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Organizational roles and the work and organizational engagement

Abstract: *Purpose – The article aims to attempt to define the work and organization engagement of the employees of one of the exclusive hotel spa in Poland. The present paper proposes that organizational roles taken by employees differentiate symptoms of their engagement. The research aims to test the hypothesis and to show the differences at the level of concepts and behaviors.*

Design/methodology/approach – The following study is an attempt to define the work and organizational engagement of employees of one of the exclusive SPA (sanus per aquam) hotels in Poland. The study was conducted using qualitative methods in the form of individual interviews and a group interview. The study described is part of a bigger project implemented in a Hotel. One department within the hotel, the kitchen of the main restaurant, was chosen for analysis. As such, opinions of two managers of various ranks (the Chef and the Deputy Manager of the Hotel) and seven persons from the aforementioned department are presented in this paper.

Findings – Data analysis allowed us to conclude that organizational roles performed by employees may, in an influential way, shape the level and mental representation of the work and organizational engagement. Our results show that the higher position an employee has in the organizational hierarchy, the better is his/her understanding and the bigger is level of engagement both in work and in the organisation. What's more, higher organizational role is conducive to mixing these two perspectives, and the lower role makes them clearly separated.

Key words: *job satisfaction, organization, work engagement, organizational commitment*

Introduction

Employee engagement is nowadays probably one of the most important topics in HRM. The source of theories related to engagement of employees must be sought in the classical foundations of motivational theories and theories concerning attitudes towards work. We can indicate such notions here, as the need for self-actualisation (Maslow, 1954), the X and Y theory (McGregor, 1960), internal motivation (Deci, 1971), and modern concepts such as self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000), job satisfaction (e.g., Herzberg, 1965), organizational commitment (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982) and organizational citizenship behaviour (Organ, 1997). Modern psychology of work uses many notions, which are related to engagement. Literature in that field refer to several different, but related, ways of understanding engagement in work: job engagement, work engagement, organizational engagement and employee engagement.

In this paper, we firstly introduce definitions of several types of engagement in the work situation. We also try to compare them. Then we present our assumptions that have become the starting point for research. In the next step we discuss the qualitative procedure used in our research. We also present the data collected in the form of expression of employees of examined organization. The article ends with conclusions on the impact of the organizational role on the level of work and organization engagement.

Types of engagement in the work situation

This multiplicity of concepts concerning engagement in work situation makes some creates certain problems when somebody wants to diagnose the level of engagement in the organization.

The distinction seems to be the most difficult in the case of job and work engagement. 'Research into employee engagement has traditionally focused on employees' investment of self in their role (job engagement) or more

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generally at the workplace (work engagement)' (Reissner & Pagan, 2013, p. 2743). However, review of the literature shows that researchers use the same questionnaire for the diagnosis of engagement – UWES (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008) – regardless of whether they analyze job or work engagement (see: Inceoglu, & Warr, 2011; Wefald, Mills, Smith, & Downey, 2012). UWES in no way refers to the place of work (organization), but always simply to employee activity. In this article we assume that both concepts (work engagement and job engagement) are so similar that we can treat them as synonyms. So we take the definition of job/work engagement as positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that includes three subscales: vigour, dedication, and absorption (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008). Thus, persons engaged in their job are characterised by a high level of energy and mental resilience at work, as well as a willingness to invest their efforts in work performance and to be resilient, even if they face difficulties. Dedication is primarily related to the belief that one's job is significant and to being proud of one's job. Absorption is characterised by full concentration on one's job and a pleasurable feeling of 'sinking' into. However, absorption is sometimes also considered as a result of engagement (Salanova, & Schaufeli, 2008).

Organizational engagement and employee engagement are another concepts which are worth discussing. These two concepts are also similar to each other. Organizational engagement is the willingness to be a member of a particular organization, which reflects the behavior based on organizational values. It is also associated with the degree of identification with the organizational role (Saks, 2006). But authors rarely use that notion in their research. Deliberations on employee engagement can be found much more often. Apart from the texts in which the employee engagement means the work engagement, the term is usually defined as a relationship with the organization and professional role. Reissner and Pagan (2013) claim that employee engagement is a broader proposition than work or job engagement. It is a dynamic, changeable psychological state which links employees to their organizations. Kahn (1990), with his approach combining engagement with the performance of professional roles, seems to be matched to employee engagement definition. Engagement occurs when a member of an organisation sees an opportunity for physical, cognitive and emotional self-expression in his/her professional role. 'Self and role exist in some dynamic, negotiable relation in which a person both drives personal energies into role behaviors (self-employment) and displays the self within the role (self-expression)' (Kahn, 1990, p. 700). So a key notion for engagement to be understood in that way is the identification with one's professional role. Employee engagement is often defined as a rich set of behaviours (Dalal, Brummel, Wee & Thomas, 2008; Saks, 2008). This set of behaviours is frequently said to include organizational attachment and identification with values of the company as well as a belief that it allows employees to develop themselves and to achieve success. The basis for organizational commitment is sought in the resources of a given work environment (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010),

including organizational procedures, such as evaluations of employees, motivational systems and management styles. In practice, engagement in the organisation is usually assessed with tools regarding organizational commitment. The view presented by Meyer and Allen (1991), which assumes that there are three elements significant for commitment, and their questionnaire are undoubtedly the most widespread methods of diagnosis. The first element is emotional commitment defined as positive emotions related to the organisation, e.g., pleasure when talking about the organisation. The second element is the continuance commitment, which is related to, for example, calculation of costs that the employee would make if she/he decided to resign from the organisation. The last component is the normative commitment, defined as feeling morally obligated to remain in the organisation. It seems obvious that the three components do not play the same role in increasing an employee's activity, which would result in benefits for the company. Emotional commitment will surely contribute to greater organizational engagement and increase the understanding of specific behaviour; the other two elements do not have to influence the behaviour of employees in the same way.

After analysing those many perspectives of understanding engagement in work situation, we can conclude that sometimes, it is hard to tell the difference between job/work engagement and engagement related to the place where the work is performed. The issue of the professional role is frequently related to the organisation within which a given person performs his/her role. Such problem is visible also in a debate about how employee engagement differs from such concept as organizational commitment (Reissner & Pagan, 2013).

The division between job/work engagement and organizational commitment seems to be justified and reasonable on the one hand, as it results from the adoption of different perspectives in the psychology of work and organizational psychology, and because they are a result of different causes (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Saks, 2006). On the other hand, researchers may in some way, artificially impose the division. Employees and organisations, which are interested in increasing the engagement of their personnel, do not discriminate between them. From the perspective of the 'actors' of a working situation, both constructs fuse.

In this article, we assume, the definition of work engagement as an engagement of personal resources (i.e. social support, a sense of personal control, self-acceptance, self-efficacy, optimism and coping) in work activities, and organizational engagement as the exploitation of these resources for the benefit of organization, in which the individual is currently working.

Aim and procedure of the study

The study presented here is part of a bigger empirical project. During the project, quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The scientific aim of the project was to diagnose the level of well-being of employees (among the diagnosed variables were work and organizational engagement) and to indicate factors – both organizational

and those which characterise employees themselves – that influence well-being. The study was meant to cover all employees and managers of various ranks. As a result, about 80% of employees were studied via direct interviews, group interviews, an observation and using questionnaires. The research concerned one of the exclusive Polish SPA hotels, which belongs to a Polish chain of hotels. The study described below was conducted in September 2014, in the hotel, located in the north-eastern region of Poland.

The variety of organizational diagnosis methods used was an obvious advantage of the project. The methods were used in accordance with the triangulation paradigm of social studies (King, 2004; Kostera, 2003). The quantitative and qualitative methods were used but the purpose of this article is to present the results of qualitative research. For the qualitative sections, individual interviews were conducted (with the management of the hotel and its departments) as well as group interviews with employees of specific departments, an observation of natural behaviour of employees, and an original tool supporting the group interviews, which is a map of emotions felt by employees at various situations at work.

That article is based on the data collected during the individual and group interviews. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and finally coded on the basis of categories used by respondents during the interviews. The group, apart from their utterances and mutual stimulation in the discussion, was supposed to perform a task together and at that moment, it became a task group. The interview moderators were focused on the aims of the study, specifically, gaining knowledge, obtaining answers to the questions asked, stimulating the discussion and encouraging participants to work as a team. Persons conducting the interviews tried to eliminate any elements of power in the organisation or outside of it, as well as any connections to the management of the hotel from their role (Cassel, 2005; Steyaert & Bouwen, 2004).

During the studies, the attempt to maintain an image of an objective researcher looking for answers to questions, not influencing the participants by her behaviour and not causing any consequences for them when it comes to the managers was successful. We suspect that the interviewers might have raised some doubts in the beginning (mainly related to the issues of passing along information and opinions of the participants to higher-ranked superiors and to the influence of the interviews on the evaluation of employees made by his/her superiors); however, the relationship between management and interviewers was based mainly on the idea of partnership and mutual curiosity. Things were slightly different for the group interviews conducted among employees of chosen departments. In this case, the majority of groups were initially anxious and lacked trust, but they also seemed to be cautious and slightly subordinate when approaching the interviewers. Thus, it was important for the researchers to create a good relationship at the beginning of the study and to convince the group that their intentions were only cognitive. In addition, the researchers, in order to reduce the distance, acted as understanding and supporting persons, who positively reinforced the groups of employees.

The following article is based on a detailed analysis of part of the data collected in the scope of the whole project, specifically, the data collected during three interviews: two individual and one group. The first interview was conducted with a person managing the whole hotel, the second interview was with the chef of the kitchen and the group interview was conducted with employees of that department. A total of seven people took part in the group interview; they were the main team of the catering department of the hotel (the basic and the biggest restaurant of the hotel). All three interviews took 27–35 minutes and during that time the participants were asked questions in accordance with a previously prepared scenario, which was related to their work.

The main aim of the data collected in the interviews was to answer two research questions:
- How did the workers (both the managers and their subordinates) understand work and organizational engagement?
- How do employees determine between the notions of work and organizational engagement?

The method used was the interpretive analysis of text (speech) based on semantic-structural approach (Taylor, Gibbs, 2010; Budziszewska, Dryll, 2008; Straś-Romanowska, 2004). The statements of the respondents did not constitute a coherent and expanded narrative, but rather free answers to open questions of researchers, which is quite widely accepted tool in ethnographic research of organization (Kostera, 2007). The semantic categories relating to the construction of the image of the world and making sense in the field of work and organization, were coded referring to the two main variables, i.e. work and organizational engagement. The specific categories are: the motives of work and motives to take up a job, attitude to the organization, support for the team, received support, resources, demands.

Analysis of individual interviews

The individual interviews presented in this article were conducted with the chef of the kitchen of the basic restaurant (serving breakfast, lunch and supper) of the hotel and with the deputy manager of the hotel. Only those points of the conversations that concern the issue of engagement are presented.

The structure of the interview assumed that there would be three questions directly referring to job engagement and organizational engagement:
- How do you contribute to your job, team, employer? What does high job engagement mean?
- How do you contribute to your team, employer? What does high organizational engagement mean?
- And how does a team contribute to it? How do they engage?
- How do you see your professional life in 5 years? What are you going to do then? Where?

During data analysis, we noticed additional questions provoking participants to give their opinions on engagement, those were:

• Please think about your team: why does your personnel work? Because they have to? What drives them? Which needs do they fulfil at work?
• What is the most valuable aspect of your job?
• What is the most pleasurable/the least pleasurable thing in it?
• Would you work if there were no need for you to do so?

Interview with the Chef

The chef talked with admiration about the engagement of his employees, and emphasised that the employees, on the one hand, they respect their job, and on the other, find it pleasurable: 'those, who work currently in the kitchen, want to work. They like it, they respect their job and their superiors, they are not afraid to work hard.' What is interesting is that our interlocutor did not mention the financial standing of his employees. It was as if he thought it was obvious or not really significant for his team. He did mention that he can see that his employees are facing difficulties in maintaining the high standard and that they experience sorrow and sadness.

> They feel discomfort related to the fact that there used to be more of them and less work (…) and it's true, there aren't enough of us in comparison to the standard we are supposed to maintain. They can see and understand that and they feel bad about it.

The chef pointed to the measurable indicators of engagement of the personnel. These are: the number of overtime hours and the number of unused annual leave days. According to the chef, it is an indication of their engagement, high standards set by the organisation, and of their relationship with the previous chef (it was an issue frequently mentioned during the interview).

> It is the first time I encountered a company, in which the employees have on average about 160 overtime hours from the previous years. They must get them back during the low season (…), they have unused annual leave days, and it's not like those are, 2–3 days, but more like 15 or, 20 of them.

What allows for the recognition of an engaged employee is, above all, the readiness to develop their skills, attend trainings and face new challenges at work. Obviously, the chef notices that not everybody is ready to develop, but he generally sees potential in his team.

> They would like to develop themselves, maybe apart from a few women who are going to retire soon, I think they are willing to do (…) not only cooking, but also motivation training, courses concerning the manner of speaking with customers, etc.

Concerning our question of how to cultivate the engagement in the employees of a kitchen, our interlocutor indicated possibilities of doing something untypical and giving the employees challenges:

> I allow my employees to engage in the creation of our menu, to propose something new (…). Some of them don't want to do that and they will never undertake activities like that, and some of them would.

Some parts of the interview, which concerned job engagement of the chef, indicate an appropriate match between the person and his job.

> I was born a cook. (…) motion, stress, spending time with other people, creativity – this is what I like. (…) For 12 years, I have been working on New Year's Eve in the kitchen and I can't see myself on the other side.

When he was asked about specific examples of his job engagement, he mainly mentioned building relationships with his employees. It was visible that it is hard for him to determine job engagement from factors related to the organisation, where he works. He emphasised that he heard about bad relationships with his predecessors and because of that, one of his most important aims was to create relationships based on respect and mutual kindness. His approach to his subordinates is full of care and understanding for their specific situation.

> I create a relaxed atmosphere, I don't want them to be afraid of me (…) the previous chefs were like that – they treated the employees badly; (…) they are experienced, but only when it comes to this, this is their first and only job, they can't make any comparisons; (…) it's hard to imagine how it would be like.

When asked if he has any specific recommendations from the hotel concerning the atmosphere he creates, he said he was never instructed to do so.

> I don't know that, this is just what I am and this is what turns me on (…) nobody has ever told me how to manage a team (…) everything must be in tune, and it doesn't matter how I do that.

The chef underlined the fact that he always uses plural verbs when he speaks to his employees. He tries to build a common sense of responsibility. This concept applies in situations in which everything is good and they are appreciated by guests, but also situations, in which there are mistakes and they are getting criticised: 'when everything is good, I praise them, when I get scolded for something, I pass it on (…) This isn't only ME working there, WE are working together'.

When the chef was encouraged to think about his role in the organisation, he recognised his value and the value of his department. He had a feeling that they were important and that he means a lot to the organisation. 'I think I'm valuable for the company. (…) Of course, we can't suit everybody's taste, but from the guest's feedback, you can see that everything is good (…) and that the management board agrees with that'.

The question about the forecast for the near future (in the perspective of 5 years) concerns organizational commitment directly. The answer of our interlocutor

suggests his commitment to staying in the organisation is moderate. The chef is ready to stay at the organisation only if he sees a significant development of it as well as big opportunities for self-development.

> I imagine myself within the scope of self-actualisation, of course. Probably, I'll be in some new places, but not necessarily. If something happens here and there will be some kind of development, if I get to get along with the management, I will be here.

In summary, it can be said that the chef is extremely engaged in his job and he does not see himself at another post. Apparently, these types of tasks and activities match his psychological traits. He views his job as teamwork and thus why one of the most important aims for him is to create good relationships with all employees working in the kitchen; he sees a way to engage his employees in those relations. It seems that the issue of matching a person to a job is of key importance to him. This is how he views his employees, indicating the fact that when they like their job, they work hard and are engaged. From the whole interview, an image of a person who is able to do much for his job, which is also his passion, appears. The chef believes that there is a sense to engaging into a job for its own sake. In his opinion, the context of working at a specific organisation appeared. The employees of the kitchen and the guests of the restaurant were mentioned on numerous occasions. They may be seen as elements constituting a part of the image of the company. However, it can be presumed that for the chef, they constitute elements necessary for him to perform his job. Those elements appear everywhere, no matter where a cook works. It can be concluded then, that our interlocutor was talking mainly about the post of a cook and his engagement in the job, while the place of employment had a much lower significance for him. This attitude is definitely typical for liberal professions, which by definition are separated from a specific organisation. This attitude is also visible in the context of the chef's opinion on his future. Finally, a conclusion may be reached that our interlocutor is strongly committed to his post and he is ready to engage in his job. At the same time, his commitment to the organisation where he works, is much lower, as is his readiness for organizational commitment.

Interview with the Deputy Manager of the Hotel

Significant circumstances of the interview – it is worth mentioning that the interlocutor is one of the most recent employees of the hotel. She was employed half a year before the interview was conducted and she has a specific personal situation. Currently, she lives in a company apartment located within the hotel's premises, in a small building designed for purpose. She lives on her own, her family did not move here with her. She spends every weekend travelling (about 450 km in one direction by car, which takes about 6 hours given Polish road conditions). The deputy manager was the only employee we interviewed who had been well-trained in the field related to management. She had not only practical, but

also theoretical knowledge concerning the management of employees and ways of influencing them.

Our interlocutor, when replying to questions concerning motivating employees and their willingness to engage, emphasised that there are as many motifs as there are people, but one can try to categorise them somehow.

> (…) there are some various groups and various reasons why they work here. Some of them work, because they have to, others work due to their great passion and they are easily visible among the rest of employees. There are people who work for money and it always comes up in a conversation with them, they constantly talk about it.

When we asked the deputy manager about the employees who have passion, we found out that those people easily attract attention, which probably means that it is not frequent in an organisation that

> It's easy to recognise a committed employee with passion, it's written all over their faces (laughter). (…) it's a different manner of behaviour, some kind of forecasting, sometimes they even come up with things that I wouldn't have thought about and it doesn't depend on the experience of a given employee.

When she was thinking about the difficulties she faces when she motivates her employees to be engaged in their work, she emphasised the frequent difficulty some employees face (especially the older ones), to understand some basic rules governing a company conducting its activity in the hotel industry.

> We are here to satisfy our guests, because they will pay us then, we will implement our budgets as planned, the employer will be satisfied and it will benefit us in the future. The guests are paying us, not the hotel. It's easier to convince the younger employees with no experience in different organisations about that, and it's more difficult to do that in case of people with some experience.

Among the ways and tools motivating people to engage in their job, she pointed to appropriate ways of giving feedback on work, especially on the meaning of praise. She claimed that not only a good word, but also a good example given by a superior, may do good for the employees.

> …for the employees, it's nice when we praise them and when we notice the positive sides, to be appreciated by your superior (…) thanks to our calculations, there are usually enough people at work; however, there are some random events and then we lack employees, but in this kind of situation, it's important that, for example, managers take up some duties – sometimes even I served as a waitress and I heard them saying, "look, the manager is doing quite a good job holding that tray', a good example must come from the top of the hierarchy.

She later came back to the issue of passion that allows for understanding how this organisation works independent of the ages of such employees. In her speech, she frequently combined passion with readiness to educate oneself and to

develop, *'it's easier for those with passion, and it doesn't depend on their experience then (…) when they want to learn something, they take it easier.'*

Specifically, she frequently referenced traits of an organisation as an autonomous motivator and something attractive for the employees. On numerous occasions, our interlocutor repeated that the hotel does a lot for its employees, making it clear that practically every employee should be grateful to the hotel.

> It's a good employer – it takes care of the employee, creates a family-like and loyal company and if someone is full of passion, he may spread wings, learn a lot (…). I think that there must be something magical in here as so many employees have been working for so long here – it rarely happens in the hotel industry. I've never encountered people committed to one company for such a long time in any hotel and I've been working in four of them.

She expressed a similar, positive view regarding the organisation when she talked about her commitment. She mentioned the good name of the company that attracted her to work here and that it is equally attractive for others:

> I decided to work here (my family lives in a different city), because this brand is a brand worth working for. (…) working here is an opportunity to develop, to learn something more. (…) I don't regret being here.

When we continued to ask questions on self-actualisation, we found out that it is not only about the brand or this organisation – the hotel is something valuable to her, but so is the hotel branch.

> It's such a pleasant profession. Each day is different, there are constant surprises and that's something that turns me on (…) obviously there are some difficulties (…) people, an unkind guest, mistakes of our employees, stressful situations related to multiplicity of difficult decisions, but still every day is pleasant (…) I tried to outline my professional path to do something that I like, and I like working in the hotel industry.

At the end of the interview, we asked about her vision of her near future (in the perspective of 5 years). The deputy manager did not hesitate when answering; she does not connect her future with the hotel. However, it is not a result of non-commitment, but the lack of real possibilities.

> I will surely be a hotel manager! At latest when I'm forty, that's my aim and plan. I think I will be trained and experienced until then, that I will have such an opportunity (…) it's not a big chain of hotels, there are only a few hotels in it, so the possibilities are limited. It's hard to count on the fact that I will be transferred from one hotel to another, due to my good job.

Summing up the interview with the deputy manager of the hotel, the perspective of the organisation where she works appears frequently. Her engagement is obviously a result of a perfect match between her personality and her profession, as she frequently talked about the pleasure she gains from activities, which, in her opinion, are specific for the hotel industry. However, she also pointed to some values and rules of operation of the hotel that are especially attractive. One may think about the extent to which the perspective of the organisation is a result of the position of this woman. Due to her position, she has greater knowledge of the hotel and also a greater sense of responsibility for it. Her job is to know what is happening in each department, to physically be in different places, to engage in localisation in the hotel. This general view and perspective of the organisation, resembling a view from a bird's eye, may somehow require from her to completely identify job engagement with organizational commitment.

Analysis of the group interview with employees working in the kitchen

At the beginning of the group interview, we asked participants to indicate general motives of human labour and job engagement. The first motive mentioned by participants was an obligation, or even a constraint – mainly a financial one: *'people must work for their whole lives, because of the fees they have to pay and their living expenses.'* The idea of taking up a job in cases of no economical obligations, which we presented, surprised the participants. There were people in the group that firmly stated that they would not work in that situation. However, the majority of participants said that they would work – mainly due to the need to meet other people, be active and to prevent boredom.

> I have two adult sons, they both work, I would bore myself to death if I didn't work. I have to do something in my life; I'm generally not this kind of person that doesn't move on, I like to do things.

Another significant motive mentioned was satisfaction gained from work – mainly resulting from the fact of doing something that is interesting, something that gives an opportunity to develop ourselves. In addition, participants pointed out such needs as being with others, having relationships with them and being independent. There were other specific needs, which a professional job may satisfy: the need to structure time and life and preventing boredom.

The important factors influencing engagement in one's own job, according to the participants, also included quickly visible effects – like dishes that are ready and served or generally – coping with a crisis, that is an accumulation of tasks and duties within a short period of time: 'We are very proud that we are coping with it, that we still have the strength to do that.' Participants also referred to the indicator that shows their own efficiency, namely satisfaction of the customer, which is revealed in feedback (praise) and general content of the customer (smiling, words of appreciation): 'It happened to me once that guests came to me and thanked me for the breakfast. They said it was delicious and rich. It makes a man grow before his eyes, am I right?'

Another significant aspect that reflects engagement and content is a good team atmosphere – mutual

understanding, cooperation, support and a feeling of a common fate. It seems that participants were convinced that their job is based on cooperation with persons they like and that are similar to them in many regards (age, interests, place of residence, future).

> It's not a competition, we don't leave anyone alone, we come to them and help them instead.(…) When I'm alone in the department, Anita helps me, and when I have some time on my hand, I help Anita (…) One shaft helps another, doesn't it?

It should be noted that a good atmosphere and relations with colleagues do not translate into good cooperation with other departments and persons working at other places and areas of the organisation: 'I really don't know how it all looks like in other departments'; 'We don't have any relations with other departments.' It seems that there is no integration, knowledge or mutual support between the employees of the hotel as a whole. This type of identity and community – 'we – the employees of the Hotel' would surely increase organizational commitment, even though it would not necessarily contribute to job engagement.

Positive feedback from bosses, customers, and each other seem to be expected and wanted; praise seems to increase engagement. Reinforcements of engagement include: rewards, appraisals, financial gratification (even small amounts), but also a situation, in which the boss sees the effort and engagement of his/her employee: 'The boss is generally ok. Sometimes he compliments us, always comments on what we do well.'

Although, the respondents did not view a sense of industrial identity as a factor determining job satisfaction, it should be emphasised that this aspect is a powerful stimulus for persistent and engaged work. Identification with the catering branch allows participants to have a sense of belonging to an attractive group of professionals, and, at the same time, it supports their interests, professional development and job engagement. In addition, it is the basis for social comparisons (e.g., with other hotels in the region), which, in their opinion, shows a real advantage of their own workplace.

> I can tell you that I've been in the local hotels as a guest. I must admit that we have very high standards here. It's a different job here, it's so different there. Here everything must be perfect to the last bit, everything must be beautifully served to the guest. I mean, it's like in the catering industry. I think we are able to win this competition with them.

On the other hand, factors that have a negative influence on job engagement mainly include remuneration perceived as definitely too low in comparison to the commitment of the majority of employers: 'People don't want to come here and work, it's about the remuneration. Everything is about it…' What is interesting is that when the argument about disproportions in remuneration between specific persons was given, for example, the participants did not compare the level of wealth of the hotel's customers nor the remuneration of the management board of the hotel with

their own financial standing. The basic argument in favour of an increase of remuneration was – almost for everybody – high personal job engagement and high efficiency. The respondents feel that their contributions, efforts and engagement are not appreciated. They think that not many people would be able to cope with the job burdens they face, thus they have high expectations for appreciation and rewards: 'Well, there is unemployment, but there are no people willing to work. If anybody comes, they come only for half of the day and then they never come back.' This aspect of engagement is of a strongly normative character and belongs to a specific kind of ethics at work. The employees value hard work, as they grew up in its cult and are ready to take it up: 'If somebody is made to work, they will work,(…) I've been taught since I was a little kid that you have to work, and not to be lazy and expect that everything should be given to me.'

This normative attitude towards one's own work and relations related to it may be a basis for organizational commitment in a surprising way. Employees believe that there is a natural, normative order and hierarchy at their workplace. They respect this order and during the interviews, we did not observe any need to infringe upon it. The stable, unchangeable and natural elements of this order are the customers – the greatest value in the organisation and the superiors – who are burdened with responsibility and competent, but relatively distant from the everyday reality of the employees. The latter openly expressed their unwillingness to take up the duties of their bosses, they clearly were not jealous, and even on the contrary – they felt sorry for them because of the burden they carry. This attitude may be seen as one of very few indicators of organizational commitment presented by the participants.

> And would you like to be the boss? When I see the face of my boss, I'd rather not (…) It's about the responsibility. Maybe that's why there's such a high frequency of the turnover in the management board. They can't cope with it, they have so much duties imposed on them.

Another element influencing the organizational commitment of the participants was a specific bond with the organisation, based on norms and values. When the respondents were asked about the prime principle, the reason for establishing and functioning in their company (the hotel), only some of them were referring to the category of efficiency and profit. Others viewed the need to provide jobs to people in this region with a high unemployment rate as the fundamental value; others thought the value was related to the beauty of the landscape and the wild nature of the region. Maybe this assumption seems to be somehow naive, but it clearly shows a positive relation with the employer, which is based on moral and aesthetic values and could be expressed as follows: 'my employer, that is my company, is a good place and it is composed of good people as the rules which govern it are good'.

> What's the use of this hotel? There's high unemployment rate in the region. And that's maybe why it was established. To give people jobs. I'm 100% sure (…) or maybe it's

the nature. When people come from cities, they have only brick walls there, and here there are forests, peace and quiet (…) people want to come here because we have peace, landscapes, and forests all around us.

Discussion and conclusion

Summarizing the three interviews, it should be emphasized that to the great extent it was possible to identify how the hotel employees understand their work engagement.

Summary data (semantic category) from all three interviews, below presents the table. It shows clearly the similarities and differences in the understanding and experience of the basic phenomena analyzed in this study, i.e. work engagement and organizational engagement, among subjects with three levels of hierarchy of the organization.

The basic conclusion is that there is a high diversity between the attitudes expressed in all the three interviews. The differences seem to depend on roles played in the organisation. The situation of our interlocutors may be described as "listening through a closed door" – in reference to the kitchen employees, "a view from the back office" – in reference to the chef, and "a view from the balcony" – the deputy manager of the hotel.

It should be emphasized that lower-level employees feel deprived of important information relating to the organization – its current state, strategy and plans for the future – not necessarily affecting themselves directly. It seems that this type of communication is neglected in the organization. Engagement in the organization of this group is relatively low as the employees feel not supported by the organization, although the requirements are high. Moreover, the organization does not always apply those values which have been earlier subject to a kind of contract with the staff. These values employees believe to be truly important (in particular service quality and customer satisfaction). Middle level managers may be overloaded – on the one hand, the need to meet the requirements and plans of the top management, on the other hand solving current problems in their team and its activities (which often ends in the need to work closely together). Furthermore, the top management within the organization – focused on

Table 1. Semantic categories related to work engagement and organizational engagement

Semantic--psychological category	Deputy Manager of the Hotel	Chef	The kitchen employees
motives of work	ambition; passion; development consistent with education; competence development; specifics of business	curiosity; competence development; learning; coping with the challenges	money; need for survival; structuring of time; need for activity; satisfaction; work ethic
attitude to the organization	conviction about care and attention employer; conviction about a strong brand, to work for; the likelihood of leaving company, in the absence of prospects for development	dependence organizational commitment on the organization development; some conflicts with the persons in higher levels of hierarchy in the organization	high quality; prestige; dissatisfaction with low pay; the lack of integration, community and knowledge of other employees in hotel; beliefs about ethical attitude of the employer
support for the team	the praises; noticing positive things; example of work and commitment; moments of working together	support creativity; autonomy of subordinates; building relationships based on respect and friendliness; avoid negative emotions, eg. fear;	common understanding; cooperation; support; a sense of common fortune
resources	passion; willingness to constant development; ambition; education; experience; strong professional identity	passion; mobility; creativity; good relationships; the importance of work for the organization; strong professional identity	relationships with others; support from the supervisor; self-efficacy resulting from customer satisfaction; strong professional identity
demands	dedication to work and to the organization a significant part of life; disrupted work-life balance; a lot of stressful situations; customer and management requirements	lack of support from organizations in the team management; ambitious challenges and tasks; self-reliance; customer requirements	high workload; a lot of stressful situations; high standards of the hotel; the need for alone or team to cope with difficult situations; low salaries

the general view and not reaching too often the method of "management by walking around" miss the picture of important current issues and growing disappointment of lower-level employees.

It appears than for the employees that, the higher is position in the hierarchy, the higher the level of his/her own engagement in the organisation is (probably due to the greater knowledge of the processes taking place in the organization) and the greater his/her understanding of what organizational engagement is. In case of job engagement, it was visible that there is some diversity in its level: the highest levels of engagement were found in the chef and the deputy manager, the lowest – in the case of employees working in the kitchen. However, when naming what the engagement is, our interlocutors had rather similar views and referred to similar indications of work (?) engagement. Furthermore, the results indicate that lower-level employees clearly distinguish between work engagement and organizational engagement (separable expression, opinions and emotions associated with these perspectives) as opposed to the top manager of the hotel, which combined in their statements and equated two perspectives.

It turned out that both types of commitment might be completely separable (as was the case with the kitchen's employees) or almost identical, as it was in the opinions of the hotel deputy manager and the chef. Thus we can conclude that at the employee level, job engagement is viewed as more basic, intuitive and as not needing any external support. On the other hand, the management board needs to make an effort at organizational commitment, as it seems that is lacking within the company.

It could be recommended as a result from the study, to raise awareness of managers to a significant difference (it seems that quite natural, or inevitable) between them and the lower staff. The difference concerns the organizational engagement and sense of responsibility for the organization. Employees probably differentiate in their minds levels of the organization and perceive its highest, meta-level, a bit abstract (in the presented research called the "Hotel"), which they seem to be the most attached to and lower levels associated with top managers (low attachment is noticed) and direct chiefs (greater attachment is noticed). For the management of the organization and operations of HR ideal situation would be to combine, or even to identify both: work and organizational engagement. In connection with this important recommendation for leaders seems to be attempt to build a coherent picture of the organization, based on reliable data and appropriate communication with employees.

Correct and full communication also addressed to the lowest levels of employees in the organization, can promote the feeling of meaning own organizational role. The other hand a sense of meaning of their work may affect the significant increase in organizational engagement.

The study presented has its limitations. Undoubtedly, it is hard to treat information obtained from individual and group interviews as perfectly adequate. In addition, it would be a good idea to support the interviews with data from observations of the people interviewed, collected over at least one working day; then the engagement diagnosis would cover both the declarative and real levels, displayed in natural behaviour. However, it seems that the study allowed us to reach at least preliminary conclusions, which may be an inspiration for a detailed qualitative analysis or quantitative studies conducted in the field of commitment.

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