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Factors Influencing the Evaluation of Remuneration Justice

The remuneration system is one of the most influential factors affecting employee attitudes. By fair differentiation of salaries the company motivates employees to develop and increase efficiency.

Contemporary management emphasizes the broad meaning of remuneration. It encompasses in general financial and non financial benefits which an employee receives in return for the work provided. They form a package supporting company goals achievement considering simultaneously employees needs and hierarchy of values, [Juchnowicz, 2012].

Fairness is the most important factor in the assessment of the remuneration system, which – as a component of the overall human capital management system should be consistent with the common culture and strategy of the organization [Petersen, 2014]. It plays a crucial role in employee satisfaction, the lack of which results in higher level of absenteeism and lower efficiency [Williams, *et al.*, 2006]. The feeling of pay injustice generates the so-called counterproductive behaviours in the workplace. They are revealed in: reduced activity, theft, increased aggression, absenteeism, increased fluctuation and litigation with the employer [Colquitt, *et al.*, 2001]. Unfair wages also affect the willingness of employees to help one another [Johnson, 2012].

Increased competition and a fast pace of change make companies seek innovative solutions which lead to the expected business results [Juchnowicz, Kinowska, 2017]. They create circumstances that lead to considerations about remuneration justice. Comprehensive remuneration systems require a multidimensional assessment. Definitions and solutions developed in the twentieth century are losing their relevance. There is a need to redefine what remuneration justice is.

The aim of this paper is to explore factors influencing the assessment of remuneration justice. They were identified on the basis of literature review. Next, a theoretical model of connections between them was developed. The model was verified with the use of the SEM-PLS analysis. The exploration of factors influencing the assessment of justice was made on the basis of the survey results of Poles' work on remuneration justice, carried out in November 2017 under the "Remuneration Justice" fund, financed by the National Science Centre.

Remuneration justice

The problem of justice has been apparent in philosophy since Aristotle. He introduced the division into distributive and compensatory justice [Aristotle, 1956]. The main criterion for distributive justice is the principle of proportionality,

which results in different treatment of people who are unequal. Compensatory justice allows to view pay as a reciprocal and equivalent performance in terms of work. According to it, an employer determines the remuneration based on the value of the work provided by an employee.

In the philosophical tradition, there are concepts of formal and concrete justice [Wratny, 2015]. The first one means equal treatment of individuals belonging to the same essential category, i.e. separated on the basis of a uniform criterion. It is the application of the same principles of conduct in relation to all category members [Wratny, 2015]. The problem is the choice of the characteristic feature that is the basis for distinguishing the category of people who should be treated equally. While formulating it, there is a need to refer to the scale of values. The formulas of justice range from egalitarianism to elitism. On the basis of personalism, the indisputable criterion of fair reference is human dignity [Szulist, 2016].

The role of the remuneration system

In the management literature, remuneration justice is analysed in the context of organizational justice [Petersen, 2014]. It is recognized as the basis for shaping trust and, as a result, leads to productive employee behavior. It means a sense of justice regarding the functioning of the organization in a wide range: the distribution of remuneration, development opportunities, promotions, procedures including bonus criteria, promotions, dismissals and social interactions, i.e. the principles of communication, feedback, etc. [Turek, 2011]. According to Adams' theory of justice [1963], employees compare their efforts and benefits to the efforts and benefits of other employees. Depending on the result of the confrontation, they formulate the assessment of justice. If an employee makes more effort

than the reference person, but does not receive a proportionately higher reward, he treats the imbalance as being unjust. In order to restore the balance, he will probably reduce his involvement.

Over time it was discovered that organizational justice is a much more complex construct than a simple comparison of the distribution of inputs and outcomes. Researchers focused on the need for fair procedures [Thibaut, Walker, 1975]. Its essence was the notion that the probability of accepting the result increases when the parties consider the process to be fair and impartial. With time the concept has been adapted to the circumstances of the organization functioning. The processes of decision-making control by managers and explaining the reasons for taking them have been considered crucial for management. Rules have been developed that will lead to the perception of justice in organizational procedures. These include: equal treatment of a given procedure, lack of bias, precision of information affecting the outcome of the procedure, consideration of the possibility of correcting erroneous or inaccurate decisions, consistent application of ethical and moral standards and the inclusion of people affected in the process [Leventhal, 1980]. The principles mentioned above form the basis for formulating the first research hypothesis:

H1: Transparency, familiarity among employees and consistency in the application of the remuneration system have a positive impact on the assessment of remuneration justice.

The influence of the superior

Distribution and procedural justice mainly relate to formal aspects of justice. They do not fully explain the perception of justice in organizations. Employees may see the organization as unjust despite appropriate distribution and appropriate procedures. The reason for this is the inappropriate behavior of managers and

bad relations with employees. Researchers noticed the necessity to take interpersonal relations into account in the perception of organizational justice [Bies, 2001]. This dimension has been defined as interactional justice. Researchers proposed that it should be divided into interpersonal and informational justice [Greenberg, 1993]. The first one refers to interpersonal relations. The latter focuses on the quantity, precision and quality of information provided to employees. Interpersonal justice refers to interpersonal communication, informational justice – concerns all messages, including those passed on through impersonal or formal channels. In the workplace, the supervisor plays a key role in interpersonal communication.

The complexity of contemporary companies affects the level of complexity of social exchange relations maintained at work. They take place in many dimensions. Relationships at the level of the immediate superior are of particular importance. The assessment of interpersonal relations depends on him or her. The supervisor's role also includes providing information on actual decision-making procedures regarding remuneration principles. They form the overall assessment of the organization's justice, the test of which is the perception of remuneration [Mumford, Smith, 2012].

On the basis of the literature, referring to interpersonal justice and social exchange, a hypothesis has been formulated:

H2: Conviction of manager's care for the appropriate remuneration for employees has a positive impact on the assessment of remuneration justice.

The importance of criteria

The concepts of liberal economics justice are the result of faith in the existence of objective laws and market mechanisms that lead to the harmonious course of social phenomena [Hayek, 2011]. In this approach, the level of employees' remunera-

tion informs them which job they should choose, shows the value of a particular type of effort from the point of view of an employer [Radzka, 2010]. Employers, functioning in the market realities, differentiate remuneration according to the value of work of individual people. It is determined on the basis of: necessary work inputs, competence requirements, complexity of tasks and responsibilities as well as work performance.

Fair remuneration of employees, providing them with appropriate social benefits and satisfaction are the subjects of interest of corporate social responsibility (CSR), implemented at the enterprise level [Klimek, 2013]. In this sense, justice of remuneration and non-remuneration motivational elements is evaluated from an economic point of view. Awareness of the disproportion between the contribution and compensation causes frustration.

The equivalence of just remuneration in relation to the contribution is part of the definition of justice apparent in catholic social teaching. It distinguishes between causal and final principles and introduces distinction between just and fair wage. The first one corresponds to the productivity of work, the second one – to the needs of the employee [Wratny, 1995]. The equivalence refers to the individual usefulness of work for the employer. The implementation of the causal principle means the necessity to refer the wage to the value of the manufactured product. Fair wage also remains in a reasonable proportion to the income allocated to the needs of the company and employer [Wratny, 1995].

The arguments given above are the basis for the formulation of two further research hypotheses regarding remuneration justice. The first one concerns the conviction of employees about the importance of remuneration at work. Employees aware of the leading role of remunera-

tion will be more focused on the basics of their differentiation. Therefore, the belief that remuneration is the most important factor at work will have a positive impact on the assessment of its justice.

Another hypothesis concerns the employees' beliefs related to the basis for the differentiation of remuneration:

H3: The conviction that remuneration is the most important factor at work has a positive impact on the assessment of remuneration justice.

H4: The conviction that the level of remuneration should depend on the work input, the complexity of tasks and the level of performance has a positive impact on the assessment of remuneration justice.

Relevance of relations and development in the assessment of remuneration justice

Employee engagement is a key factor in the effectiveness of the organization. It is related to: customer loyalty, profitability, productivity, increase in turnover, security, lack of absenteeism. A commitment deficit can have serious practical consequences. In spite of this, the subject of relationships of engagement with justice is rarely described in the scientific literature.

Engagement is conceptualized in many ways [Kinowska, 2009; Hughes, Rog, 2008]. Researchers agree that it covers three – interrelated – factors: cognitive, emotional and behavioral [Shuck, Wollard, 2010]. The cognitive aspect refers to the awareness of the role in the work environment. The essence of the emotional factor is to create connections with other people (co-workers and colleagues) and to experience empathy and care for the feelings of others [Luthans, Peterson, 2002]. In literature, the three components of the behavioral element are the most common: positive feedback about the organization,

desire to continue employment despite chances to work elsewhere and undertaking additional efforts and initiatives for the organization [Baumruk, 2006; AON Hewitt, 2017].

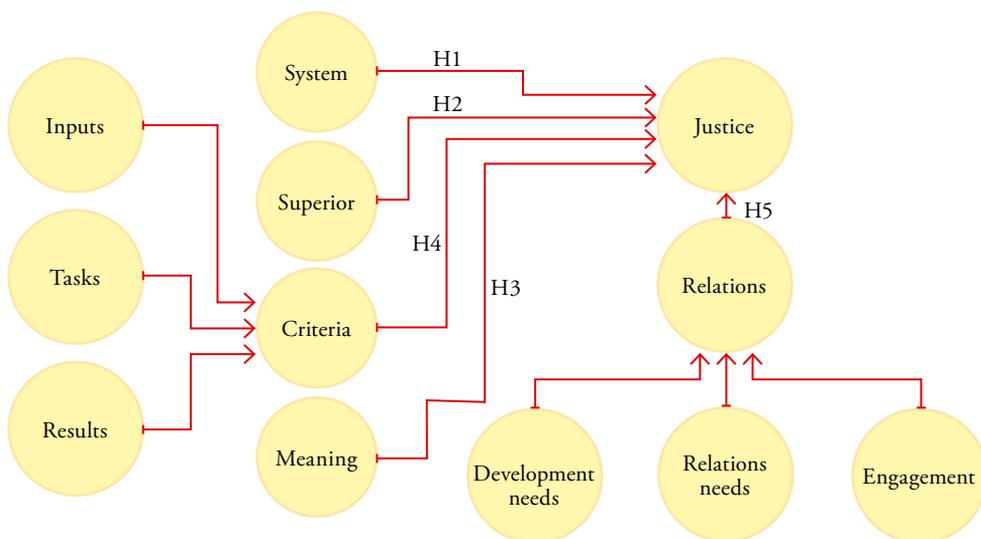
On this basis, it can be assumed that engagement is a certain attitude towards work [Juchnowicz, 2012]. It requires knowledge about the subject of attitude, positive or negative attitudes in relation to the organization, in particular the values and goals of the company, the conduct of leaders, forms and methods of operation and specific attitude towards the company. The engaged employee is characterised by a high degree of concentration on the performed work, carries it out with passion and enthusiasm, has a positive attitude towards organization and / or work and shows a high degree of professional activity [Juchnowicz, 2012].

The theory of social exchange creates a theoretical framework to explain the variation of the level of engagement [Cropanzano, Mitchell, 2005]. It also explains the relationship between justice and employee engagement. According to this theory, mutual obligations between the organization and the employed arise as a result of a series of interactions. They occur between the parties that are interdependent. Relations between them are based on loyalty and trust, if both sides respect the established rules [Cropanzano, Mitchell, 2005]. The condition is the observation of the rules of justice [Colquitt, et al., 2001].

Engagement requires a specific approach to motivating. The superior uses a comprehensive motivational instrumentation, within which he selects incentives tailored to the individual needs of employees [Juchnowicz, 2012].

The needs of employees are the essence of the final principle – the second one, superior to the casual principle of justice resulting from the catholic social teaching. According to it, the employee is prior over the subjective work [Wratny, 1995]. The

Figure 1 Hypothetical dependencies in the tested model



Source: own research.

remuneration, understood as the equivalent of work, should enable the needs of both the employee and his family to be met and provide the means necessary not only for existence, but also for development.

The arguments mentioned above formed the basis for formulating another hypothesis:

H5: Engagement and belief that relationships and development opportunities are important at work have a positive impact on the assessment of remuneration.

Model for evaluation of remuneration justice

Hypothetical dependencies between variables are presented in Figure 1.

Remuneration “justice” is a dependent variable in the model. Its level is examined with the use of three empirical indicators covering the perception of justice, adequacy and satisfaction. The relationship between justice and the adequacy of remuneration in relation to the performed work is quite extensively explained in the literature on the subject. More controversy concerns the satisfaction and justice of remuneration. In the literature on the subject, one can find the view that justice

and satisfaction with wages are equivalent concepts. Researchers draw such a conclusion from the possibility of using the same instruments to measure the perception of both phenomena [Scrapello, Carraher, 2008]. Interpreting the results of the research, however, it should be remembered that they constitute separate concepts. Employees form an evaluation of remuneration based on satisfaction. It is a pleasant emotional state resulting from a satisfactory assessment of remuneration, allowing it to meet needs in the expected degree [Williams, *et al.*, 2006]. Justice takes into account the perspective of the employer. It aims at maintaining the balance between the business needs of the company, regarding cost optimization and remuneration goals, i.e.: acquisition, retention, development and forming the engagement of competent employees.

“System”, “superior”, “criteria”, “meaning” and “relations” are explanatory variables. The remuneration “system” is a latent variable. It is formulated by three empirical indicators covering: the perception of transparency, clarity (assessment of whether the system is understandable) and the consequences in its use, i.e. the belief of similar earnings in similar positions.

“Superior” is a variable made on the basis of a single indicator, examining the belief about the superior’s care for an appropriate remuneration for his employees.

“Criteria” is an endogenous latent variable. It consists of three latent variables that include beliefs about the different dimensions of the work specifics affecting the differentiation of remuneration. The first one is inputs, i.e. the conviction that the remuneration should be differentiated based on: the employee’s experience and the amount of time he spends at work. The second one covers tasks, that is the belief in the legitimacy of higher remuneration for people who perform more

difficult types of work and have more responsibilities. The third one is created by a single indicator, examining the conviction of the appropriateness of the remuneration differentiation based on the results of work.

“Meaning” is a variable created on the basis of a single indicator examining the conviction of the key importance of remuneration at work.

“Relations” is an endogenous latent variable. They consist of three successive latent variables. The first one is “engagement”, researched by using a simplified method developed by M. Juchnowicz [2012]. The two are variables examining

Table 1 Empirical variables and indices

Variable	Item	
Justice	P1_02 My remuneration is appropriate for the work I do	
	P1_05 My current remunertaion is fair	
	P1_09 My remuneration is satisfactory to me	
System	P1_01 I know the rules for determining remunerations in my company	
	P1_04 The remuneration policy in my company is transparent	
	P1_12 Employees performing similar work to mine receive a similar remuneration to mine	
Superior	P1_03 My direct superior takes care of the appropriate remuneration for his employees	
Criteria	Inputs	P6_2 People at the same position should earn more if they work after hours (stay longer at work)
		P6_6 People at the same position should earn more if they have more experience / longer work practice
	Tasks	P6_3 People at the same position should earn more if they have more responsibilities
		P6_4 People at the same position should earn more if they perform more difficult, more essentials tasks for the company
	Results	P6_1 People at the same position should earn more if they work more efficiently (they are able to do more at the same time)
	Meaning	P5_1 At work the most important for me is remuneration
Relations	Engagement	P1_11 I feel exploited at work (reversed question)
		P1_6 I am proud of the performed work
		P1_7 My work gives me satisfaction
		P1_10 At work I willingly share my knowledge and experience
	Relation needs	P5_5 At work, the most important for me is the atmosphere and contact with people
		P5_2 At work job security is the most important thing for me
Development needs	P5_3 At work, the most important thing for me is the possibility of development and promotion	
	P5_4 At work, the most important thing for me is independence and doing what I like	

Source: own research.

needs. The first of these – the “needs of relations” – is formed by two indicators examining the belief that at work the most important factor is the atmosphere and contact with people as well as employment security. The second one – “development needs” – is formulated by two indicators examining the belief that at work the most important factor is the possibility of development and promotion as well as independence and doing what one likes.

The list of variables combined with empirical indices is presented in Table 1.

Research results

The aim of the conducted study was to check whether and how the constructs identified on the basis of the literature analysis are related to the assessment of remuneration justice. For this purpose, the SEM PLS study was carried out. Explanatory variables: “system” and “relations” (forming endogenic latent endogenous variable) were constructed in a formative manner. Others: “superior”, “criteria” and “significance” – were constructed in a reflective way.

The data was collected as part of the research carried out in November 2017, on a representative sample of working Poles (N = 1067), by phone technique – CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing). The selection of respondents was random, while taking into account the geographic (voivodeship), gender, education and sector dimensions. The sample structure was defined for individual dimensions based on the current CSO data. Its detailed characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Evaluation of model validity

The applied measures were characterized by satisfactory reliability calculated by means of Cronbach’s α coefficient and the Composite Reliability coefficient (CR) and high convergent accuracy (assessed by

Table 2 Characteristics of the research sample

Gender	Woman	56%
	Man	44%
Age	below 25	6%
	26-34	31%
	35-44	25%
	45-59	32%
	over 60	6%
Education	basic / vocational	8%
	basic vocational	24%
	secondary	35%
	higher	33%
	state property (treasury)	18%
Sector	municipal property (local governments)	3%
	private property of natural persons	49%
	company / cooperative	19%
	foreign property	6%
	I do not know / it’s hard to say	5%
Company size	up to 10 people employed	27%
	11-50 people employed	22%
	51-250 people employed	21%
	251-500 people employed	7%
	over 500 people employed	16%
	I do not know / it’s hard to say	7%
Town size	village	35%
	up to 100,000	32%
	100 – 499 thousand	18%
	500+ thousand	14%

Source: own research.

means of the average variance coefficient explained – AVE) and discriminant validity (fulfillment of the Fornell-Larcker criterion). Statistics for measures of reliability of reflective variables measurements are presented in Table 3.

Assuming that Cronbach’s α coefficient is treated as the lower limit of true scale reliability, and the total reliability coefficient (CR) as its upper limit, the obtained level of reliability can be considered as satisfactory. Convergent validity for all

Table 3 **Reliability statistics**

Construct	No. of items	AVE	CR	Alpha	Justice	Superior	Criteria	Inputs	Tasks	Results	Meaning	Relations
Justice	3	0.838	0.940	0.904	0.916							
Superior	1	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.568	1.000						
Criteria	5	0.498	0.824	0.731	0.140	0.090	0.699					
- Inputs	2	0.599	0.749	0.331	0.126	0.111	0.749*	0.774				
- Tasks	2	0.774	0.873	0.709	0.109	0.070	0.895*	0.475	0.880			
- Results	1	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.106	0.031	0.728*	0.374	0.516	1.000		
Meaning	1	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.133	0.082	0.176	0.105	0.180	0.120	1.000	
Relations	8	0.331	0.793	0.704	0.395	0.431	0.241	0.190	0.196	0.201	0.275	0.576

Note: the reference values for the Alpha and CR coefficients are $> 0,7$; for AVE it is $> 0,5$. The matrix diagonal (bold numbers) contains square root values from AVE for constructs, and numbers outside the diagonal are the values of the relevant correlation coefficients. * items form a latent variable "Criteria".

Source: own research.

constructs is high, and discriminant validity estimated on the Fornell-Larcker criterion is appropriate.

Analysis of results

The data presented in figure 2 reveal that the research model explains 36.3% of remuneration "justice" variability. Engagement, development and relationship needs explained 99.8% of "relations" variability, and the belief about the differentiation of wages based on inputs, tasks and work results – 100% of "criteria" variability. Based on exploratory research findings it was determined that the "superior" explained 17.6% of the remuneration "system" assessment variability.

The results support the H1, H2 and H5 hypotheses. However, the H4 and H3 hypotheses could not be confirmed for the entire sample due to the lack of statistical significance. To verify the possibility of leveling the impact of "criteria" and "meaning" by opposing directions in the subgroups, the heterogeneity of the sample should be analyzed at the next stage of research. After that it will be possible to state firmly whether indeed the "criteria" and "meaning" have no impact on the assessment of justice.

The supervisor has the most significant influence on the assessment of remuneration justice (H2). The supervisor exerts influence both directly – a coefficient of 0.456 – and indirectly through the evaluation of the remuneration system – a coefficient of 0.42. Internal relations positively influence the assessment of remuneration (H5). Their impact is much lower than the influence of the supervisor – the coefficient equals 0.142. The assessment of the remuneration system (H1) has the lowest impact on the evaluation of remuneration justice (H1) – a coefficient of 0.103.

In case of "criteria" and the "meaning" of remuneration the coefficients amounted to as low as 0.043 and were not statistically significant. Therefore, based on the research results, hypotheses concerning influence on the assessment of justice referring to beliefs about significant meaning of remuneration in the workplace and the appropriateness of pay differentiation based on work input, tasks and results cannot be accepted.

Conclusions

Based on the research on remuneration justice it may be concluded that the construct is multi-dimensional. The re-

tasks. The willingness of employees to get involved in the functioning of the organization depends on the effective use of comprehensive instruments. The research has confirmed that: pride, satisfaction, lack of a sense of being exploited, the need for development and positive relationships in the workplace, are a predictor of remuneration justice.

To sum up the results of the conducted research, it can be concluded that the current definition of justice – particularly in management sciences – is not adapted to the requirements of contemporary reality. The focus on equality and remuneration system does not correspond with the complexity of business reality. Contemporary pay justice depends on proper relationships within the organization, among which the superior plays a key role. The subject of justice is both important and insufficiently recognized. Further in-depth studies are required.

On the basis of the conducted analyses, it can be assumed that the complexity of the remuneration justice phenomenon may result in heterogeneity of models. In order to find the factors conditioning

the diversity and define the specificity of models for particular groups, an in-depth analysis should be carried out in accordance with the prediction-oriented segmentation (POS) procedure. Thanks to the grouping of respondents, it should be possible to obtain a higher R^2 indicator, i.e. to increase the explanation level of the assessment of justice variability by the model.

While conducting research on the remuneration justice, the significance of the level of wages can not be ignored. Research shows that the importance of remuneration justice is particularly evident in the case of lower income levels. When employees – receiving remuneration below the median – felt that their colleagues earn more than they do, their satisfaction with salary and job satisfaction significantly decreased. However, in the case of people receiving wages above the median, the level of job satisfaction, despite such an evaluation, remained largely unchanged [Card, *et al.*, 2012]. Therefore, in further exploration studies, the relationship between the model of justice assessment and the level of remuneration should be examined.

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