

FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER MOTIVATION IN THE LITHUANIAN ENERGY SECTOR

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Abstract

The energy sector in Lithuania faces persistent challenges in retaining and motivating its workforce, particularly regarding internal career development amid a rapidly transforming industry. This study aimed to identify the key factors that act as motivators and demotivators for employees within a leading energy group company in the country. The qualitative research methodology involved conducting eight focus groups with a total of 64 participants, ranging from junior-level to senior-level employees, of whom 25% were women and all were engineers. Ethical research standards were rigorously upheld throughout the study. The findings highlight critical motivators, such as the company's reputation, stability, innovative culture, and sense of safety, which are increasingly vital in the context of the sector's transition toward sustainability and technological advancement. However, the study also identifies key demotivators, including a lack of autonomy, insufficient access to resources, strained workplace relationships, and inconsistent leadership practices. Notably, the pressure on management to sustain motivation underscores the systemic nature of these challenges. The study concludes that to address demotivation effectively, organizations must prioritize fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment. This includes enhancing employee autonomy, improving resource availability, cultivating positive interpersonal relationships, and adopting consistent and transparent leadership strategies. These actions are particularly crucial during the ongoing energy sector transformation, as they ensure workforce adaptability and engagement. The insights gained provide valuable guidance for organizations in the energy sector and beyond to proactively tackle workforce challenges in dynamic environments.

Keywords: *Career development, employee motivation, energy sector, transformation, workforce.*

1. Introduction

The energy sector in Lithuania faces persistent challenges in retaining and motivating its workforce, particularly regarding internal career development amid a rapidly transforming industry. This study aimed to identify the key factors that act as motivators and demotivators for employees within a leading energy group company in the country. The qualitative research methodology involved conducting eight focus groups with a total of 64 participants, ranging from junior-level to senior-level employees, of whom 25% were women and all were engineers. Ethical research standards were rigorously upheld throughout the study.

The findings highlight critical motivators, such as the company's reputation, stability, innovative culture, and sense of safety, which are increasingly vital in the context of the sector's transition toward sustainability and technological advancement. However, the study also identifies key demotivators, including a lack of autonomy, insufficient access to resources, strained workplace relationships, and inconsistent leadership practices. Notably, the pressure on management to sustain motivation underscores the systemic nature of these challenges.

The study concludes that to address demotivation effectively, organizations must prioritize fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment. It is essential to recognize that employees are significantly affected by the nature of their work, the work context, and the overall working environment, all of which collectively influence their level of motivation and subsequent job performance (Ghaleb & Ordun, 2021).

This includes enhancing employee autonomy, improving resource availability, cultivating positive interpersonal relationships, and adopting consistent and transparent leadership strategies. Furthermore, the effectiveness of motivation systems is intrinsically linked to an organization's ability to attract, retain, and optimize the performance of its employees, thereby bolstering its competitive advantage and long-term sustainability (Hauer et al., 2021). These actions are particularly crucial during the ongoing energy sector transformation, as they ensure workforce adaptability and engagement. The insights gained provide valuable guidance for organizations in the energy sector and beyond to proactively tackle workforce challenges in dynamic environments.

2. Key components of career motivation in the Lithuanian energy sector

Employee motivation in large-scale energy enterprises is shaped by a complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contribute to professional satisfaction and long-term career commitment. Effective people management plays a crucial role in helping organizations succeed at higher levels, with motivation tactics emerging as one of the most essential contributors to long-term organizational success (Nadeak & Naibaho, 2020; Tiwari et al., 2023). This study identifies several core motivational components that are particularly relevant within the Lithuanian energy sector and examines their influence on employee engagement and retention.

Organizational Stability and Professional Prestige

A large and well-established company within the energy sector provides a sense of job security and long-term career sustainability. Employees are highly motivated by the stability associated with the energy profession, which is perceived as a critical pillar of national infrastructure. The security offered by the energy industry enhances employees' psychological safety, fostering a deep-rooted sense of professional belonging and purpose.

Passion for Engineering and Professional Identity

Individuals who pursue careers in energy engineering often exhibit a strong intrinsic motivation stemming from their passion for the field. The ability to engage in complex problem-solving, technological advancement, and the application of engineering principles contributes significantly to professional satisfaction. Moreover, the sector's unique activities, such as large-scale energy production, grid management, and renewable energy integration, reinforce a strong sense of professional identity and fulfillment.

Work Environment and Collegial Relationships

Social dynamics within the workplace, particularly interactions with colleagues, are fundamental to career motivation. A collaborative and intellectually stimulating work environment encourages knowledge sharing and mutual support among professionals. Employees who experience positive interpersonal relationships and a sense of teamwork are more likely to remain engaged and committed to their roles.

Complexity and Variety in Work Tasks

The dynamic nature of the energy sector presents professionals with intricate challenges that require innovative solutions. Employees are motivated by the intellectual stimulation associated with varied and complex work responsibilities, which prevent stagnation and monotony. The opportunity to tackle engineering challenges, optimize energy efficiency, and contribute to national sustainability goals enhances job satisfaction and professional engagement.

Technological Innovation and Industry Transformation

The Lithuanian energy sector is undergoing a period of rapid technological evolution, including advancements in smart grid technologies, renewable energy integration, and digitalization. Employees who are engaged in cutting-edge technological projects experience heightened motivation due to the continuous learning opportunities and professional growth associated with innovation-driven work environments.

National Importance and Societal Impact

The energy sector plays a pivotal role in national economic stability and environmental sustainability. Many employees are motivated by the broader societal impact of their work, recognizing that their contributions influence national energy security, sustainability, and public well-being. This sense of purpose enhances job satisfaction and long-term commitment to the industry.

Compensation and Career Development Opportunities

While intrinsic motivation factors are essential, extrinsic factors such as salary and career advancement opportunities also significantly influence employee retention. Competitive financial compensation, coupled with clear pathways for professional development, ensures that employees remain motivated to excel in their roles. Organizations that prioritize continuous learning, training, and leadership development foster an environment in which employees can achieve both professional and financial growth.

3. Demotivators affecting internal career development

Despite the importance of internal career mobility, several challenges hinder employees' career progression within the organization:

Employees' first choice is outside the organization – Many professionals seek career growth externally due to perceived limitations within the company, such as unclear promotion paths or lack of new challenges.

Lack of direct manager support – Insufficient guidance and encouragement from direct managers reduce employees' confidence and motivation to pursue internal career advancements.

Male employees are more proactive in pursuing internal career opportunities – Gender disparities in career advancement suggest that male employees are more likely to actively seek promotions, while female employees may encounter additional barriers or hesitate to pursue leadership roles.

Key demotivators – employees experience a lack of autonomy, insufficient access to resources, strained workplace relationships, and inconsistent leadership practices. These factors significantly impact motivation and career growth.

Pressure on management – the responsibility placed on management to sustain motivation highlights the systemic nature of these challenges, often leading to inconsistent support structures and career development pathways.

4. Conclusion

The Lithuanian energy sector's ability to retain and motivate its workforce depends on a multifaceted approach that integrates both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Meeting the needs of employees at work gives them the energy or strength that creates motivation, and an employee's motivation to do his job can be met when the need for satisfaction is achieved (Deomedes & Adam, 2021; Kashirina et al., 2020). By fostering a stable and innovative work environment, promoting professional growth, and recognizing the societal significance of the energy sector, organizations can enhance employee engagement and commitment. Future workforce strategies should emphasize inclusive leadership, technological adaptation, and continuous professional development to sustain motivation in an ever-evolving industry landscape.

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