

Study on Employee Satisfaction Within a Sport Organization

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ABSTRACT. Employee satisfaction plays a critical role in organizational success, particularly in sports institutions where performance expectations are high. Ensuring a positive work environment enhances motivation, retention, and overall productivity. This study focuses on assessing job satisfaction among coaches at Viitorul Cluj Football Academy by examining key workplace factors. **Objectives:** The primary objective of this study is to evaluate employee satisfaction levels and identify factors that influence both fulfillment and dissatisfaction. Specific areas analyzed include salary, promotion opportunities, supervision, fringe benefits, rewards, operating procedures, coworker relationships, nature of work, and communication. **Materials and Methods:** A quantitative research approach was employed using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Paul E. Spector (1994). The study was conducted on 14 coaches, utilizing a 36-item questionnaire measuring nine subscales of job satisfaction. Responses were collected through a structured survey and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. **Results:** Findings indicate that supervision, coworker relationships, nature of work, and communication are the most positively rated aspects, with 100% of respondents expressing satisfaction with their supervisors and 80% reporting enjoyment of their work. However, dissatisfaction was noted in salary (only 55% felt compensated), promotion opportunities (10% perceived limited growth), fringe benefits (25% dissatisfaction), and rewards (only 15% felt adequately rewarded). These results suggest a need for improvement in compensation structures and career development opportunities. **Conclusions:**

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The study highlights the importance of strong leadership, positive team dynamics, and engaging job roles in fostering satisfaction. However, enhancing financial incentives, promotion transparency, and reward systems is essential for sustaining long-term employee motivation. Addressing these areas can contribute to a more engaged, committed, and high-performing workforce, benefiting both employees and the organization.

Keywords: *job satisfaction, sports organizations, employee motivation, workplace environment, career development*

REZUMAT. Studiul privind satisfacția în activitatea antrenorilor din cadrul unei organizații sportive. Satisfacția angajaților joacă un rol primordial în succesul organizațional, în special în instituțiile sportive unde așteptările privind performanța sunt ridicate. Crearea unui mediu de lucru pozitiv contribuie la creșterea motivației și a randamentului. Acest studiu își propune să evalueze satisfacția în activitatea antrenorilor din cadrul Academiei de Fotbal Viitorul Cluj, analizând factorii determinanți ai acesteia. **Obiective:** Obiectivul principal al acestui studiu este de a evalua nivelul satisfacției angajaților și de a identifica factorii care influențează atât sentimentul de împlinire, cât și eventualele nemulțumiri. Domeniile specifice analizate includ salarizarea, oportunitățile de promovare, supervizarea, beneficiile, recompensele, procedurile operaționale, relațiile cu colegii, natura muncii și comunicarea. **Materiale și Metode:** A fost utilizată o abordare cantitativă, prin aplicarea Chestionarului de Satisfacție în Muncă (JSS) dezvoltat de Paul E. Spector (1994). Studiul a inclus 14 antrenori, care au completat un chestionar de 36 de itemi, evaluând nouă subscale ale satisfacției profesionale. Răspunsurile au fost colectate printr-un sondaj structurat și analizate utilizând metode statistice descriptive. **Rezultate:** Rezultatele indică faptul că supervizarea, relațiile cu colegii, natura muncii și comunicarea sunt aspectele cel mai pozitiv evaluate, 100% dintre respondenți declarându-se mulțumiți de supervizorii lor și 80% exprimând satisfacție față de activitatea desfășurată. Totuși, au fost identificate nemulțumiri în ceea ce privește salarizarea (doar 55% consideră că sunt remunerați corect), oportunitățile de promovare (10% percep oportunitățile ca fiind limitate), beneficiile (25% sunt nemulțumiți) și recompensele (doar 15% consideră că sunt recompensați suficient). Aceste rezultate sugerează necesitatea îmbunătățirii structurilor de remunerare și dezvoltare a carierei. **Concluzii:** Studiul subliniază importanța unui management al resurelor umane eficient, a dinamicii pozitive în echipă și a unor sarcini de muncă motivante în menținerea satisfacției angajaților. Optimizarea beneficiilor salariale și implementarea unor sisteme de recompensare sunt necesare pentru asigurarea motivației și un climat pozitiv în cultura organizațională pe termen lung. Abordarea acestor aspecte va contribui la crearea unui mediu de lucru mai motivant, implicat și performant, cu beneficii atât pentru angajați, cât și pentru organizație.

Cuvinte-cheie: *satisfacția, organizații sportive, motivația angajaților, mediul de lucru, dezvoltarea carierei*

INTRODUCTION

In an era of rapid technological advancements, evolving market dynamics, and intensifying competition, sport organizations must exhibit resilience and adaptability to sustain their operations and maintain a competitive edge. The success of an organization is closely tied to its ability to manage these external challenges effectively, and at the core of this adaptability lies its workforce. Employees are directly influenced by organizational shifts, and their ability to perform optimally within these evolving conditions determines the overall efficiency and sustainability of a sport business (Karaman et al., 2020).

For organizations to thrive in today's highly competitive environment, maintaining operational standards and ensuring workforce efficiency are imperative. Achieving high productivity levels is contingent upon employees performing at their best within the set benchmarks and industry standards (Çakır & Gözoğlu, 2019). In this regard, performance is conceptualized as a measurable outcome derived from a structured and goal-oriented process. It can be assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively, reflecting the extent to which an individual or a team achieves predefined objectives (Çalışkan et al., 2019). From another perspective, we can define performance as the level of accomplishment that an individual or a group attains in relation to a specified goal, in terms of both efficiency and quality.

Job performance is the extent to which an employee fulfills the duties outlined in their job description and aligns their contributions with organizational objectives (Karaman et al., 2020). This suggests that performance is not merely an outcome, but a dynamic process shaped by job responsibilities, employee engagement, and organizational support. Organizations that prioritize performance management through well-structured evaluation systems, regular feedback, and employee development initiatives stand a better chance of achieving long-term success. When employees are recognized and rewarded for achieving their professional goals, their level of job satisfaction increases significantly.

Moreover, the efficiency and productivity of employees are closely linked to their level of job satisfaction. Employees who experience higher satisfaction in their roles are more engaged, motivated, and committed to their organization's goals, which means that organizations must identify the factors influencing job satisfaction and implement measures to enhance them.

In specific contexts, such as the sports industry, job satisfaction becomes even more complex due to the unique challenges associated with the field. Those in leadership roles, particularly, face heightened stress levels resulting from the demands of top management, the expectations of fans, and the pressure from athletes during and after matches or championships (Guenzi & Ruta, 2013).

The dynamic nature of the sports environment amplifies the need for effective management of job satisfaction, as the high stakes often create a stressful and demanding workplace. Individuals vary significantly in their reactions, behaviors, and emotional responses to their work environment. This diversity in perception explains why some individuals find satisfaction in certain aspects of their job, while others experience dissatisfaction under similar circumstances. These differences underline the importance of understanding the subjective nature of job satisfaction and the need for tailored approaches to enhancing employee well-being and engagement.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study, conducted within the „Viitorul Cluj” Football Academy, is to analyze and enhance employee job satisfaction levels to foster a positive organizational culture and improve overall performance. We conducted a comprehensive survey to evaluate the current level of job satisfaction among coaches, focusing on various aspects of the workplace.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of job satisfaction among the coaching staff at Viitorul Cluj Football Academy, this study involved the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), a widely recognized instrument developed by Paul E. Spector (1994). The JSS has been used in workplace research due to its ability to assess various dimensions of employee satisfaction, offering valuable insights into the factors that contribute to both fulfillment and dissatisfaction.

Taking the research in Cluj-Napoca, we used the Romanian-adapted version of the JSS, translated and validated by Professor Horia Pitariu from the Faculty of Psychology at Babeș-Bolyai University. This adaptation ensures cultural and linguistic appropriateness, allowing for a more accurate assessment of employees' perceptions in the Romanian organizational environment.

The Job Satisfaction Survey consists of 36 items, divided into nine subscales, each designed to evaluate a specific dimension of job satisfaction. These subscales include pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (6).

The study was conducted among 14 coaches employed at Viitorul Cluj Football Academy, all of whom participated voluntarily. To ensure honest and uninfluenced responses, the questionnaires were distributed in a confidential

format. Each participant received clear instructions on how to complete the survey, emphasizing that their responses would remain anonymous and be used for research purposes.

RESULTS

Once collected, the responses were systematically coded and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to determine general satisfaction levels and identify patterns in the data. Each subscale was examined individually to highlight areas where employees reported high levels of satisfaction, as well as aspects where dissatisfaction was more prevalent.

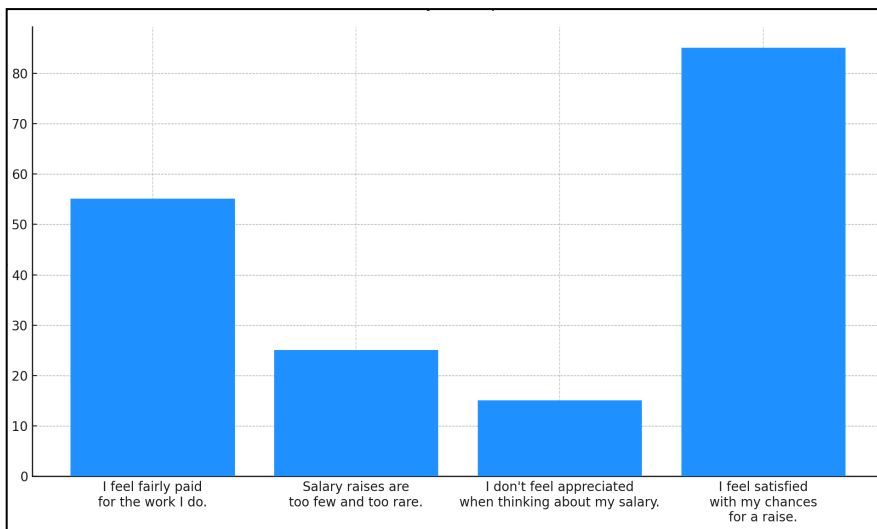


Fig. 1. Salary perception among coaches

According to Fig. 1., the results indicate a nuanced perception of salary satisfaction among respondents. While 85% of employees expressed optimism about their chances of a salary increase, only 55% felt fairly compensated for the work they do, suggesting a gap between perceived potential and current remuneration. Furthermore, 25% of employees felt salary raises were too infrequent, and 15% reported a lack of appreciation when thinking about their salary. This highlights that while prospects of salary growth are encouraging, the current pay structure and lack of appreciation around compensation may undermine motivation.

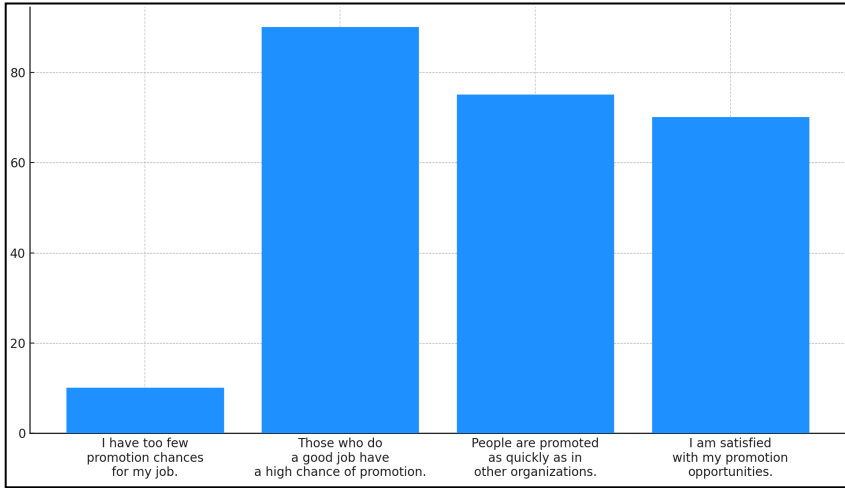


Fig. 2. Promotion opportunities for the coaches

The data reveals a predominantly positive sentiment toward promotion opportunities. 90% of respondents agreed that high performers have significant chances for promotion, and 75% believed the organization’s promotion speed aligns with industry standards. However, 10% of employees felt there were too few promotion opportunities, indicating that some workers perceive limited upward mobility. This suggests that while merit-based promotions are well-regarded, providing greater transparency regarding career pathways could enhance overall satisfaction.

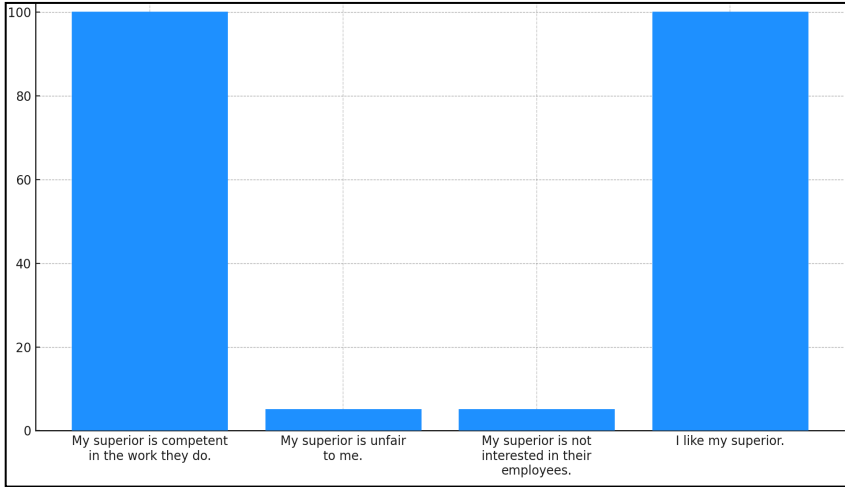


Fig. 3. Supervision feedback

Feedback about supervisors was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of respondents stating their supervisor was competent, and 100% indicating they liked their supervisor on a personal level. Additionally, only 5% felt their supervisors were unfair or uninterested in employees' needs. These scores suggest a strong leadership presence, marked by competence and interpersonal skills.

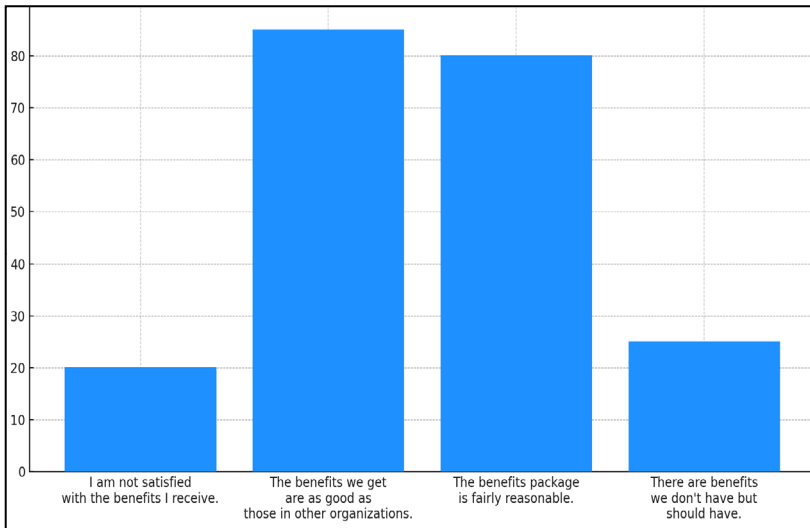


Fig. 4. Coaches benefits at workplace

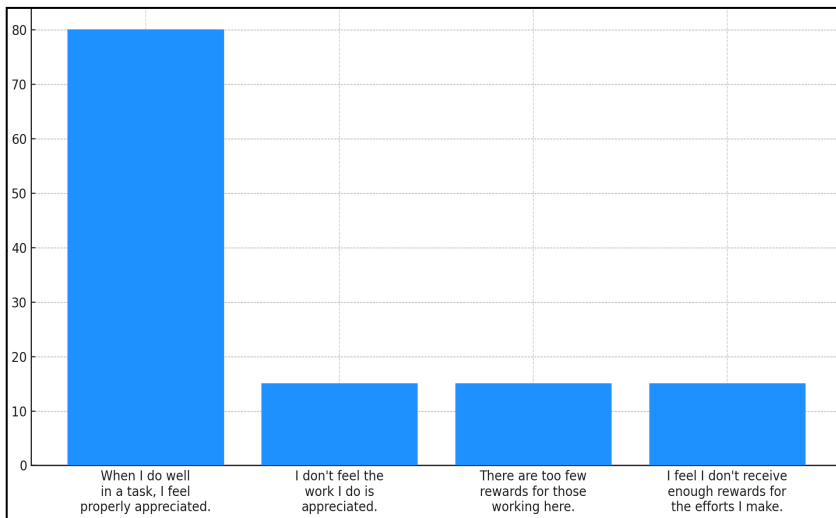


Fig. 5. Perception of recognition and rewards

Responses regarding benefits were mixed but leaned positive. 85% of employees believed their benefits were on par with them or better than those offered by competitors, and 80% felt the benefits package was reasonable. However, 25% expressed dissatisfaction, citing gaps in the benefits they expected but were not provided. This difference in opinion suggests that while the overall benefits package is strong, there may be individual unmet needs.

The results of this section reveal a disparity in perceptions of recognition and rewards. 80% of respondents reported feeling appreciated for good performance, but only 15% felt that rewards were sufficient or frequent enough. This indicates that while immediate recognition is present, tangible rewards like bonuses or salary increments are perceived as lacking.

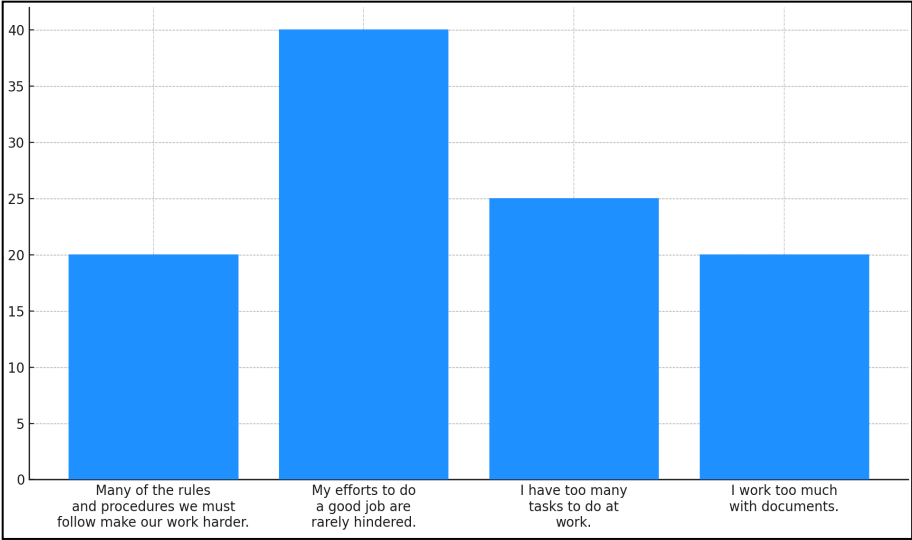


Fig. 6. Challenges in work environment for coaches

This category highlights a generally positive work environment. 40% of respondents reported their efforts to excel were rarely disadvantaged, while 20% expressed challenges related to excessive tasks and document handling, and 20% found organizational rules inconvenient.

STUDY ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION WITHIN A SPORT ORGANIZATION

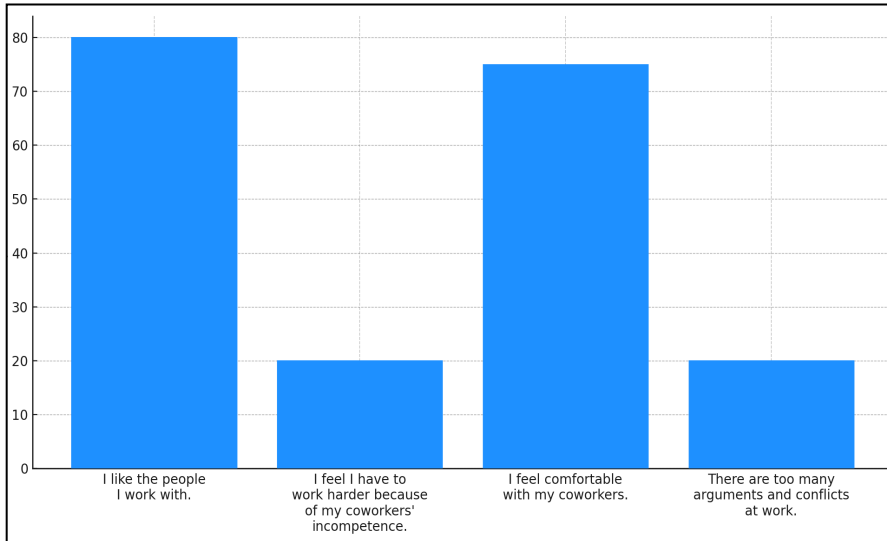


Fig. 7. Coaches' interpersonal relationships within organization

Perception about coworkers underscores strong interpersonal relationships within the organization. 80% of employees reported liking their colleagues, and 75% felt comfortable working with them. However, 20% noted having to compensate for perceived incompetence among coworkers, and 20% highlighted workplace conflicts as a concern.

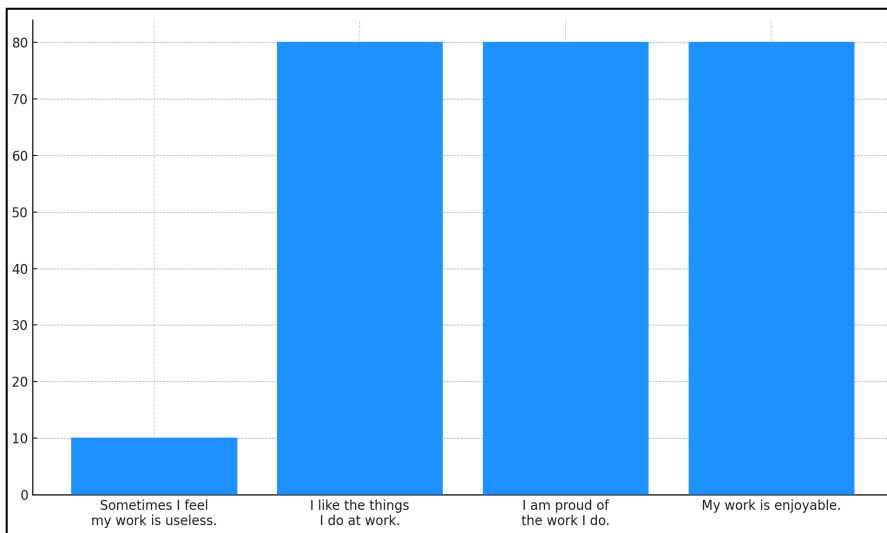


Fig. 8. Coaches' perspective about importance of their work

Findings in this category demonstrate high levels of intrinsic job satisfaction. 80% of respondents reported enjoying their work, feeling proud of their contributions, and valuing the tasks they perform. Only 10% felt their work was occasionally meaningless. These results highlight the importance of maintaining task alignment with employee interests and ensuring continued engagement by showcasing the impact of their work on organizational goals.

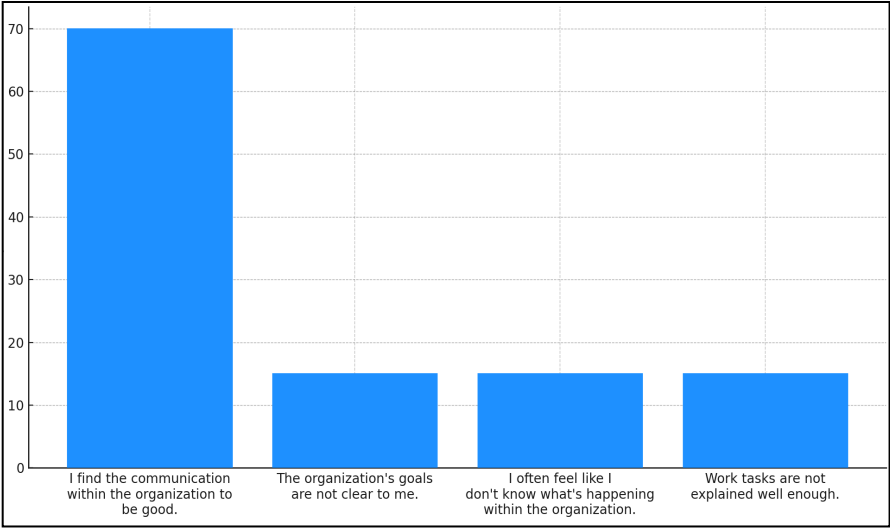


Fig. 9. Internal communication within organization

The data reflects a predominantly positive perception of organizational communication. 70% of respondents felt that internal communication was effective, while 15% reported unclear organizational goals, insufficient explanations of work tasks, and a lack of transparency regarding ongoing activities.

DISCUSSIONS

The present study aimed to assess job satisfaction among coaches at Viitorul Cluj Football Academy using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). The analysis focused on nine subscales: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. The results presented above provide valuable insights into the factors influencing job satisfaction within this specific sports organization. The results of the first scale indicated moderate satisfaction levels concerning pay

and promotion opportunities. This aligns with the research suggesting that compensation and career advancement are critical determinants of job satisfaction. For instance, Lee et al. (2023) found that both intrinsic factors, such as recognition, and extrinsic factors, including pay and promotion, significantly influence job satisfaction across various industries. In the context of sports organizations, competitive salaries and advancing pathways are essential to attract and retain talented coaches. High satisfaction levels were observed in the areas of supervision and relationships with coworkers. Supportive leadership and positive interpersonal relationships are known to enhance job satisfaction. Effective supervision fosters a sense of appreciation and recognition, which are internal factors contributing to job satisfaction (Cooper et al., 2018). Moreover, a collaborative work environment among colleagues promotes a sense of belonging and mutual support, further enhancing satisfaction levels.

Participants reported lower satisfaction with fringe benefits and contingent rewards. This finding is consistent with studies indicating that inadequate benefits and lack of performance-based rewards can lead to dissatisfaction. Ensuring that coaches feel adequately rewarded for their efforts is imperative, as it directly impacts their motivation and commitment to the organization (Lee et al., 2023). Implementing a structured system of contingent rewards may address this issue, providing clear motivation for performance. Satisfaction with operating procedures was moderate, suggesting that the organization can search for improvement in organizational policies and processes. Improving procedures to reduce bureaucracy and enhance efficiency can positively impact job satisfaction. Employees who perceive organizational processes as fair and efficient are more likely to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Cooper et al., 2018).

The nature of work and communication received high satisfaction ratings. Engagement in meaningful tasks and effective communication channels are decisive in fostering job satisfaction. When employees find their work intrinsically rewarding and are well-informed about organizational matters, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction (Lee et al., 2023). Maintaining open lines of communication ensures that employees feel valued and heard, contributing to a positive work environment. The results suggest that while certain areas, such as supervision, coworker relations, nature of work, and communication, are sources of satisfaction, attention should be directed toward enhancing pay structures, promotion opportunities, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, and operating procedures. Addressing these areas may involve conducting market salary analyses to ensure competitive compensation, establishing transparent promotion criteria, offering comprehensive benefits packages, implementing performance-based reward systems, and improving organizational procedures.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined job satisfaction among coaches at Viitorul Cluj Football Academy, revealing strengths and areas for improvement. Supervision, coworker relationships, nature of work, and communication emerged as key factors contributing to a positive work environment. However, dissatisfaction with pay, promotion opportunities, benefits, and rewards indicated the need for better compensation structures and career development pathways. Enhancing these aspects can lead to a more motivated, engaged, and high-performing workforce, ultimately benefiting both employees and the organization.

Study Limitations

This study's sample size was limited to 14 coaches within a single football academy, which may affect the general aspects of the results. Future research should consider larger, more diverse samples across multiple organizations to validate these findings.

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