
Proactive Attitude as an Element of the Strategy of Sustainable Development of Modern Companies in the Aspect of Occupational Safety

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Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to study the importance of the factors of the concept of sustainable development on proactive behavior in relation to the comprehensive management of OSH using the example of a selected company.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The article presents selected results and conclusions of the conducted research on the identification of factors stimulating the proactive attitude of the employee in the management of sustainable development of occupational safety. The research was conducted at a selected chemical manufacturing company. A traditional questionnaire survey (PAPI/CAVI) was used to conduct the study.

Findings: Based on the results obtained from the study, the following conclusions can be made: the proactive attitude of the employee with regard to occupational safety in the organization allows for better risk management in the organization; the involvement of employees within the framework of the adopted proactive attitude of employees in the context of the entire organization provides a basis for building mutual responsibility for overall safety; in terms of occupational safety, the proactive attitude is linked to the key factors of the strategy of sustainable development of modern companies.

Practical Implications: Used in the research process, the tool allows to find out what aspects need to be paid attention to in order to increase the proactive attitude in the company and, consequently, its security level. In addition, it can be used to compare individual departments within an organization among themselves - comparing the final result.

Originality/Value: The authors of the publication analyse the scientific literature and current own research on the importance of the factors of the concept of sustainable development on proactive behavior in relation to OSH management in the organization. They focus on the key areas of the subject of the research, which consist of the employee's proactive behavior and attitude, and the systemic approach to occupational safety management in relation to the basic factors of sustainable development.

Keywords: Proactive attitude, sustainable development, work safety development, safety management system.

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1. Introduction

Sustainable development is an extremely important concept nowadays, facing global problems related to human activity, the functioning of economies and societies regardless of their level of development. When building their image, companies are increasingly turning to sustainability initiatives. This is also one of the ways to strengthen employee loyalty and attachment to the organization (Czop and Leszczyńska, 2012).

The sustainability of organizations is a way of managing that simultaneously and equivalently takes into account economic, environmental and social issues related to their functioning. In practice, this means that a new quality of management should emerge in organizations following such a development path. With regard to social factors, it may concern, among other things, such aspects as a systemic approach to the management of employee safety and health, which is part of the company's overall management system, and the proactive attitude of employees as expressed by their commitment (Saks, 2006).

Both of these aspects facilitate the management of occupational safety risks in the organization, as well as provide support in controlling and minimizing health risks to employees and the organization's environment. In addition, employees themselves expect not only the assurance of job safety, but increasingly the need to identify with the organization, its goals and values (Borkowska, 2010).

Referring to social factors that include, among others, human rights, working conditions and employee health and safety, the authors see a clear need to address the problem contained in the article's topic. This is a priority in the management of worker safety due to the importance of the issue of employee safety and the concurrent problems associated with the implementation of the concept of sustainable development, which may have a variety of causes.

A preliminary assessment of the importance of the topic addressed indicates the value-added aspect seen in the promotion of physical and mental health protection among employees. In addition, the standards developed in the enterprise, supported by the right tools, help shape a high level of safety culture and strengthen the commitment and develop employee relations at various levels of the organization's

functioning. In the methodical improvement of occupational safety, the author sees an opportunity to introduce qualitative changes in the systemic management of the organization. This creates conditions for the implementation of mechanisms for the continuous improvement of work processes, which, for example, due to the type of activity of the enterprise, affect environmental factors.

These are related to waste management, energy consumption or biodiversity conservation, among others. At the center of this approach is placed the employee with his or her potential for competence, level of responsibility and degree of personal commitment (Croston, 2008).

The article presents selected results and conclusions of the conducted research on the identification of factors stimulating the proactive attitude of the employee, functioning within the framework of systemic management of occupational safety. The research was conducted in a chemical manufacturing company in Poland.

The purpose of the research was to obtain an answer to the question: *what factors in the organization stimulate the proactive attitude of the employee and contribute to raising the employee's personal commitment to improving work safety?* An attempt to answer the question posed and the conclusions obtained from the research made it possible to determine the importance of sustainability factors on proactive behavior in relation to comprehensive Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) management in the selected company.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sustainable Company Development Strategy and Occupational Safety Management

Important in terms of company sustainability is the provision of decent working conditions, which includes aspects such as adequate wages, occupational health and safety, respect for workers' rights and equal treatment. In 2015, 193 UN member states unanimously adopted a resolution entitled. "Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

As part of the resolution passed, the 2030 Agenda was adopted, which in its scope includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 related tasks. Both the goals and targets included in the Agenda directly address the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and Environmental (Hák *et al.*, 2016).

The introduced Agenda 2030 is Universal, horizontal and at a high level of implementation. With regard to the adopted goals that address the aforementioned dimensions of sustainable development, among others, Goal 8 on promoting stable, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all people was indicated.

In turn, analyzing the tasks indicated therein, we find issues directly related to occupational safety management, these are (Agenda, 2030):

- promoting development policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation,
- protecting labor rights and promoting a safe working environment for all workers, including migrant workers, especially migrant women and those in precarious employment.

Juxtaposing the assumptions of the sustainable development strategy and the current global challenges, which have reached a significant scale and level of complexity, it is necessary to try to solve them already at the level of a single organization. One of the areas of modern businesses affected by the importance of the sustainability strategy is the area of job security of employees.

Nowadays, in order to ensure effective management of the area of occupational safety and employee health, improvement activities play an important role (Zieja and Golda, 2014; Yazdi *et al.*, 2020). Constantly changing conditions in the work environment and the emergence of new risk factors make effective management of employee safety and health even more important.

Emerging accidental events negatively affect the injured and their families, but also affect the image of the company, additionally generating costs due to, among other things, the need to stop work due to employee absenteeism, the deployment of more people to work, but also damage to property, such as machinery and equipment (Rzepecki, 2012; Górny, 2017). In addition, the consequences of occupational accidents also have a significant economic dimension (Rzepecki, 2012).

In practice, although the costs of occupational accidents are borne by the institution of a particular country, they are entirely transferred to society. It should be noted that, most often, the causes and circumstances of the occupational accidents that have occurred are due to improper working conditions and employee behavior. In addition to the aforementioned accidents, the consequences of improper working conditions and the presence of hazards at the workplace include occupational diseases and other work-related illnesses, as well as reduced productivity (Wolnica *et al.*, 2018).

In order to achieve the desired results in the area of ensuring a safe work environment, ISO 45001:2018 standard recommends that the processes taking place in the organization be monitored, measured and analyzed. The primary purpose of control (monitoring) of occupational health and safety is to check, on an ongoing and periodic basis, the compliance of carried out activities and their results with predetermined requirements (Zamajtyś, 2020). Proper implementation of the monitoring process is made possible by establishing appropriate orders or procedures.

It therefore becomes crucial to determine throughout the systemic management process:

- what should be monitored and how,
- when measurements and analyses will be carried out,
- with what methods and tools the measurement and evaluation of results will be carried out,
- when, how and to whom the results of monitoring will be communicated.

From the perspective of an enterprise's operations, monitoring behavior and commitment as part of a proactive attitude, in systemic management of occupational safety, is not an easy task. Appropriate actions aimed at improving the enterprise, particularly the conditions of the working environment, are taken much more often in those enterprises that have implemented various management systems than in those that have not (Pawłowska and Ordyński, 2013).

The process of improvement should consider all activities whose impact on the effectiveness of occupational safety management is not only the greatest, but also extends to all employees. On this basis, it is now assumed that in the process of managing occupational safety, the basic pillar of improvement is the proactive attitude of the employee, and the actions taken by him are a guarantee of success in achieving the goals set in the organization (Kubasiński, 2024).

In addition, the standards developed in the company, supported by the right tools, help to shape a high level of safety culture and strengthen the commitment and develop relationships of employees at various levels of the organization.

2.2 Reactive Approach in Occupational Safety Management

Today, companies are struggling to find the right solutions that will translate into improvements in specific areas of their operations. They aim to increase their efficiency while reducing their own costs. Modern enterprises usually apply a systemic approach to improving health and safety management processes (Gajdzik, 2010). The structure of the occupational safety and health management system is the same as other management systems, e.g., quality, environmental, information security. It includes elements that determine the effectiveness of achieving the intended results. These include (Górny, 2017):

- top management involvement,
- formation of health and safety policies,
- planning the structure of the system and its implementation,
- implementation and operation,
- checking, and taking improvement actions (corrective and preventive),
- review performed by management.

Improving the operation of an enterprise is impossible without the introduction of standards. It can be added that the existence of standards is a condition for continuous improvement, the realization of the postulates of quality and efficiency (Kubasiński and Slawińska, 2019). Systems on occupational health and safety management appeared in enterprises after the implementation of quality management systems and after environmental management systems.

Activities, like standards, to improve occupational safety and improve working conditions are constantly evolving. New organizational, management, control tools, etc. are being implemented. Both direct tools for improving working conditions, such as auditing, material investment, transfer of modern technology, etc., and indirect tools, consisting of organizational and procedural measures, employee awareness management, building employee involvement, training, motivation and communication systems, are used.

In an effort to continuously improve the solutions adopted to protect the safety and health of workers, attention should be paid first and foremost to the need to improve occupational safety and health management systems, the primary goal of which is to continuously improve the performance of the in this area. In particular, it is important to prevent accidents at work and work-related illnesses and ensure healthy and safe workplaces. Of key importance in this process are standards and norms that capture occupational safety management issues in a systemic manner, facilitating the implementation of measures leading to improved working conditions.

Traditional occupational safety management is based on improvement activities of an *a posteriori* nature, which can most simply be understood as “after the fact” or “following the fact.” In this perception and nature of meaning, we seek answers to the question “what went wrong?” (as a result of, among other things, accident analysis) and possibly “what could have gone wrong?” (as a result of an occupational risk assessment) (Pęciłło-Pacek and Galwas-Grześkiewicz, 2022). Corrective actions are usually taken as a result of an increasing trend in total accident rates or by accident category (severe, collective, fatal). In this case, we speak of a reactive approach in occupational safety management.

In practice, depending on the type of data used, three security management strategies are distinguished: reactive, proactive and predictive (Szymanek, 2015). The reactive approach within the adopted strategy is that actions are taken in response to the occurrence of events with significant consequences. T. Ewertowski and his team state that the basic principle of a reactive strategy is to analyse adverse events that have occurred in the past: disaster, failure, accident (Ewertowski *et al.*, 2020).

Following this, corrective actions (reactions) are triggered (Ewertowski and Kubasiński, 2021). An example of a technique used in a reactive strategy is the investigation of accidents with severe consequences for life, health, property and the environment. The reactive approach in occupational safety management is primarily

used in the following situations (Ewertowski *et al.*, 2020):

- when a company uses old safety management systems in which the data necessary for proactive management are not available
- and predictive management,
- in response to adverse events with significant consequences,
- in the case of threats that arise suddenly in the operational environment.

A reactive approach to process management in a company is very disruptive. It does not achieve the desired goal and prevents finding solutions to improve processes. In addition, a reactive attitude is associated with many negative emotions. The feeling of being responsible for failure triggers frustration, stress, anger or perpetual dissatisfaction in employees.

This manifests itself in frequent complaining, making it very difficult to establish good relationships with co-workers or those around them. A reactive employee fails to see that the problem lies with him and not with the reality around him, which, among other things, reduces the effective work of the entire team.

2.3 Proactive Approach in Occupational Safety Management

According to researchers (Ben Eli, 2018; Li and Guldenmund, 2018; Zio, 2018; Kubasiński, 2022), the modern departure in managing the area of occupational safety and worker health should be characterized by a systems approach in its management and proactive measures. The attitude of an organization that treats employee health and safety on an equal footing with other areas of its business demonstrates its maturity and mindset (Chomątowska, 2011).

This approach is the key to achieving an adequate level of employee health protection, while maintaining the employer's obligation to provide safe and healthy working conditions. Therefore, an important role in promoting and implementing occupational safety management systems is played by ISO 45001:2018 standard, which provides requirements and guidelines for its application to enable organizations to proactively improve their occupational safety and health performance.

The aim of the standard is to support and promote good practices and standards in the area of occupational safety, while balancing with economic needs. The provisions of ISO 45001 place great emphasis on employee participation in the implementation of ensuring safe working conditions in the company.

The involvement and role of non-managers, according to the ISO 45001 guidelines, are considered an essential condition for the successful operation of a company's occupational safety management system. The fundamental changes we note with respect to previous occupational safety and health standards are as follows (ISO

45001):

- consideration of the organization's context in safety management,
- consideration of risks and opportunities relating to both employees, other stakeholders and the organization itself (e.g., reputational damage, impact on business continuity) in the planning of the safety management system,
- increasing the role of leadership and the importance of security management through integration with business processes (e.g., design and development, procurement, human resources, sales and marketing),
- expansion of communication requirements,
- greater emphasis on planning for change by reviewing the consequences, among other things,
- employee participation with regard to: mechanisms for their consultation and participation; identification of hazards and risk assessment; actions to control hazards and risks; identification of competency requirements, training needs, training and their evaluation,
- involve employees in consultations on: identifying stakeholder needs and expectations; establishing a health and safety policy; assigning organizational roles, duties, responsibilities and authority; determining how to meet legal and other requirements; defining safety goals; determining applicable supervisory elements with respect to subcontractors; ensuring a continuous improvement process.

Management of a safe workplace in an company is based on the assumption that safe employee behavior, as well as safe working conditions, do not arise spontaneously, but are the result of a previously developed and implemented schedule of activities.

Therefore, it should be assumed that in the effective management of safety in the organization, an important role is played by a proactive approach (both in terms of the individual - the employee, as well as the entire enterprise) and improvement activities. Actions that an organization can take to ensure a safe workplace taking into account the guidelines derived from ISO 45001 should be directed at stimulating a proactive approach in all areas of the organization's operation (Kubasiński, 2022).

The proactive approach stems from the organization's security strategy. A proactive organization is one that places the greatest emphasis on long-term strategic planning. Organizations that have adopted the goal of being proactive gain many advantages, both business-wise and in terms of dealing with potential problems in the area of workplace safety. In the most general terms, safety strategy is defined as a set of rules for resource-related activities, which are of a different nature.

A strategic approach to the management of the area of occupational safety is associated not only with the adaptation of the enterprise to the requirements of legal regulations and normative acts. Such an approach, is a kind of management

philosophy, on the basis of which activities are carried out aimed at achieving carefully considered goals based on safety (Woźny *et al.*, 2018).

Companies need committed, proactive employees to grow, who will identify with the company and treat it as their own (Sasin, 2015). Proactive individuals undertake to change the organization's mission, detect and remove difficulties, influence the world around them, and create conditions in the social environment for effective action (Crant and Bateman, 2000; Bańka, 2015). Such employees are, therefore, a valuable resource for the organization. They initiate change, anticipate certain events in the environment in which they function on a daily basis, and propose solutions.

Proactivity can be considered at the individual, team, and organizational levels (Parker *et al.*, 2006). A proactive attitude can mean both openly sharing one's ideas, getting involved in the development of the position and making innovative changes in the area of the whole company.

Cybal-Michalska defines a proactive attitude as an attitude of anticipating, acting in advance, and inducing changes in the environment in order to minimize the effects of unforeseen difficulties (Cybal-Michalska, 2014). Unfortunately, in practice, not all employees willingly undertake such activities.

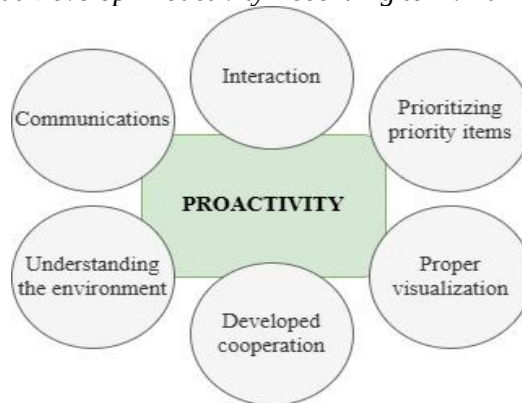
There are many factors contributing to such a condition, which may be due to both the environment in which the employee finds himself and his own attitudes and motivations.

So how and taking into account what factors can the conditions for a proactive attitude of the employee be built in the company? Looking for an answer to the question posed, the ISO 45001 standard comes to our aid, and more specifically the individual requirements and guidelines contained therein.

Among other things, the standard indicates activities in which: it is required that the employer ensure the participation of employees, it is required to model an adequate communication system taking into account the opinions of stakeholders (ISO 45001).

In addition, factors that complement the conditions for the development of an employee's proactive attitude and the formation of certain habits (Figure 1), based on the requirements of ISO 45001, we can include: awareness, shared responsibility, competence and motivation.

Taking initiatives and, consequently, specific actions in the organization, as part of a proactive attitude, is not possible without the involvement of all units functioning in the company. Therefore, such an important role is played by the employee himself, who is a common element of all management subsystems that function in the organization (Kubasiński, 2020).

Figure 1. Habits that Develop Proactivity According to H. Paliwal

Source: Own study based on: Paliwal, 2018.

3. Research Methodology

On the basis of observations of the working environment in companies that are diverse in terms of industry and size, and taking into account environmental and social sustainability issues, it was decided to conduct a study in a chemical manufacturing company. The surveyed company has a health and safety management system in place and is perceived in the region as a good employer that complies with regulatory requirements.

The purpose of the survey was to try to answer the problem question posed concerning the identification of those factors in the organization that stimulate the proactive attitude of the employee and contribute to raising the employee's personal commitment to improving occupational safety. The data collection procedure was carried out from May 20, 2024 to May 30, 2024. A total of 72 questionnaires were obtained. The structure of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Features of survey respondents

Characteristics		Company			
		Distribution		Total	
		N	%	N	%
Company size	Medium	1	100	1	100
Form of business activity	Manufacture	1	100	1	100
Age group of respondents	18-30	12	17	12	17
	31-50	50	69	50	69
	50+	10	14	10	14
Job experience of respondents	1-5	24	33	24	33
	6-10	36	50	36	50
	11+	12	17	12	17
Position of respondents	Managers	13	18	13	18
	Workers	59	82	59	82

Source: Authors own study.

A traditional survey (PAPI/CAVI) was used to conduct the survey. The survey form was developed in Microsoft Word and then transferred to Google Form. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions, each rated on a five-point Likert-type scale. When answering the questions, respondents chose from the following options:

- 1 - Definitely not,
- 2 - Rather not,
- 3 - I have no opinion,
- 4 - Rather yes,
- 5 - Definitely yes.

The content of the questions and the results obtained are shown in Table 3 in the survey research results section.

4. Research Results

The study used a survey of employees of a manufacturing company. Table 2 shows statements describing employees' potential for a proactive attitude.

Table 2. *Evaluation of the studied elements of the employee's potential concerning the proactive attitude*

No.	Rated Item	Mean	SD
1	I am committed to my work	3.33	0.52
2	In my workplace, I feel the need to make changes that can improve the functioning of my environment	3.51	0.57
3	When I encounter a problem, while at work, I actively seek help from others	3.65	0.80
4	I try to take an active part in health and safety meetings by expressing my suggestions about work	3.49	0.79
5	I make my comments related to inconsistencies and hazards I see in the workplace	3.38	0.48
6	While doing my job, I am aware of the hazards (dangerous situations) that may arise in the workplace	4.26	0.47
7	In my workplace, I am afraid to take action that seeks change	3.81	0.76
8	My involvement in the workplace is based not only on active speaking, but also on active listening	3.72	0.72
9	In my workplace, I allow others to take the lead in solving problems	3.74	0.68
10	I am willing to get involved in helping others solve problems	3.99	0.53

Source: Authors own study.

Table 2 shows the results of the survey in terms of the outcome criterion of each question.

The study used a survey of employees of a medium-sized manufacturing company. Table 3 shows the characteristics of the results regarding the answers to the

questions on the surveys conducted.

Table 3. Survey results on employee potential in proactive attitude

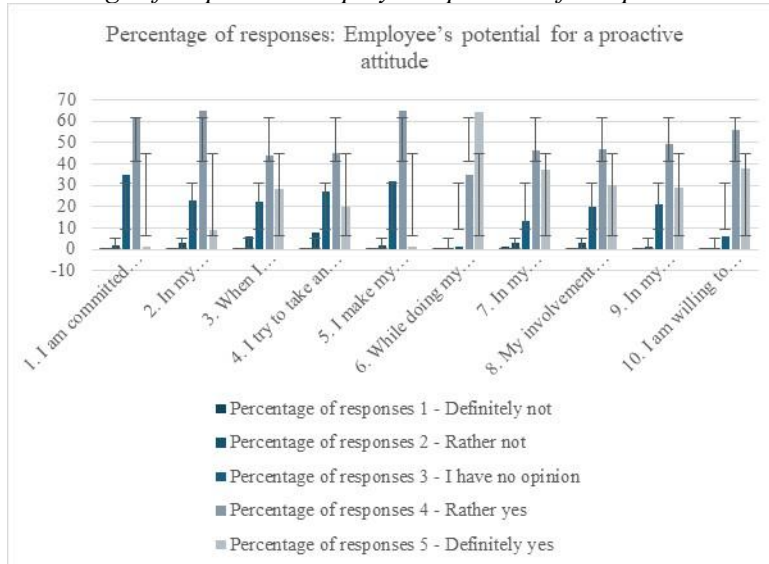
No.	Employee's potential for a proactive attitude	Percentage of responses				
	Question	1 - Definitely not	2 - Rather not	3 - I have no opinion	4 - Rather yes	5 - Definitely yes
1	I am committed to my work	0	2	35	62	1
2	In my workplace, I feel the need to make changes that can improve the functioning of my environment	0	3	23	65	9
3	When I encounter a problem, while at work, I actively seek help from others	0	6	22	44	28
4	I try to take an active part in health and safety meetings by expressing my suggestions about work	0	8	27	45	20
5	I make my comments related to inconsistencies and hazards I see in the workplace	0	2	32	65	1
6	While doing my job, I am aware of the hazards (dangerous situations) that may arise in the workplace	0	0	1	35	64
7	In my workplace, I am afraid to take action that seeks change	1	3	13	46	37
8	My involvement in the workplace is based not only on active speaking, but also on active listening	0	3	20	47	30
9	In my workplace, I allow others to take the lead in solving problems	0	1	21	49	29
10	I am willing to get involved in helping others solve problems	0	0	6	56	38
No.	Implementation of health and safety goals	Percentage of responses				
	Question	1 - Definitely not	2 - Rather not	3 - I have no opinion	4 - Rather yes	5 - Definitely yes
11	The safety goals set at the company are communicated to all employees	0	0	9	47	44
12	Objectives related to the area of safety, at individual workplaces, are consistent with the	0	0	28	55	17

	company's objectives					
13	The goals set take into account the legal requirements that apply to the company in the area of health and safety	0	0	14	69	17
14	In my enterprise, the objectives are verified on the basis of periodic reviews of equipment, infrastructure and other resources necessary for the operation of the organization	0	0	9	74	17
15	In my enterprise, the OSH objectives set take into account the results of consultations with employees	0	0	32	55	13
16	I have clearly defined goals for the work I am doing	0	0	0	37	63
17	My goals for the work being performed are monitored and reviewed periodically for any discrepancies	0	0	10	56	34
18	The established goals related to the safety area are achievable for me	0	0	0	46	54
19	If discrepancies are found on the job that relate to my goals, changes are made	0	0	14	60	26
20	In my company, the goals adopted affect my health and safety (e.g., reducing noise at the workplace, purchasing new machinery, etc.).	0	0	3	46	51

Source: Authors own study.

Chart 1 shows the percentage distribution of respondents' answers to questions about employees' potential for a proactive attitude.

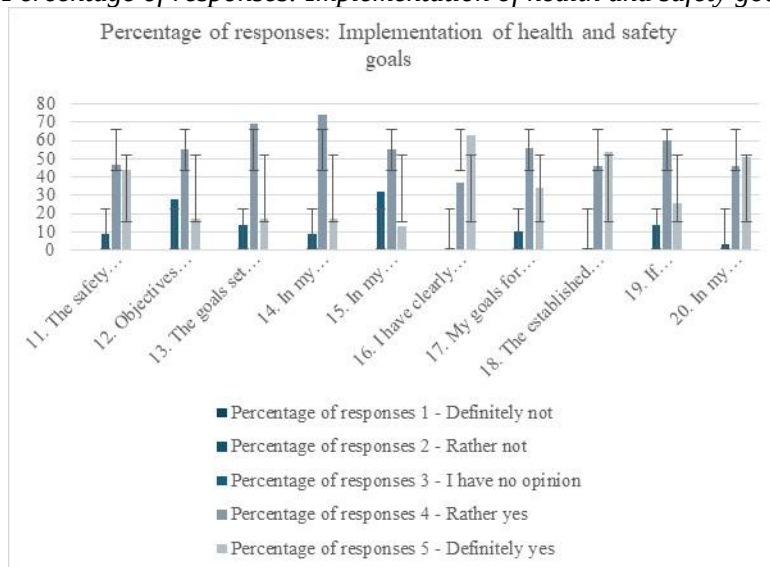
Chart 1. *Percentage of responses: Employee's potential for a proactive attitude*



Source: Authors own study.

Analyzing Chart 1, it should be noted that in the answers given by respondents, only one question had extreme answers. This concerned question 7. In this part of the survey, respondents in as many as seven out of 10 questions indicated a “Rather yes” answer, and this was the most frequently selected answer. This is important information from the point of view of the research procedure and further inference of individual questions.

Chart 2. *Percentage of responses: Implementation of health and safety goals*



Source: Authors own study.

Chart 2, on the other hand, shows the percentage distribution of responses regarding the implementation of health and safety goals in the company. In this part of the questionnaire, respondents doped in any of the questions indicated answers: “Definitely not” and “Rather not.” By inference, it should be concluded that in the company under review, top managers take seriously the development of occupational health and safety policy, which is based on the setting and implementation of specific objectives.

5. Discussion

The survey targeted both employee and management personnel of a medium-sized chemical manufacturing company. It provided an opportunity to analyze the overall picture of employee potential regarding proactive attitude and provide a preliminary answer to the problem question posed: *What factors in the organization stimulate the employee's proactive attitude and contribute to raising the employee's personal commitment to improving workplace safety?*

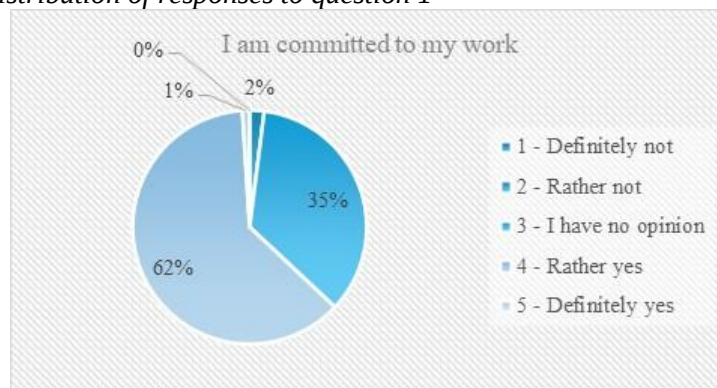
The results obtained can be analyzed both in terms of the individual employee and in relation to the organization in terms of achieving the adopted goals. The presented tool allows managers to find out what aspects they need to pay attention to in order to increase the proactive attitude and, consequently, the level of safety of the organization.

As part of the survey, information was obtained on employees' potential for a proactive attitude. Information was also obtained relating to specific management areas and the safety strategy adopted. The data obtained also provides the main scope of information regarding the identification of factors that stimulate an employee to adopt a proactive attitude.

In addition, the data obtained can be used for further analysis and possible action in the area of the adopted management strategy. With regard to the analysis of the results in Table 2, in the section of the questionnaire on "Employee's potential for a proactive attitude", the following are the main conclusions regarding the assessment of respondents.

Question No. 1: I am committed to my work.

Chart 3. *Distribution of responses to question 1*



Source: Authors own study.

The first statement referred to employees' commitment to their work. In answering the indicated question, 62% of respondents said that "rather yes," they are committed to their work. In contrast, 35% of respondents said they did not have a clear opinion on this issue (Chart 3). Analyzing the responses obtained, it should be emphasized that people within the framework of a proactive attitude do not stop at achieving difficult tasks, but focus more on changes that affect other people's perspective. Much greater commitment is manifested not through the number of tasks completed, but rather they focus on their quality (going beyond responsibilities, stereotypes, etc.).

Question No. 2: In my workplace, I feel the need to make changes that can improve the functioning of my environment.

A proactive attitude is characterized by an employee's special commitment to certain activities, but also a desire to make positive changes in his environment. Taking this into account, a significant majority of respondents confirmed such a need (65%), indicating “rather yes.” Proactive people take actions that lead to change, and if they do not have such resources, they try to transform situations so as to achieve the desired goal.

Question No. 3: When I encounter a problem, during work, I actively seek help from others.

Another statement evaluated by respondents was about actively seeking help from others when an employee encounters a problem while at work. A significant proportion of respondents confirmed undertaking such activities in the company: 44% “rather yes” and 28% “definitely yes.” It should be noted, however, that the question concerned only the fact of undertaking such activity, it does not refer to its manner, and it is not possible to obtain information on which group of employees the respondents turn to.

Question No. 4: I try to take an active part in health and safety meetings by expressing my suggestions about the work.

The next question assessed by respondents referred to the active involvement of employees and their participation in HandS meetings by expressing their suggestions about the work. Nearly 70% of respondents answered the question in the affirmative, indicating “rather yes” and “definitely yes” and the fact of active participation in organized meetings. In contrast, one in four of those asked could not specify and chose the answer “i have no opinion“. Less than 10% of respondents negated the fact of activity in organized meetings.

Question No. 5: I report my comments related to incompatibilities and hazards I perceive in the workplace.

Chart 4. Distribution of responses to question 5



Source: Authors own study.

The fifth question assessed by respondents referred to reporting their comments related to discrepancies and hazards they perceive in the workplace. More than 65% of respondents confirmed taking this action (Chart 4). It should be noted that such initiative is more possible by using different types of communication channels for this purpose. In this case, the surveyed company has a system of understandable feedback developed and implemented for communicating lessons learned in the process of recording employee reports.

Question No. 6: While doing my job, I am aware of the hazards (dangerous situations) that can occur in the workplace.

In ensuring a safe workplace, among other things, the employee's awareness of the dangers in the workplace plays a big role. Ensuring proper working conditions in the company, but also developing the awareness of employed people who can understand the value, results in a maximum reduction in accidental incidents. Another statement evaluated by respondents referred to their awareness of the dangers that can occur in the workplace. The overwhelming number of responses received from respondents confirmed the fact that they are aware of the dangers present in the place where they perform their work: 64% answered "definitely yes" and 35% "rather yes." Based on the responses, it can be concluded that this state can be influenced by various actions taken by the company. These include the organization of additional training and instruction, as well as a system of control of health and safety matters that is not forced and is based on the employee's reflex reactions to perceived inconsistencies.

Question No. 7: In my workplace, I am afraid to take action that seeks change.

The next statement assessed by respondents concerned employees' fear of taking actions that aim at change. Not quite half (46%) of respondents indicated a "rather yes" answer in this case. What is particularly significant in this case, analyzing the answers given by the respondents, is the fact regarding such a choice, in relation to question 2, in terms of feeling the need to make changes that can improve the functioning of the employee's environment. It should be recognized that the desire to make changes is not equivalent to the employee taking specific actions.

Question No. 8: My involvement in the workplace is based not only on active speaking, but also on active listening.

Effective communication in a professional setting, is based on the principle of active listening. With regard to employee engagement through the lens of workplace communication, the next statement assessed by respondents was that their engagement in the workplace is based not only on active speaking, but also on active listening. For this statement, nearly half (47%) of respondents indicated a "rather yes" response, and nearly one in three (30%) "definitely yes." Referring to the responses received from respondents, it should be emphasized that the ability to communicate effectively and listen actively are important in a professional setting.

Question No 9: In my workplace, I allow others to take the lead in solving problems.

An employee, as part of a proactive attitude, does not focus only on himself. He initiates actions acting in a spirit of positive benefit to others as well. This has an impact on creating a good climate in the workplace, and also shapes positive relationships between co-workers. In question nine, nearly half (49%) of respondents confirmed this fact by indicating a “rather yes” answer. Analyzing the results on the basis of the responses received, it should be noted that proactive people are characterized by constant trying also from the perspective of risk and responsibility.

Question No. 10: I am willing to get involved in helping others solve problems.

The last statement of the questionnaire, in the employee potential section, referred to the personal involvement of employees in helping others when a problem needs to be solved. More than half (56%) of respondents confirmed this fact by indicating a “rather yes” response, and a large majority of the remainder (38%) “definitely yes.” Proactive employees learn from their mistakes because they see opportunities for growth. They try to translate their experience into improving the environment they are in, including helping others.

6. Limitation of the Study

The survey conducted for the purpose of the article should be regarded as a preliminary stage of establishing dependencies in relation to the subject of its topic. The presented tool allows you to find out what aspects you need to pay attention to in order to increase the proactive attitude and, consequently, the level of security of the organization.

In addition, it can be used to compare different departments within an organization among themselves - comparing the final result.

7. Conclusions

An employee's proactive attitude toward workplace safety in the organization allows for better risk management, which directly translates into a reduction in the number of accident incidents and contributes to increased employee awareness of hazards and their consequences. In addition, the company obtains an increase in the number of reported incidents and benefits from implemented corrective actions, contributing to the elimination of similar situations in the future.

The purpose of the study conducted and the analysis of its results, was to obtain the necessary information in the area of the problem posed in the article, i.e. the triggers for adopting a proactive attitude of the employee. Following this, it is possible to identify the conditions for the development of an employee's proactive attitude in the company to which they belong:

- employee awareness,
- employee involvement,

- leadership and commitment of senior management,
- shared responsibility,
- communication,
- consultation and employee participation.

And with regard to the adopted purpose of the article, i.e., to study the importance of the factors of the concept of sustainable development on proactive behavior in relation to comprehensive management of HandS, it can be said that they are convergent and related. In the company under study, undoubtedly, the importance of sustainability factors on proactive behavior is most evident with regard to the issue of the social and environmental factor.

Thus, for example, the basic aspect of risk reduction and loss minimization in the organization in the concept of sustainability is directly related to risk management related to occupational safety. Employee involvement related to reporting non-conformities and hazards they perceive in the workplace as part of the proactive attitude adopted contributes precisely to risk reduction.

Another identical factor of the sustainability concept, which has a bearing on proactive behavior, is the environmental factor. Due to the nature and specificity of the company's business (chemical industry), it relates to the issue of employee awareness and the way they behave in the work environment. Moreover, the employee's rights, working conditions, as well as health and safety are common elements of the concept of sustainability.

On this basis, we can conclude that in the aspect of occupational safety, a proactive attitude is one of the elements of the strategy of sustainable development of modern enterprises.

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