceive:

Main hypothesis (first rank): *MH2 Employees consider that the performance of the organization is good.*

Analyzing the frequencies of the employee's perceptions of organization performance, we found that the employees of the nine companies believe that the performance of the organization they work in is good, very good or excellent.

92.9% of the respondents said the performance was good, very good or excellent, while only 7.1% of employees appreciated that the performance of the organization was medium (Figure 5).

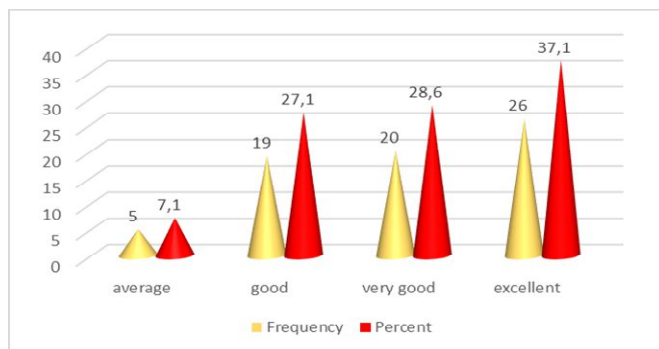


Figure 5. Employee perception on organization performance

Source: Developed by author

There were no people to consider the performance of the organization unsatisfactory. These responses can be interpreted as being optimistic, and full of expectations with regard to performance reward.

As a result of the analysis, we can state that the MH2 hypothesis is validated. The employees of the nine companies believe that the performance of the organization is good, which leads them to high expectations on the ways and the level of reward for performance.

A last main hypothesis studies employees' perception on the importance of motivating employees in achieving higher performance:

Main hypothesis MH3 *Employees consider that employee motivation is very important for performance to reach the level of excellence.*

Analysis the perception on the importance of motivating employees in achieving higher performance indicates that employees are aware that without proper motivation, excellence in organizational performance cannot be achieved (Figure 6).

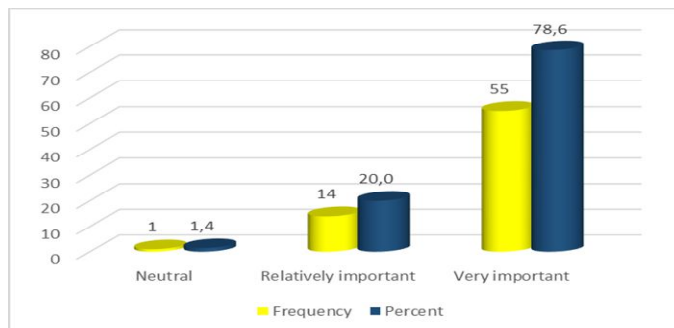


Figure 6. Perception of employees on the importance of motivating employees in achieving superior performance

Source: Developed by author

A percentage of 78.6% of respondents consider that motivation is very important for achieving superior performance, while 20% of respondents consider that motivation is very important for achieving superior performance. Only one respondent is in a neutral position.

As a result, we can assert that the main hypothesis MH3. is validated. Employees of nine companies consider that employee motivation is important for performance in reaching excellence. Therefore, the management of the nine companies must have an effective administration of the motivational package that will have a significant impact on individual and organizational performance.

6. Conclusions

Motivation is a complex concept that impact performance of an organisation. Many researchers tried to understand what motivates people, but each person is different, and by theory one cannot describe all people. Managers and employees have the responsibility to ensure that the job can be the best job possible. If managers have to do everything to ensure that employees are satisfied and motivated, and employees have a responsibility to accept the means to motivate them, they must be open to communication. A job is much more desirable if all parties are willing to participate and get involved in the motivation process.

A manager must create a climate in the organization that motivates employees. Although the organizational climate is difficult to measure, the observation of its symptoms indicates the emergence of problems that are signs of inefficient motivation of staff.

Employee motivation is the main driver of organizational performance. In the research, we used a structured questionnaire as a primary data collection tool. After data collection, they were analyzed with the SPSS Version 17.0. SPSS is considered a standard analytical tool for efficient quantitative data management (Wagner, 2010). The results of the study were presented by descriptive analyzes. A number of 3 main hypothesis were tested using the SPSS data processing tool. After studying the validity of the research hypotheses formulated and the interpretation of the answers, we came to the conclusion that employees consider essential an effective motivation to ensure performance. Managers need to propose an optimal motivation package that has significant effects on employee performance.

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