

Article

Perceived Serviceability of Outplacement Programs as a Part of Sustainable Human Resource Management

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Abstract: Work and employment are important elements of every working person's life. If an employee loses his or her job, he or she loses an important and determining part of his or her life. To reduce the negative effects that affect the quality of an employee's life, outplacement programs were established as a part of sustainable human resource management. Sustainable human resource management emphasises the importance of employee care. Outplacement, for its part, includes support for employees at their last stage in the organization. The main aims of the paper are to present the research results focused on the perceived usefulness of outplacement programs for dismissed employees, to analyse the relationships between the emotions felt by redundancies and other employees as well as the comparison of differences in emotions felt by different generations of dismissed employees. A valid collection tool (research questionnaire) was developed for research purposes and distributed to employees of industrial enterprises in the Slovak Republic. Overall, the research set was composed of $n = 692$ employees from different generational groups. The research results proved the existence of a relationships between the emotions felt by redundancies and other employees and differences in emotions felt by employees from different generational groups.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility; industrial enterprises employees; outplacement; sustainable human resource management

1. Introduction

Work as an individual and creative activity is determinative not only for performance but also for people's personality. Work has its position in the hierarchy of human values, and it influences people's attitudes and motives. Work has not only personal and economic significance but ultimately a social dimension. In addition to the possibility of self-realization, one contributes to the production of values, whether in the form of goods or services. Work does not only allow and greatly influences social interactions but also, to some extent, defines the social status of employee and his or her family. Employers should be aware of how they influence their employees' and their families' lives. They should treat current and former staff to ensure sustainability and minimize the negative impact on staff in unpopular situations such as, for example, the dismissal of employees.

1.1. Theoretical Background

Sustainability can be understood as an approach in thinking and acting that is applied in all organizational processes. Such approach considers the balance of value creation in the present and in the future beneficial for society [1]. Enterprises that consider social responsibility demonstrate respect towards human rights, social responsibility, environmental initiatives or sustainability. Some enterprises have even instituted such activities or initiatives. Some authors highlight the importance of

knowledge about the environmental, social, and economic strengths and weaknesses of enterprise for managers [2,3] for supporting decision-making [4–6]. The need for corporate social responsibility has become more pronounced in recent years, and companies have committed themselves to promoting non-economic social values [7]. The importance of corporate social responsibility on enterprise performance can be confirmed [8–12] with emphasis on the fact that the enterprise is confronted not only with economic problems but increasingly also with environmental and social ones [13–17]. Executives understand that corporate social responsibility is beneficial for businesses in relation to employees, whether present or attracting future ones [18,19]. There are various opportunities for enterprises to engage and contribute to local communities. Some enterprises, therefore, have separate units that manage their social commitment [20,21]. Social corporate responsibility does not mean only to focus in the broader sense on work issues. What is also important is commitment to social responsibility at a local level. It can be demonstrated as commitment to employees, currently as well as ex-employees, prospective employees and surrounding communities.

The enterprise itself benefits from the implementation of socially responsible initiatives. Corporate social responsibility activities influence not only how the employees are identified with the enterprise, but also their attitudes and behaviour [22] and thus performance.

Employees view favourable or unfavourable treatment from the enterprise management as an expression of how management of the enterprise values their efforts and contribution to whole enterprise performance [23]. Currently, enterprises employ the most educated employees compared to the past. These employees do not expect only higher wages. They expect fair treatment and respect and the opportunity to engage in business activities and be able to be involved in management decision making. Moreover, what is also important, they consider how their work affects their personal lives and their families [24]. Organizations must implement sustainable human resource management practices in order to provide employees with a better chance of employment or retention. However, such measures must be effective for employers, so it is essential that sustainable human resource practices do not conflict with the strategic goals of the organization [25]. As the mainstream human resource management is more interested in the activities and human resource management practices aimed at employee performance improvement not at employee correct treatment, some such human resource practices can be threatening for employees. Sustainable human resource management can be considered as an alternative approach to mainstream human resource activities. Sustainable human resource management is seen as an alternative care-oriented option and approach to maintain employees and restore human resources [26]. Sustainable human resource management puts the focus on networking and external relationship into enterprise human resource management [27]. Individual activities of sustainable human resource management can not only directly increase employee performance [28] as well as their satisfaction and willingness to cooperate [29] but also the positive perception and the employee's identification with the enterprise [30] both, current and past. Preferred values, attitudes, beliefs, priorities and approaches in human resource management practices and activities may vary across the generations of employees [31]. As described, part of the human resource activities survey focused on how well enterprises addressed social responsibility initiatives; highly regulated initiatives were more likely to be handled well by the organizations surveyed, while low regulation and no regulation initiatives (such as outplacement) were the most likely to be handled poorly by organizations [32]. Although some enterprises have established services as outplacement consulting and career transition services, and they became part of the human resource practice at the time of dismissal, their contribution could not be evaluated and understood, as these activities and the services provided were not properly evaluated and their effectiveness or efficiency was not monitored [33]. Moreover, despite the fact, that many employers offer substantive outplacement services, too many displaced employees are not satisfied with the assistance they received [34]. Little is also known about outplacement counselling effectiveness [35]. The above mentioned was an incentive for the authors of this paper to research the subject area. Enterprises surely often focus on employees when hiring and employing. Due to fact, that retiring employees have significant impact on the current employees

and communities in which they live, focus on helping employees when they leave may improve corporate social responsibility initiatives. For organizations, retiring employees and job termination brings many issues concerning a chronic problem of employee turnover and knowledge depletion in organizations [36].

When an employee is retired, the labour link between employer and employee ends. Other relations between employer and ex-employee can be manifested in many ways. Former employees can promote or detract the employer brand. Their relation to the enterprise can affect its business through referring their opinion and influencing minds of other people, customers or employment candidates. Moreover, they could stay to be customers or might be employed again in the enterprise. Employee dismissal has a significant impact on the redundant workers themselves.

Dismissed employees seldom improve their financial situation in another employment. Reemployed employees may consider their new employment worse than previous one [37]. Employers interested in corporate social responsibility, remaining employees as well as reputation on the labour market are more motivated to offer termination benefits and compensations. In addition to the economic aspect, it has a dismissal effect on the emotional state or health of the redundant employees [38]. Effect on health can be manifested in various ways; it can affect the mental as well as physical health of a person but also his or her daily life, life-managing roles and well-being because employment status affects a person in a complex way [39]. Effects on physical health can affect weight [40,41]. Increased stress affects eating habits [42] because some individuals are more predisposed to eat under stress [43,44]. In addition to physical health, especially emotional conditions and sometimes mental health are affected by layoffs [45], which can be manifested by different physical illnesses perceptions [46,47] and result in fatal consequences [48]. Redundancy and its impact on human emotional states may also manifest in increased alcohol use [49] or smoking [50]. Moreover, unemployment does not only affect the unemployed individuals themselves but also their spouses and families [51]. Additionally, if at the same time a person finds himself in several unfavourable life situations, these accumulate and synergistically influence the quality of human life. Unemployment has a much more negative impact on a person's life if he or she is caught in an unfavourable social or life situation [52]. Due to the negative emotional consequences for former employees, organizations that must downsize should pay attention first to dealing with the negative emotions of employees and then to starting other outplacement activities [38]. Outplacement and outplacement services such as consultancy or counselling can be considered useful as they have a positive impact on the employability of the redundant employees. Employees who received better support from the former employer on dismissal had a better chance of reemployment than those who had little or no support [53]. Outplacement is beneficial also for the organization and remaining employees. Outplacement consultancies confirmed that outplacing minimizes organizational disruption and loss of morale [54]. The time required by outplaced employees varies depending on the individual, the type of job sought, and the economy [55].

The possibility of re-employment can be more challenging for employees who have spent a long time in one job or be different for various age groups (employee generations). As generations, they are collectively qualified people born in a relatively close time period. Due to members of one generation entering life in the same historical and socio-technical period, their personality and development are influenced by a similar socio-cultural environment [56]. Thus, members of one generation are close in age but also in values, interests, goals, attitudes, needs, preferences, etc. Currently, there are several different generations of employees in the labour market [57–61]. From the labour market, the Generation of Veterans, even named the “Silent Generation” born before 1945, has almost disappeared. People born between 1946 and 1960, sometimes referred as “Baby Boomers,” are considered as the “Post-War Generation”. They are followed by Generation X, born in 1961–1980, Generation Y born in years (1981–1995) and Generation Z, born in 1996–2009, already entering the labour market. The youngest generation born since 2010 is known as the Generation Alpha [60,62]. However, there is no absolute consensus among scientists and practitioners when limiting the birth years of individual

generations. What is more important, members of each generation manifest certain characteristics that are common to them and may be different for various generations of employees [63].

Understanding the issue of age diversity in today's workplace can maximize the strength of age-diverse people at work [64,65]. Given the diversity of Western and Eastern cultures (the Slovak Republic) and the environment in which the Veterans (Silent Generation) lived, their characteristics differ. In Western countries and Slovakia, common signs can be found that the Generation of veterans had a permanent job opportunity and a comfortable retirement. Currently, members of this generation are only in exceptional and specific professions in the labour market, but their approach to work has influenced the economy [66] and the next generations of employees. The Post-war generation is a generation that commenced improvements in the standard of living of next generations [67]. This generation in Slovakia spent their productive age mainly at a time when unemployment was an undesirable phenomenon for society. Persons avoiding a permanent employment were prosecuted for parasitism [68]. Work and employment have thus become an integral and essential part of their lives. For this generation, the job loss situation that came with the opening of the economy in the nineties of the twentieth century was even more shocking.

Compared to the younger generations, employees of Generation X want to identify themselves more with the organisation and remain there because of mere obligation [69]. Generation X is less loyal to companies than previous generation but loyal to people [70]. The Generation Y is more technologically skilful, with better chances for education and more open to other ethnic groups than older generations. Challenges, experience and adventure are important for people of this generation to judge what they have achieved. They enjoy success and therefore they are looking for new challenges. Their search for challenges leads to seeking a stable job longer and a longer time to find a lifelong relationship [71]. As Generation Y entered stable employment later, they are more likely to acquire higher education [72,73]. Generation Z has become a global generation [74], which means that its characteristics across countries are more common than in previous generations. The members of Generation Z are also called Children of Internet, Digital Generation, etc. Because of their age, just a few of them are employed and their personalities are still not mature. Their parents usually planned their education from a young age, so they can develop their skills and benefit from their developed education when entering business life. Some characteristics of the Generation Z are reliance, freedom, individualism and addiction to technology, [75–77], they are influenced by friends and colleagues [78]. These generations have different representation extent in labour market. They coexist, interact, collaborate, and influence each other. It follows that sustainable human resource management needs to be in some ways diversified for different generations. The attractiveness and use of outplacement services are also different for different generations of employees.

Enterprises in Western countries, and especially those from the United States, have established outplacement to build a reputation for socially sustainable human resource management [79]. Outplacement is the term unknown for most Slovak companies. According to Herzka and Zatrochová, the first tracks of outplacement in Slovakia are estimated to be in around 2000, when many foreign organizations that opened divisions in Slovakia applied outplacement as a service, which they used in their parent organizations abroad [80]. Experts from Slovakia confirm that outplacement is still underused in Slovakia, although it is expected to increase in provision [80–83]. Stacho and Stachová in their study argue, that in Slovakia outplacement is provided by less than 12% of organizations, compared to United States of America, where is outplacement provided by 70% of organizations [83]. Due to the increasing trend in the providing of outplacement in Slovakia, we hypothesise that the rate of outplacement provision is higher than 12% but still does not exceed 30%. Based on the theoretical background described above, we defined research problem, research questions and hypotheses.

1.2. Research Questions and Research Hypotheses

The main research aim was to research the perceived serviceability of outplacement programs for redundant employees, to analyse the relationships between emotions felt by dismissed and other

employees as well as to compare differences in emotions felt of employees in dismissal with respect to different generations of employees in the labour market.

Research questions: The authors defined three research questions that stem from theoretical knowledge and the need to explore the serviceability of outplacement programs and sustainable human resource management, focusing on generational differences and addressing redundancies.

Research question 1: What are the reasons for the dismissal in industrial enterprises in Slovakia with reference to employees of industrial enterprises?

Research question 2: How do employees of industrial enterprises perceive potential serviceability of outplacement programs in Slovakia?

Research question 3: Is there a difference in identified discrimination in redundancies of industrial enterprises employees between different generations of employees?

Research hypotheses: Based on the defined main aim of the research and the determined research questions, the authors of the paper have defined five research hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1. *There is a statistically significant difference in the emotions felt when dismissing employees between various generational groups.*

Hypothesis 2. *There is a statistically significant relation in the emotions felt between dismissed employees and their colleagues.*

Hypothesis 3. *There is a statistically significant relation in the emotions felt between dismissed employees and their supervisors.*

Hypothesis 4. *Less than 30% of redundant employees were provided with outplacement programs.*

Hypothesis 5. *There is a statistically significant relation between the use of outplacement programs and the identified serviceability of outplacement programs.*

2. Materials and Methods

The research sample consisted of industrial enterprises employees in the Slovak Republic. For better representativeness of the sample, we have decided to include in the research all sizes of industrial enterprises and employees belonging to all generational groups in the labour market. The sample of respondents was selected through multi-stage sampling with conglomerate and random sampling. The quota selection was aimed on the same or similar distribution of one character in the group, the chosen character was the age interval of the respondents, which was subsequently recalculated according to the selected classification of the generational groups. The aim of this stage was to achieve a generational representation of respondents, which would correspond to the generational representation in the Slovak Republic. In total, 692 respondents participated in the research. The distribution of respondents according to their age can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by age intervals. (Source: own elaboration, 2019.)

Age Interval	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency [%]
18–25	155	22.39
26–35	248	35.84
36–45	144	20.81
46–55	108	15.61
56–65	37	5.35
Total	692	100.00

The higher number of respondents was aged 26–35 years (Table 1). On the other hand, the lowest number of respondents was in the age group 56 to 65. The distribution of respondents by generational groups can be seen in the Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by generations. (Source: own elaboration, 2019.)

Generation	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency [%]
Baby boomers	27	3.90
Generation X	232	33.53
Generation Y	391	56.50
Generation Z	42	6.07
Total	692	100.00

It is clear from Table 2 that the distribution is not equal among the generational groups; considering the ratio of individual generational groups, we can conclude that the representation of respondents is comparable with representation of generational groups in the Slovak Republic.

As data collection tool, a structured questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was determined to analyse perceived serviceability of outplacement programs and emotions felt by employees of industrial enterprises caused by dismissal. Employee care at every stage of employee life in the organization is directly related to corporate social responsibility of enterprises and sustainable human resource management. However, providing outplacement is often neglected in human resource management. The research data were collected from February 2018 to May 2018. The research questionnaire was distributed solely in paper form directly to respondents in industrial enterprises. The questionnaire was fully anonymous and the only respondents' identification character was respondents' age. The questionnaire contained 13 questions that focused on reasons for dismissal, identified discrimination, emotions felt and provided support for dismissed employees by employers. The 12 questions were closed, only one question was open. Four questions included Likert's 7-point scales, and these scales were anchored. Collected data were used for testing the research hypotheses. The research hypotheses were tested at the level of significance $\alpha \leq 0.05$ and $\alpha \leq 0.01$.

A various method was used for statistical interpretation of the collected data: descriptive and quantitative statistical methods (histograms, pie charts and tabular supplementary analyses). Furthermore, parametric and non-parametric statistical tests (Chi-Square Test, Cramer's V, Spearman Correlation, Eta Coefficient, Spearman's Rho) were used to better process the obtained data and to determine the relevant conclusions. The basic thought processes were used in the research, such as analysis, synthesis, abstraction, concretization, deduction, analogy and comparison, which were used in the processing of all parts of the paper, from the preparation of the Introduction and Theoretical Background to the Discussion. For statistical processing, the IBM SPSS 22.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program was used to test the determined research hypotheses. Additional statistical analyses were processed in Microsoft Excel.

3. Empirical Results

The research results are divided into two parts, and the most important research findings according to determined research questions and research hypotheses are presented.

Research question 1: What are the reasons for the dismissal in industrial enterprises in Slovakia with reference to employees of industrial enterprises? Based on employee responses about redundancies in industrial enterprises, we have identified the most common reasons for the dismissal referred by employees. Respondents may have identified multiple responses because some of them were dismissed more times over the reference period. The results of the first research question can be seen in Figure 1.

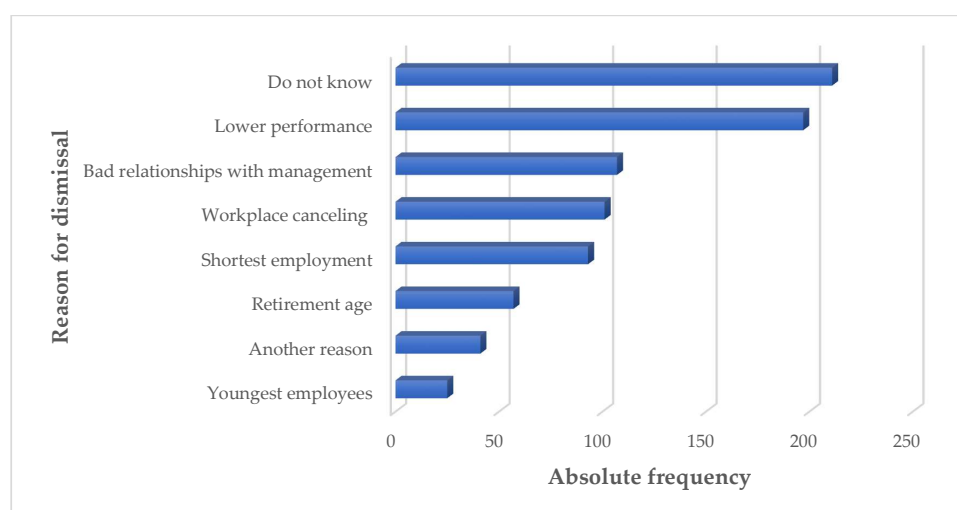


Figure 1. Reasons for dismissal in industrial enterprises in Slovakia. (Source: own elaboration, 2019.)

Figure 1 shows that the most numerous answer was that respondents do not know (211). We can assume that employees at different job positions do not know why their colleague was dismissed, even if they themselves were released. The second most numerous answer was that the dismissed was an employee with a lower performance (197). On the other hand, the least numerous reason for dismissal was that the youngest employee was dismissed (25) and the employee was dismissed for another reason (41).

Research question 2: How do employees of industrial enterprises perceive potential serviceability of outplacement programs in Slovakia? To evaluate the second research question, quantitative interpretation was used, with absolute and relative frequencies. All responses from respondents were used (Table 3).

Table 3. Perceived potential serviceability of outplacement programs in industrial enterprises in Slovakia. (Source: own elaboration, 2019.)

Option Answer	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency [%]
1—certainly yes, I would accept such possibility	169	24.42
2—probably yes	199	28.76
3—do not know	166	23.99
4—probably not	76	10.98
5—certainly no, I would refuse such possibility	82	11.85
Total	692	100.00

We can state that half of the employees would accept to be involved in outplacement programs. They are represented by 368 respondents (Option 1—certainly yes, I would accept such possibility and 2—probably yes). The analysis of the data shows that 158 (22.83%) respondents would refuse the outplacement service. Undecided are 166 (23.99%) respondents, who do not know if they would accept or refuse such a possibility. It follows that most employees are interested in benefitting from outplacement programs in industrial enterprises. Considering sustainable human resource management, it is necessary for human resource managers to identify the need for outplacement services. They must create outplacement programs focused on the needs of the target group of employees, thereby increasing the possibilities of using the programs.

Research question 3: Is there a difference in identified discrimination in redundancies of industrial enterprises employees between different generations of employees? To evaluate the research question, the absolute and relative frequencies of respondents were used. The results in the Table 4 were differentiated according to the respective generational groups of respondents.

Table 4. Identified discrimination in different generations of employees. (Source: own elaboration, 2019.)

Option/Generational Group	Baby Boomers		Generation X		Generation Y		Generation Z		Total	
	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency [%]	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency [%]	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency [%]	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency [%]	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency [%]
1—yes, one time	5	18.52	32	13.79	38	9.72	7	16.67	82	11.85
2 yes, more times	4	14.82	31	13.36	24	6.14	1	2.38	60	8.67
3—no	14	51.85	112	48.28	265	67.77	23	54.76	414	59.83
4—do not know	4	14.81	57	24.57	64	16.37	11	26.19	136	19.65
Total	27	100	232	100	391	100	42	100	692	100

Table 4 shows that 414 industrial-enterprise employees have not identified discrimination. We consider this fact as very positive because in case of these employees it can be concluded that they were fairly treated and had experience with socially responsible businesses and ethical management in Slovakian industrial enterprises. In contrast, it showed as a negative fact that 82 employees identified discrimination, and 60 respondents stated that they identified discrimination repeatedly. Based on the percentages given in Table 4, it can be concluded that the Generation of baby boomers most often identified discrimination, indicating that 33.34% of the baby boomers have experienced discrimination. At least with age discrimination, members of Generation Y identified only in 15.86% of cases that they had suffered discrimination during their working life. What is surprising is the fact that young people from Generation Z are confronted with discrimination as they have been only short time on the labour market.

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant difference in the emotions felt when dismissing employees between various generational groups. When determining the first hypothesis, the authors assumed that the different generations of employees attribute different importance to work. Work and employment represent different values for people from different generations. Values are interrelated and affect people's attitudes, their emotions and feelings. In Table 5, the absolute and relative frequencies of respondents' responses while expressing their feelings on a scale from 1 to 7 can be seen. The results are divided according to their respective generational groups.

Table 5. Emotions felt of dismissed employees by generational groups. (Source: own elaboration, 2019.)

How Would You Rate Your Emotions Felt as a Dismissed/Released Employee on a Scale of 1–7?	Generations				Total
	Baby-Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z	
1—very annoying	9 39.1%	48 22.0%	46 12.7%	8 21.1%	111 17.3%
2—annoying	6 26.1%	54 24.8%	60 16.5%	7 18.4%	127 19.8%
3—little annoying	5 21.7%	28 12.8%	68 18.7%	6 15.8%	107 16.7%
4—none	1 4.3%	27 12.4%	75 20.7%	10 26.3%	113 17.6%
5—little relief	2 8.7%	30 13.8%	45 12.4%	4 10.5%	81 12.6%
6—relief	0 0%	21 9.6%	41 11.3%	1 2.6%	63 9.8%
7—big relief	0 0%	10 4.6%	28 7.7%	2 5.3%	40 6.2%
Total	23 100.0%	218 100.0%	363 100.0%	38 100.0%	642 100.0%

Table 5 shows that released employees reported mostly annoying emotions felt (Option 2). The post-war generation reported the most common answers in negative terms (1 very annoying emotion felt, 2 annoying emotions felt and 3 a little annoying emotion felt). Generation X reported that their emotion felt was a little relief after dismissal, more than other generations. Generation Y reported little relief and big relief more than other generations. From these results, the authors of the paper can assume that dismissed or released employees were not satisfied in their previous job. Generation Z demonstrated indecision resulting from the fact that the most numerous response for this generational group was the answer “none”. For the Hypothesis 1, rejection or not rejection, the statistical tests listed in the Tables 6–8 below were chosen as appropriate methods.

The tested differences between generations were confirmed by the Pearson Chi-Square test as statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), but based on the values of the tests for nonlinear measures (Cramer V = 0.146; Eta coefficient = 0.207), we may state that a relatively low but statistically significant relation exists among the respondents belonging to the same generation.

Table 6. Testing the difference in the emotions felt when dismissing employees between various generational groups. (Source: own elaboration, 2019.)

Chi-Square Tests		Value	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square		41.026	0.002
Likelihood Ratio		45.119	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association		20.972	0.000
N of Valid Cases		642	-
Symmetric Measures		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.253	0.002
	Cramer's V	0.146	0.002
N of Valid Cases		642	-

Table 7. Eta coefficient: Difference in the emotions felt when dismissing employees between various generational groups. (Source: own elaboration, 2019.)

Directional Measures		Value
Eta Coefficient	How would you rate your emotions felt as a dismissed/released employee on a scale of 1–7? Dependent	0.207

Table 8. Additional testing of the difference in emotions felt when dismissing employees between various generational groups. (Source: own compilation, 2019.)

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.232	-	-	0.019
	Cramer's V	0.134	-	-	0.019
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	0.135	0.041	3.139	0.002
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	0.141	0.043	3.258	0.001
N of Valid Cases		529	-	-	-

The relationship has also been tested for linear relationships between two ordinal variables (Spearman's Rho), since individual generations can be ranked by age, and the assessment of emotions felt can also be ranked in a 6-degree scale after deleting the "none" emotions felt option. The result of the test showed that the older the generation of employees was, the more they rate the emotions felt for their dismissal as negative (Spearman's Rho = 0.141). We do not reject Hypothesis 1, and it can be declared that there are differences in the emotions felt between different generational groups.

Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant relation in the emotions felt between dismissed employees and their colleagues. Determining the second hypothesis, we have contemplated that the redundancies are not only annoying for the dismissed employees but also for their colleagues. For evaluation of the second research hypothesis, the respondents' answers to the questions about dismissal and emotions felt when their colleagues were released are presented. The results can be seen in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2 shows that most respondents reported that they had annoying emotions felt when they were dismissed (very annoying = 89 respondents and annoying = 85 respondents) overall, 37.1% of respondents. Surprisingly several respondents reported relief (big relief = 37 and relief = 57 respondents) in total 27.93% of respondents. It follows that almost 1/3 of respondents, despite the generally unpleasant situation of job loss, felt relieved.

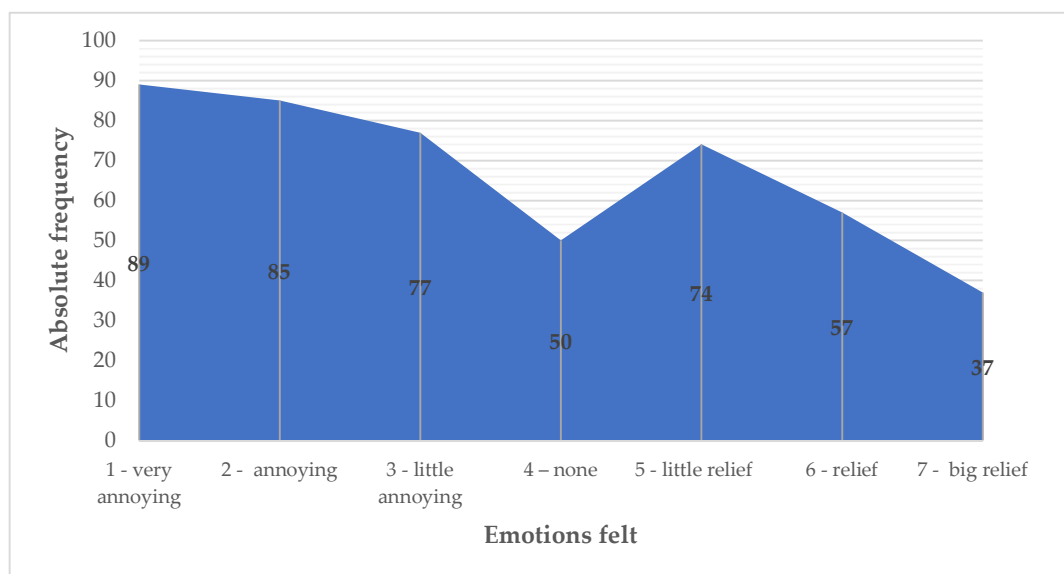


Figure 2. Emotions felt by dismissed employees. (Source: own elaboration, 2019.)



Figure 3. Emotions felt by colleagues of dismissed employees. (Source: own elaboration, 2019).

Figure 3 shows the respondents' responses to the emotions felt when their colleague was dismissed. It can be seen from the results that up to 57 respondents reported that they had felt very annoying emotions, and 165 respondents had felt annoying emotions (total 48.79%). In contrast, only 4 respondents reported that they felt a big relief and 12 respondents felt relief (total 3.52%). For rejecting/non rejecting the second hypothesis, the authors have used the Spearman correlation test; the results can be seen in the Table 9.

The result of the non-parametric Spearman correlation test proved that there was a moderate relation between the dismissed employee's emotions felt (when he or she was released) and the emotions felt when his or her colleague was released. These variables correlate at $r_s = 0.340$ at the $p < 0.001$ signification level, which has reached the desired level and, therefore, we do not reject this hypothesis and it can be declared that there is a moderate correlation between the tested variables.

Hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant relation in the emotions felt between dismissed employees and their supervisors. We have compared the respondents' answers to the questions about

dismissal and emotions felt as superiors in dismissing employees. The comparison can be seen in Figure 2 (see above) and Figure 4.

Table 9. Testing the relation in the emotions felt between dismissed employees and their colleagues. (Source: own elaboration, 2019).

Test—Spearman's rho		How Would You Rate Your Emotions Felt as a Dismissed/Released Employee on a Scale of 1–7?	How Would You Rate Your Emotions Felt as a Colleague of a Dismissed Employee on a Scale of 1–7?
How would you rate your emotions felt as a dismissed/released employee on a scale of 1–7?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.340 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.000
	N	469	455
How would you rate your emotions felt as a colleague of dismissed employee on a scale of 1–7?	Correlation Coefficient	0.340 **	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	-
	N	455	469

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

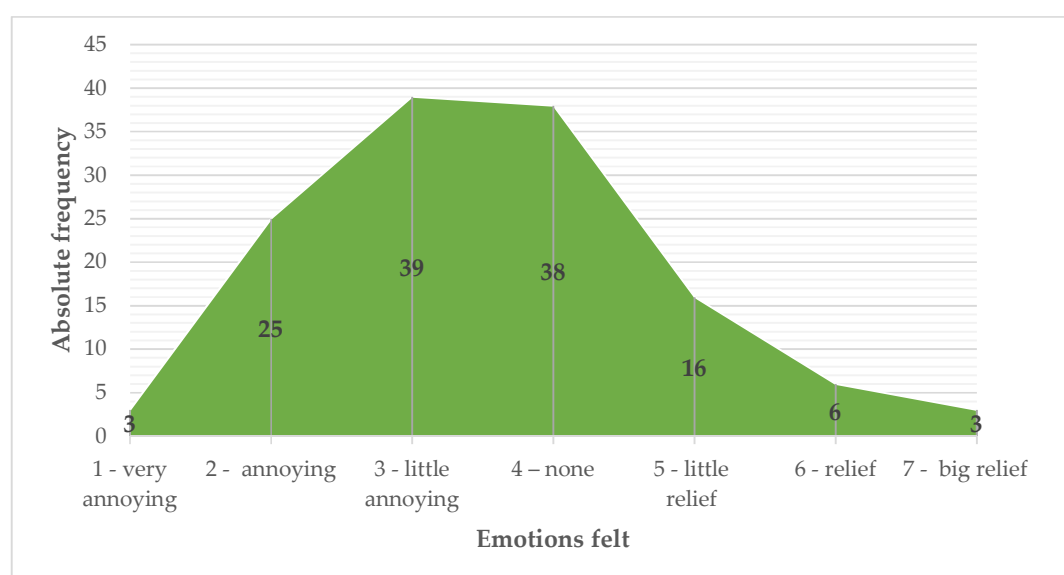


Figure 4. Emotions felt by superiors of dismissed employees. (Source: own elaboration, 2019).

The most numerous reported emotions felt by superiors of dismissed employees were 3—little annoying—followed by option 4—none. However, only 6 respondents who were in the position of superiors of redundant employees felt relief and big relief (3). In order to reject or to not reject the third research hypothesis, we proceeded to the test the hypothesis using the Spearman correlation test, the results can be seen in the Table 10.

Table 10. Testing the relation in the emotions felt between dismissed employees and superiors of redundant employees. (Source: own elaboration, 2019).

Test—Spearman's rho		How Would You Rate Your Emotions Felt as a Dismissed/Released Employee on a Scale of 1–7?	How Would You Rate Your Emotions Felt as Superiors of Redundant Employees on a Scale of 1–7?
How would you rate your emotions felt as a dismissed/released employee on a scale of 1–7?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.065
	N	469	469
How would you rate your emotions felt as superiors of redundant employees on a scale of 1–7?	Correlation Coefficient	0.085	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.065	-
	N	469	133

The result of the non-parametric Spearman correlation test showed that there was no relation between the emotions felt by dismissed employees and their superiors on their dismissal. These variables correlate at $r_s = 0.085$ with a $p < 0.065$, which did not reach the desired level and, therefore, we rejected the hypothesis, as the test proved no significant relation between the variables.

Hypothesis 4: Less than 30% of redundant employees were provided with outplacement programs. We used quantitative statistical methods to reject or not to reject the hypothesis. When evaluating the results, only responses of respondents who confirmed that in the past there were in redundancies were considered (Table 11).

Table 11. Provided outplacement programs with reference to industrial enterprises employees. (Source: own elaboration, 2019).

Provided Outplacement	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency [%]
1—No	188	71.26
2—Yes	76	28.74
Total	264	100.00

In the Table 11 can be seen that 71.26% of respondents (188 respondents) stated that they were not provided with any form of outplacement program. Only 76 respondents (28.74%) reported that the employer provided them with an outplacement program when being dismissed. We do not reject hypothesis. Finally, it can be assumed, that less than 30% of redundant employees of industrial enterprises were provided with outplacement programs.

Hypothesis 5: There is a statistically significant relation between the use of outplacement programs and the identified serviceability of outplacement programs. The absolute and relative frequencies of respondents' responses are in the Table 12.

Table 12. Perceived potential serviceability of outplacement programs with reference to employees of industrial enterprises. (Source: own elaboration, 2019).

	Describe Parameters		Dismissed/ Released	Never Dismissed/Released	Total
If your employer would provide an outplacement support when dismissal, would it help you to find a new job?	Certainly yes, I would accept such possibility	Count % within recrec2	139 27.9%	28 17.0%	167 25.2%
	Probably yes	Count % within recrec2	148 29.7%	49 29.7%	197 29.7%
	Do not know	Count % within recrec2	104 20.8%	35 21.2%	139 20.9%
	Probably no	Count % within recrec2	50 10.0%	25 15.2%	75 11.3%
	Certainly no, I would refuse such a possibility	Count % within recrec2	54 10.8%	28 17.0%	82 39.5%
	Other possibility	Count % within recrec2	4 0.8%	0 0.0%	4 0.6%
	Count	499	165	664	-
	% within recrec2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	-

Table 12 shows that the interest in outplacement programs is mainly expressed by redundant employees, where respondents' responses to option "1—certainly yes, I would accept such a possibility" were at 27.9%; employees who have never been redundancies would have been interested in outplacement programs only in 17.0%. The option "probably yes" in the relative frequencies expressed both categories of respondents in 29.7% of responses. Only 10.8% of redundant respondents think that they would refuse such possibility. Moreover, the 17.3% of respondents from the category that were never redundant would not be interested in the assistance in the form of outplacement programs. To test the

fifth hypothesis, we have used the Chi-square test and the complementary Cramer test; the results can be seen in the Table 13.

Table 13. Testing received potential serviceability of outplacement programs with reference to of industrial enterprises employees. (Source: authors' compilation, 2019).

Chi-Square Tests		Value	Asymp. Sig. (2-Sided)
Pearson Chi-Square		14.176	0.028
Likelihood Ratio		15.164	0.019
Linear-by-Linear Association		0.254	0.614
N of Valid Cases		664	-
Symmetric Measures		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.146	0.028
	Cramer's V	0.146	0.028
N of Valid Cases		664	-

The differences between categories of employees who have been dismissed and those who have never been dismissed were confirmed by the test as statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Based on the value of a nonlinear relationship test (Cramer V = 0.146), we can confirm that between employees' perceived serviceability of outplacement programs in employee categories—dismissed/released and never dismissed/released—there is a relatively weak but statistically significant relationship. Therefore, it can be stated that employees who have been dismissed in the past perceive the serviceability of outplacement programs more positively than those who have never been released. The authors do not reject Hypothesis 5 and confirm that there is a difference in perception between the tested categories of employees.

4. Discussion

Care for employees at every stage of the employee's life cycle—and thus for redundancies—should be moved to the centre of human resource management so that corporate governance demonstrates social responsibility in specific situations. The way enterprises approach to redundancies and dismissal, affects how employees understand their job loss responsibility and the reasons for unemployment. Outplacement can thus positively influence the responses of redundant employees [84].

Outplacement programs can include various support, services and consultations. According to Aquilanti, a Leroux Integrated Model of Outplacement Counselling should involve four phases: loss, grieving, transition; personal development; job search; ongoing counselling and support [85]. The results of the present research proved that employees in industrial enterprises should realize the potential usefulness of outplacement programs. It is understandable that people who lost not just their earning security but a part of their life environment and opportunities for social interaction will welcome an opportunity to be encouraged and helped to orient themselves in a new situation. Support from a previous employer can increase the perception of employability for an employee. How a dismissed employee perceives his or her employability may be very important for his or her further action [86]. However, just few organizations currently provide some support to their employees when they leave or dismiss [32,80–83].

The results of the present research have also confirmed that outplacement programs are underutilized in companies, and only a small part of the redundant employees have been provided with any form of such program. The authors of the paper surely recommend to the industrial enterprises management to increase the care of their employees and to show a higher level of responsibility by providing this support, consulting and assistance in outplacement programs. The employers provide just little support and help to increase the chances of dismissed employees to be reemployed. They mostly rely on employees to take care of themselves or rely on state support [37]. This can be considered a disclaiming of the employer's responsibility for the effects of their decisions. Many employers

rely on the role of the state in supporting the search for new employment for dismissed employees, but it is important that they take their responsibilities and show interest in outgoing employees by encouraging them to find work and not relying on self-regulatory labour market mechanisms and the state responsibility. What is more, as discussed by Dunbar et al., corporate social responsibility, sustainable human resource management and outplacement provide employees with some safety. This may encourage employees to work harder and optimize risk taking [87].

Socio-demographic capacity relies (beside other factors) on population ageing in a district and the health of its population because these factors influence the ability and the possibility to respond to external shocks [88] such as redundancies in the region, which will contribute to increasing unemployment. It is important to respect age diversity beside other factors when pursuing the dismissal and the need to provide outplacement. As the level of an employee qualification increases with age, the rate of unemployment has been shown to be related to age and associated qualifications, thus decreasing with age [89]. Experience confirmed that employees participating in outplacement can find a new job faster [81,82]. From this point of view, the most vulnerable group is just young employees [90], which can be a serious social problem, especially for young people who have never been employed [91].

The results of the present research have shown that if redundancies occur especially the younger generation feels disadvantaged compared to older generations of employees. However, when processing the research results and the reasons for the dismissal of employees, it was not demonstrated that especially young employees, have been made redundant. The redundancies concern all generational groups of employees. Companies may set different criteria for redundancies. The research results have shown that employees usually do not know the reasons for their or their colleagues' dismissal. This may be due to their lack of interest or lack of transparent leadership management in the organization. If employees were able to state the reason for the redundancies, they reported the most often low performance of the dismissed employees. However, objective performance assessments require the establishment of clear, specific and measurable criteria that minimize subjective assessments of poor performance. Reduced performance may also be due not only to the incapacity or inability of the employee to deliver the desired performance but, for example, to a deterioration in living, family, or health conditions that may have been caused by his or her occupational exposure. This again opens the question of corporate social responsibility and the impact of its influence on stakeholders, such as the company's employees. As confirmed by Lorincová et al. and Papulová, employees themselves are an important factor for sustainability [92,93]. The objective criterion of dismissal may be the length of employment. However, the research results did not prove that this criterion is a priority since this was the least frequently mentioned option on the part of the redundant employees. Therefore, we recommend to the industrial enterprises to analyse the reasons for dismissal with respect to the different generational groups so that the human resource division of the enterprises can design and implement the right strategy for sustainable human resource management.

Determining the research questions and research hypotheses, the authors assumed that different generations of employees attribute different meanings to work and employment, and this aspect affects their feelings on dismissal. Each generation is in a different life phase, whether family life or career stage. They have different relationships with the employer and manage career changes differently. Donnely points out that the age of forty is the time in which reality, the reducing pyramid of the possibilities of facilitation, becomes a key issue, so it is just important to fulfil a career [94]. Given the desire to succeed, it can be assumed that people under forty tend more to change jobs if they are not satisfied. We assumed that the Generations of baby boomers and Generation X will rate their feelings of dismissal as more annoying than the younger generations of employees, Generations Y and Z. Indeed, the differences between responses and how respondents evaluated their dismissal emotions felt were proved by various generations of employees in the present research.

Work as value is not only an economic necessity but also a major element in defining personal identity that the work situation basis needs such as safety, belonging [95,96]. Loss of employment may

cause stress, especially in situations where termination is the result of redundancies or dismissal [97]. Surprisingly, a significant proportion of respondents manifested that they felt relief on leaving work. This result points out that, although loss of work is a very stressful event in human life [98] and many ex-employees, beside stress, feel annoyed, anxious, helpless and hopeless [37,42], in some cases, people feel relieved to be dismissed from this employment. The question remains, which unsatisfactory conditions or circumstances of the work caused the relief of its loss to outweigh the negative aspects of losing such an important part of the individual's life.

Another recommendation for management is to examine the impact on employee motivation and performance due to the dismissal on their colleagues and the variety of reasons that have affected the dismissal of employees. Paradoxically, the remaining fellow employees have mostly manifested annoying feelings about dismissing or releasing their colleagues. This implies that colleagues' solidarity and empathy are often higher than expected. Also, managers, when rating their emotions felt towards redundancies, have shown that this situation was felt by them as annoying but to a lesser extent than in the case of colleagues. It is certain that superiors cannot have a close relationship with their subordinates than their colleagues, and since they do not operate in equal positions, they do not feel this dismissal as something related to them. Also, for managers, the degree of responsibility arising from their work does not allow them to feel the same degree of empathy as those of colleagues of redundant employees. However, it has been confirmed that redundancies are a very sensitive and unpleasant issue and mostly uncomfortable and annoying for all stakeholders, dismissed employees themselves, their colleagues but also superiors. This confirms the usefulness of outplacement services. Outplacement is not only of help to dismissed employees but also to those who remain in the organization because they also cope better if they know that outgoing employees are provided with support in finding their future employment [99].

5. Conclusions

Overemployment is at a state when the company is usually in a long-term bad financial condition, caused by persistent decline in orders, great competitiveness, etc., a situation that often requires unpopular solutions. In the present research, we focused on the reasons for dismissing employees. Research results demonstrated that employees most often do not know the reasons for dismissal. This implies the need to use a transparent system of employee appraisal and open communication in organizations. From a sustainability perspective, it is important for management, even in difficult situations requiring dealing with redundancies, to approach this task carefully and responsibly. The experts in the literature declare there is underusing of outplacement programs in organizations. We can confirm that outplacement programs are used only to a small extent. We were able to quantify that it is less than 30%. Our research has shown that employees of industrial enterprises perceive the potential serviceability of outplacement programs strongly. Perceived serviceability of outplacement programs services confirms their usefulness in sustainable human resource management. It has been confirmed that employees who have previously been made redundant are interested more in outplacement programs. Outplacement programs can include various forms of support, active job search assistance, providing the technical equipment, expert human resource consultancy, counselling or consulting with psychologists to help clients cope with the challenging times, etc. This will make it possible to decrease the negative effects of a stressful situation, such as the loss of employment. Nevertheless, some, although a small number of employees, would refuse the possibility of outplacement. This can be considered as one of the disadvantages of outplacement. The reasons for rejection may vary, as the employees may not know about outplacement programs, or they may not want to have anything to do with their former employer. When assessing the perceived serviceability of outplacement, it is also important to consider the regional disparity factor. The development of the region and the capability of the workforce make it possible for employees, despite company provided outplacement, to reject the benefit provided.

One of the significant benefits of the paper is that we have considered the age diversity in the redundancies and outplacement. Research results did not confirm that some generation was significantly disadvantaged over others. What we have proven is that older generations of employees cope worse with their job loss, and their emotions felt are more annoying. When dismissing employees, the organization, especially for older employees, should focus on mitigating negative feelings and psychological support before providing other outplacement services. An evaluation of the emotions felt by redundant employees, their colleagues and supervisors has shown that the redundancies are unpleasant for all stakeholders. In addition, the redundancies proved to be unpleasant mainly for the remaining staff. Dismissed employees also declared feeling annoying emotions. Surprisingly, part of the dismissed employees declared relief on leaving the job. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that outplacement programs are also very important for all, dismissed employees, remaining employees and their superiors. Such support for outgoing employees can help remaining employees to accept the risks of staying in the organization. In further research, it would be also necessary to focus on demographic sensitivity in assessing the potential usefulness of outplacement programs, considering regional disparities, which potentially affect the interest of dismissed employees in outplacement programs.

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