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## Organizational environment factors and the work of individuals serving sentences of imprisonment

**Abstract:** This article focuses on the issue of undertaking work by individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the context of organizational environment factors in the model developed by M. Leiter. This model addresses the following factors: workload, sense of control, rewards, community support, sense of fairness and values. Presented here are the results of a study conducted in penitentiary units among working individuals serving sentences of imprisonment. The obtained results indicate that the knowledge of organizational factors responsible for the social climate of the workplace may be meaningful for the effectiveness of the process of social readaptation of convicts working there.

**Key words:** prison labor, working life, organizational environment factors, social readaptation of convicts.

### Introduction

Understanding organizational factors allows for identification of sources of work efficiency, such as the number of working hours, shift work, and rules and regulations at work. Some positions carry exceptional emotional absorption, which can be the cause of many problematic situations in the workplace (Fengler, 2000). This research focuses on six organizational factors, namely workload, sense of control at work (autonomy), perceived organizational support (rewards) and community support at work, sense of fairness, and mutual alignment of values between the employee and the organization.

These factors are taken into account in Michael Leiter's model of organizational environment factors (Leiter & Maslach 2002). In the model, he defines the workplace from the perspective of social role theory. According to this theory, behavior is defined and sanctioned through organizational norms and values. Thanks to the interrelatedness of organizational roles, norms, and values with those of the individual, the system functions properly. (Katz, Kahn 1979). The workplace is an organization with a structure composed of four elements: the technological system, the social system – people with their attitudes, motivations, abilities and personality traits), the structural system – the totality of positions and organizational roles, and the ecological system – the external environment. Amitai Etzioni (1964, quoted from: Sułkowski 2004) suggests that in the workplace there is a division of tasks, power and flow of information that is consciously planned. Because of the presence of centers of power, the purpose of this arrangement is to achieve certain goals. The basic tasks of the centers of power include controlling the cohesion of the organization's efforts and directing it towards the goals of the institution. Workplaces are also characterized by substitutability of staff. This means that people who do not perform their tasks can be removed from the institution and their roles can be transferred to others.

An important element in the functioning of the workplace is its organizational climate. It can be defined as: the employee's perception of the organization, which is a reflection of the interaction process that occurs between them and the workplace or employer (Dobrzyński 1981). Depending on the position held, participation in goal setting, or involvement in the informal structure, employees can influence the functioning of the organization (Lipińska-Grobelny 2007). The interaction content, in the form of people's behavior, is determined by the value system adopted in the organization. At the same time, one can observe the reverse direction of this relationship, since the behavior of people at work is also shaped by norms and value systems. The presented relationship between the type of interaction and the adequate system of values can be used to determine the qualities of work conducive to the process of social readaptation of convicts. Work with educational qualities is characterized by the fact that it takes into account the needs of prisoners and only in the next perspective they become visible as important organizational parameters of the institution. Poorly organized employment of convicts and careless performance of work by convicts can bring more social and individual harm than benefits (Ambrozik 2016).

Rudolf H. Moos (2002), in relation to the processes taking place in the institution, points out that the positive social climate of the institution promotes personal development of the wards, their self-education and self-fulfillment. In an effort to provide convicts with experiences of this nature, the Prison Service seeks new workplaces for convicts. In 2016, the Ministry of Justice launched the "Work for Prisoners" program. It is carried out by the Prison Service and aims to support the widely understood social readaptation of people in penitentiary facilities and

detention centers, especially their professional activation. As a result of this project there is an increase in employment among people placed in penitentiary units.

## Own research

The purpose of the research undertaken was to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of workload of convicts working inside and outside the prison premises and performing paid and unpaid work?
2. What is the level of the sense of control at work in individuals sentenced to imprisonment working inside and outside the prison premises and performing paid and unpaid work?
3. What is the level of fulfillment of the needs of anticipated rewards in prisoners working inside and outside the prison and performing paid and unpaid work?
4. What is the level of community support at work perceived by convicts working inside and outside the prison premises and performing paid and unpaid work?
5. What is the level of sense of fairness in convicts working inside and outside the prison premises and performing paid and unpaid work?
6. What is the level of compatibility of the value system of the working convicts with the system of the organization where they work depending on the place of the work performed and whether it is paid or unpaid?

The study used the "Areas of Worklife" questionnaire created by Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter, as adapted by Jan Terelak, Anna Izwantowska (2009). The questionnaire consists of six subscales: *Workload*, *Control*, *Reward*, *Community*, *Fairness*, and *Values*. Answers to the questions are given on a scale from 1 to 5.

The results obtained by the respondents, indicating the degree of intensity of a given dimension, were interpreted by determining their distance from the mean expressed by the size of the standard deviation based on the norms indicated in the Polish adaptation of the questionnaire. Individuals whose average score from particular scales was in line with the norm or remained in the standard deviation range were defined as having an average level of intensity of a given variable. Those respondents whose score fell outside the standard deviation range were described as having a high or low level of intensity, depending on whether it deviated upwards (high) or downwards (low).

Results were processed using the STATISTICA package for statistical analysis.

The research was conducted in four penitentiary units under the jurisdiction of the District Inspectorate of Prison Service in Gdańsk, i.e. Penitentiary Facilities in Sztum, Wejherowo and Gdańsk and the Detention Center in Elbląg. Convicts who voluntarily agreed on participation were qualified for the study. The research sample consisted of 122 working individuals sentenced to imprisonment. In the

studied population 63 individuals worked inside and 59 convicts – outside the prison. In contrast, 73 people performed paid work and 49 unpaid work.

Table 1. Characteristics of the persons studied

Variable	Statistics	Number of participants
Place of work	inside the prison	63
	outside the prison	59
Work	paid	73
	unpaid	49
Work experience	0–6 months	50
	7–12 months	25
	1–2 years	25
	3–5 years	8
	6–10 years	6
	11–20 years	2
	longer	3
	no data	3

Source: author's own study.

## Presentation and discussion of the results obtained

The analysis of the obtained research material consisted in calculating the results of the “Areas of Worklife” Questionnaire for the whole research sample and separate groups of participants: those working inside the prison, outside the prison, and those performing paid and unpaid work.

The first variable analyzed concerns the *Workload* scale, which describes the workload of an employee resulting from certain expectations towards them, which, although legitimate and logical, are impossible to meet by them in a specified time and at an adequate quality level. In a situation of excessive workload, it becomes a source of occupational stress (Fengler 2000).

Table 2. Norms for the sense of workload scale

Variable: workload	M	SD
Norm	2.92	0.88
Workload of the participants in the study	3.35	

Source: author's own study based on norms for the “Areas of Worklife” Questionnaire.

From the analysis of the collected research material, it is evident that the level of workload of the convicts reaches the average level of intensity ( $M= 3.35$ ). The frequency distribution indicates that more than half of the working individuals sentenced to imprisonment surveyed, i.e. 54.92%, scored within the mean specified in the norm. A smaller percentage of the participants, 36.07%, obtained a high level of perception of workload intensity. These individuals encounter difficulties in meeting the requirements placed on them. Low level of intensity of workload was recorded in about 9% of the respondents. The demands put forth for these individuals do not present difficulties. The following graph (Graph 1) presents the structure of the level of workload in the studied group of individuals serving a sentence of imprisonment.

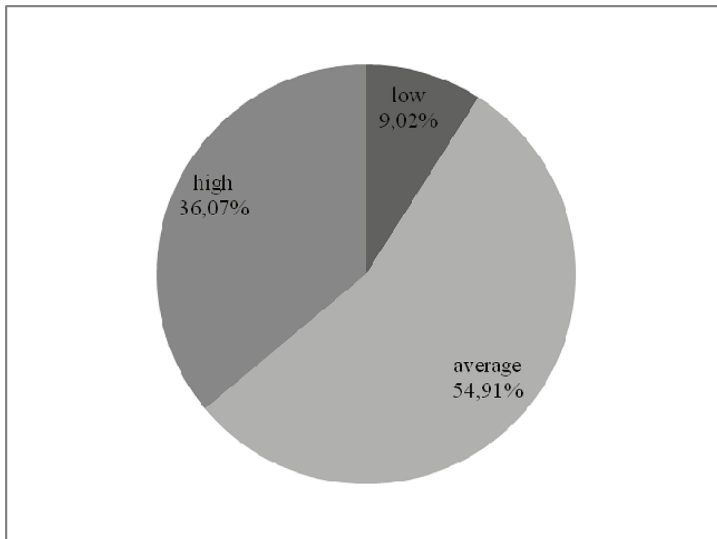


Fig. 1. Workload of individuals serving a sentence of imprisonment  
Source: author's own study.

Comparing the workload of convicts working inside and outside the prison, it is evident that it is similar. The T-Student test ( $t= 0.21$ ;  $p=0.86$ ) performed reveals that there is no relationship between workload and the fact whether an individual works inside or outside the prison. In both groups, more than half of the convicts working inside and outside the prison scored within the norm for the dimension of workload. Approximately one in three participants believe that they are overloaded with the work they perform. Only 8% of the convicts in both groups have no difficulty in fulfilling the duties imposed on them.

Table 3. Comparison of groups of participants working inside and outside the prison in terms of workload

Variable	Work inside the prison (N=63)		Work outside the prison (N=59)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Workload	19.98	5.79	20.19	4.98	0.21	0.83

Source: author’s own study.

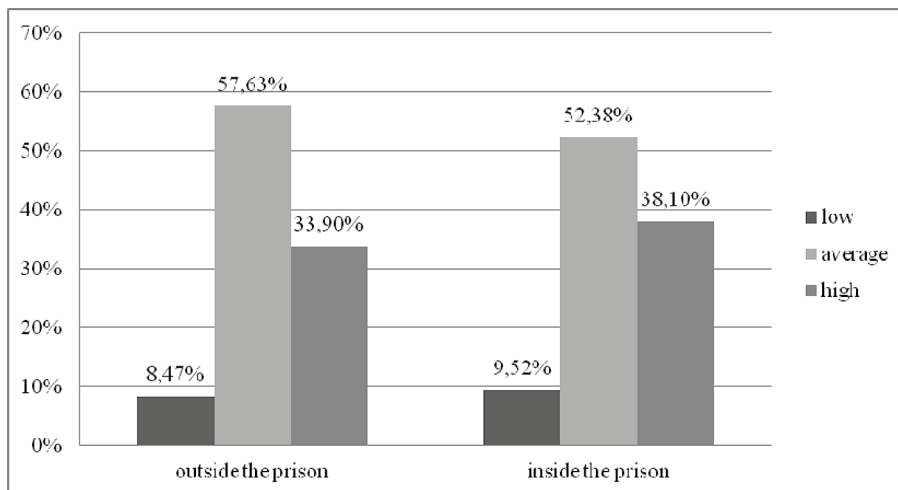


Fig. 2. Structure of the level of workload of individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the groups working outside and inside the prison

Source: author’s own study.

The comparison of the groups of respondents performing paid and unpaid work revealed that there was no relationship between the remuneration for work and the intensity of the workload ( $t=-0.17$ ;  $p=0.86$ ). Both groups have a similar frequency distribution. More than half of the individuals in the studied subgroups score within the norm in terms of workload. Only in the group of convicts performing unpaid work, one can notice a slightly higher percentage of people perceiving their work as overloading.

Table 4. Comparison of groups of respondents performing paid and unpaid work for the workload scale

Variable	Paid work (N=73)		Unpaid work (N=49)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Workload	20.01	5.22	20.18	5.70	-0.17	0.86

Source: author’s own study.

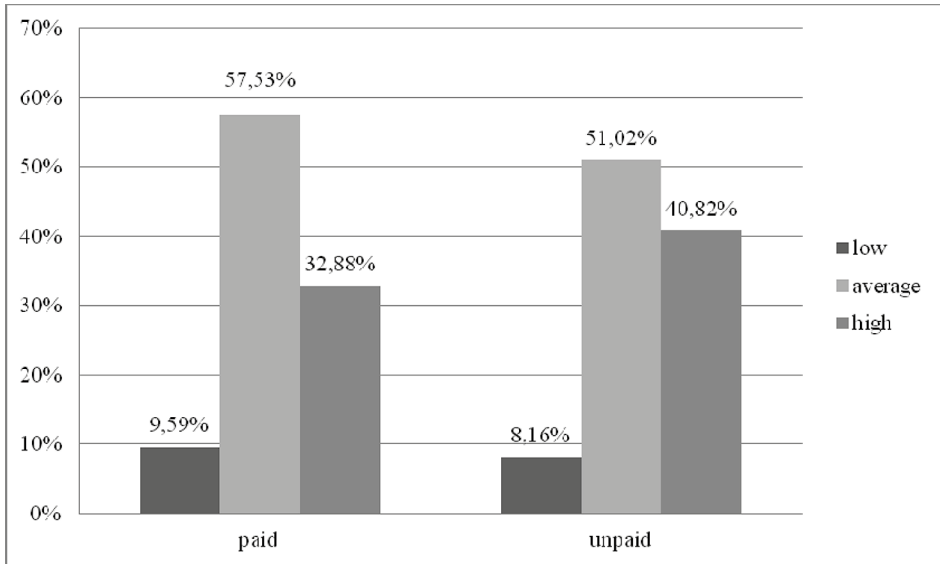


Fig. 3. Structure of the level of workload of individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the groups performing paid and unpaid work

Source: author's own study.

The second investigated variable concerns the sense of control at work, that is, the degree of autonomy in which the employee can decide on the time, place and method of performing the assigned tasks. This dimension refers to such characteristics as authority or other diverse resources which presence creates positive effects in the form of motivation, energy, new competencies or attitudes that may translate into improved functioning in other areas of life such as family or peer group.

Table 5. Norm for the control scale

Variable: sense of control	M	SD
Norm	3.46	0.87
Sense of control of the participants in the study	3.81	

Source: author's own study based on norms for the "Areas of Worklife" Questionnaire.

The data collected in the course of the study shows that the largest percentage, i.e., half of the participants in the study, obtained results within the limits defined by the norm of the mean. Slightly fewer, 39.34%, were the respondents who obtained the intensity of sense of control at work higher than average. The results

for the sense of control deviating from the mean and indicating a lower than average sense of control at work were recorded in about 10% of the respondents. An average level of intensity of the sense of control was found in about 50% of the respondents and a high level – in 39%. Chart 4 shows the structure of the sense of control in the studied group of individuals serving a sentence of imprisonment.

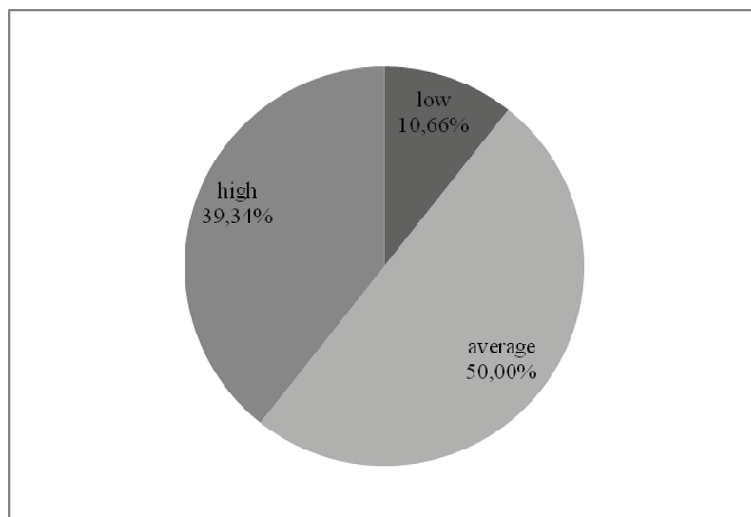


Fig. 4. Structure of the sense of control of working individuals serving a sentence of imprisonment

Source: author's own study.

The comparison of the groups of respondents: individuals working inside the prison and outside the prison (Table 6) in terms of the variable: sense of control at work, as in the case of workload, did not reveal any statistically significant differences between them. Only the percentage distribution reflects that slightly more convicts in prison have little autonomy at work compared to convicts working outside the penitentiary unit. This may suggest that penitentiary conditions, due to the total nature of the institution, are not conducive to developing the sense of control, but it should also be taken into account that not every individual can be qualified to work outside the penitentiary unit due to their personal traits, including a low sense of control over their behavior and life.



Table 6. Comparison of groups of respondents working inside and outside the prison for the control scale

Variable	Work inside the prison (N=63)		Work outside the prison (N=59)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Sense of control	11.05	3.03	11.86	2.33	1.66	0.10

Source: author’s own study.

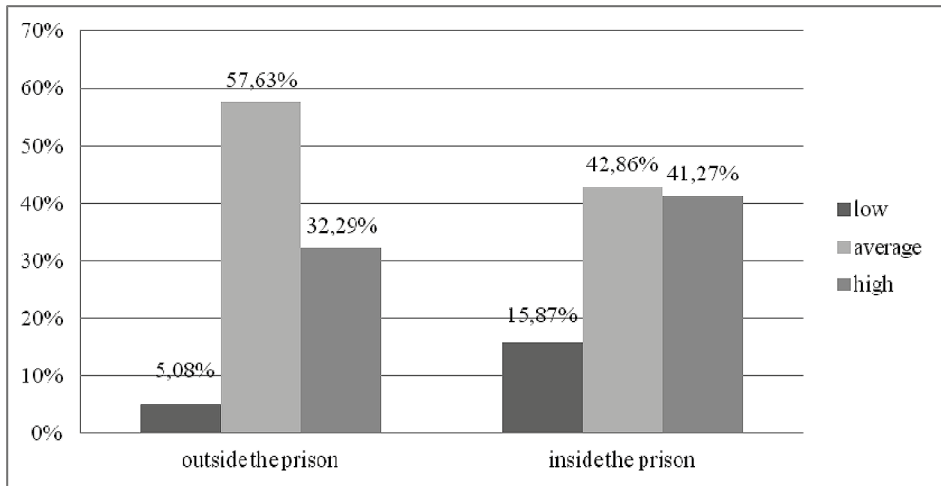


Fig. 5. Structure of the level of sense of control of individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the groups working outside and inside the prison

Source: author’s own study.

The variable that is remuneration for the work performed also does not differentiate the convicts in terms of their sense of control. Roughly half in prisoners in both groups score at the norm, and more than one-third of prisoners perceive that they have a high sense of control at work.

Table 7. Comparison of groups of respondents performing paid and unpaid work for the control scale

Variable	Paid work (N=73)		Unpaid work (N=49)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Sense of control	11.41	2.75	11.49	2.75	-0.16	0.88

Source: author’s own study.

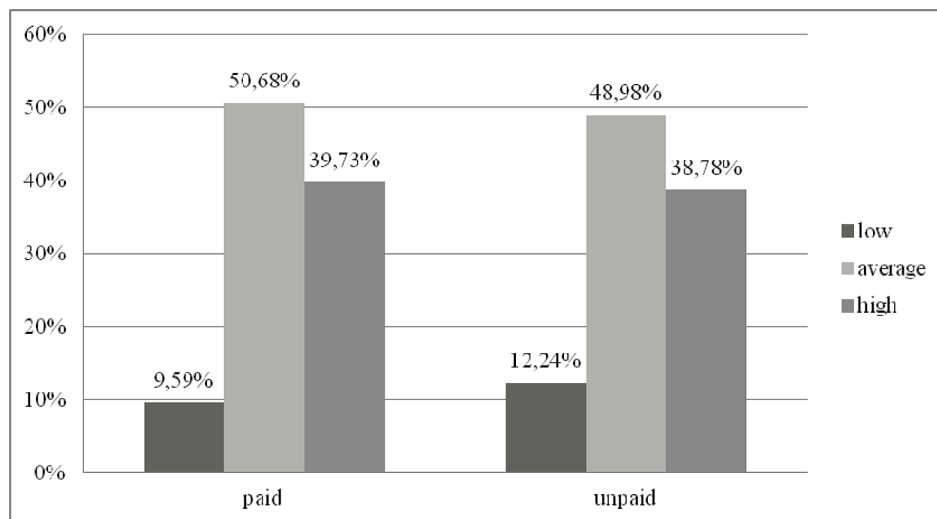


Fig. 6. Structure of the level of sense of control of individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the groups performing paid and unpaid work

Source: author’s own study.

The next analysis concerns perceived organizational support, which is a variable contained in the employee’s overall belief that the employer recognizes their efforts and cares about their well-being. It refers to emotional, technical, and financial support that may translate into performance at work. This dimension particularly draws attention to the rewards expected by employees.

Table 8. Norms for the rewards scale

Variable: Organizational support	M	SD
Norm	3.13	0.60
Organizational support of the participants in the study	3.37	

Source: author’s own study based on norms for the “Areas of Worklife” Questionnaire.

The analysis of the research material obtained demonstrated that in the group of working prisoners, the result indicating an average level of intensity of the perceived organizational support prevailed among the scores of the respondents – it was scored by 71.31% of the respondents. Results indicating lower than average intensity of the variable constituted about 18% of the total. The remaining individuals in the group achieved scores higher than average, and this was recorded in 10.66% of the participants. The structure of the level of perceived organizational support is shown in the chart below (Fig. 7).

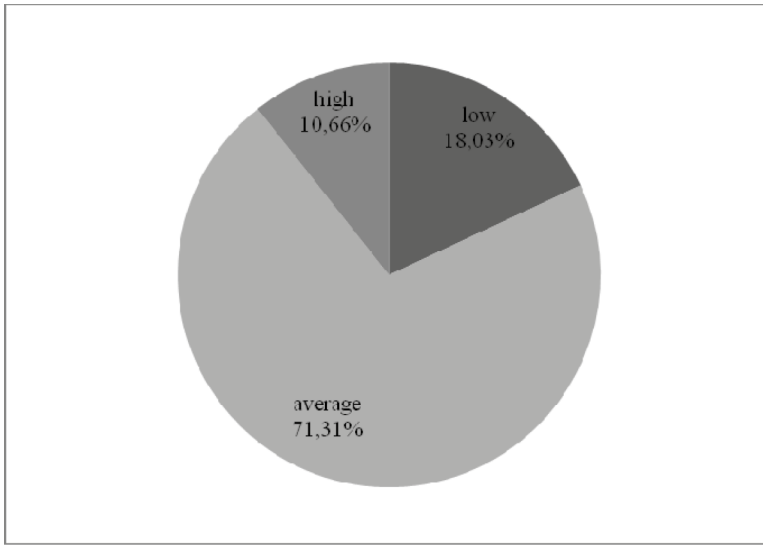


Fig. 7. The structure of the level of organizational support in the context of meeting the expectations of rewards of working individuals serving sentences of imprisonment

Source: author's own study.

The statistical analysis results lead to the conclusion that the convicts working outside the prison obtain statistically significantly higher results than the convicts working inside the prison in terms of recognized effort in the institution where they work and experienced rewards and well-being ( $t=-2.51$ ;  $p=0.01$ ). Among the convicts working outside the prison, there are fewer people experiencing insufficient recognition at work and unsatisfied with rewards.

Table 9. Comparison of groups of respondents working inside and outside the prison for the rewards scale

Variable	Work inside the prison (N=63)		Work outside the prison (N=59)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Organizational support	12.67	4.02	14.42	3.69	2.51	0.01

Source: author's own study.

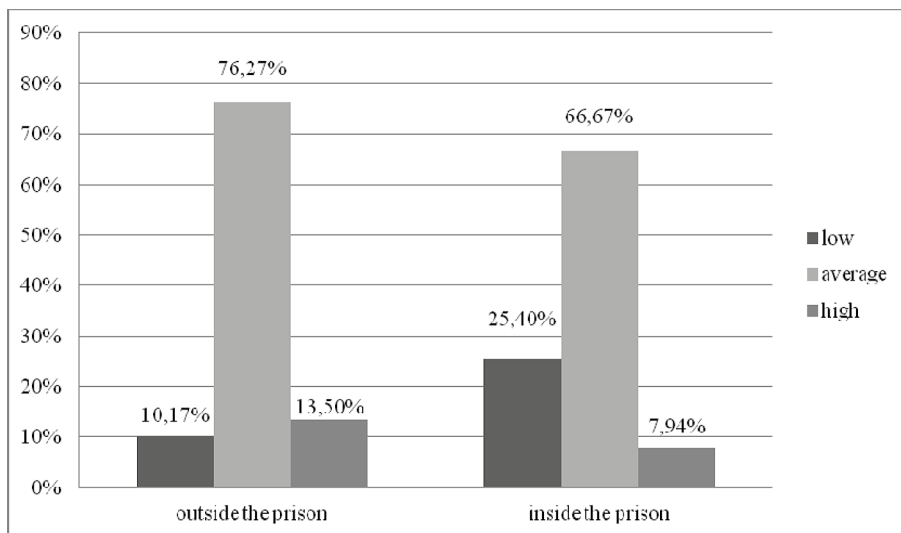


Fig. 8. The structure of the level of organizational support in the context of meeting the expectations of rewards of individuals serving sentences of imprisonment in the group working outside and inside the prison

Source: author’s own research.

The fact of whether the work is paid or unpaid does not differentiate the convicts in terms of the rewards they experience at work. In these subgroups, most convicts (about 71%) obtain average results. Only about 18% negatively evaluate their rewards and are not satisfied with the experienced recognition from the organization where they work.

Table 10. Comparison of groups of respondents performing paid and unpaid work for the rewards scale

Scale	Paid work (N=73)		Unpaid work (N=49)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Organizational support	13.32	3.83	13.82	4.13	-0.69	0.50

Source: author’s own study.

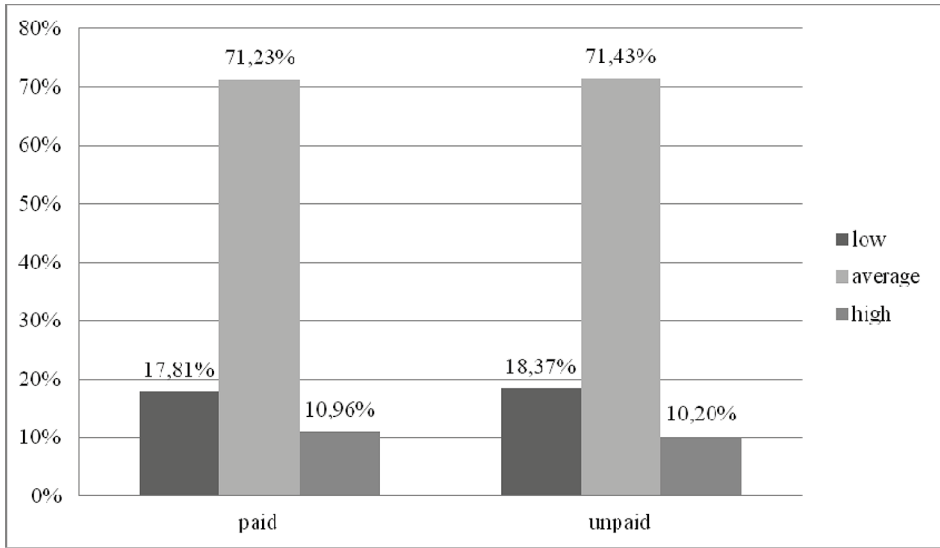


Fig. 9. The structure of the level of organizational support in the context of meeting the expectations of rewards of individuals serving sentences of imprisonment in the group performing paid and unpaid work

Source: author’s own study.

The next dimension analyzed concerns the variable of community support at work. It concerns emotional support and instrumental help that an employee may experience from superiors or colleagues. It also takes into account the feedback on the individual’s functioning at work. Community support is a buffer of sorts that protects people from stress by mitigating and dampening its negative consequences. Integration at work or peer and family relationships can be a more important source of support than formal programs implemented by workplaces.

Table 11. Norms for the community scale

Variable: community support	M	SD
Norm	3.37	0.88
Community support of the participants in the study	3.28	

Source: author’s own study based on norms for the “Areas of Worklife” Questionnaire.

As the analysis of the collected research material shows, the vast majority of the respondents sentenced to imprisonment, i.e. 66.39%, obtained results indicating an average level of community support at work. A much smaller percentage of the participants, approximately 23%, scored lower than average. High scores on this scale, on the other hand, were achieved by 10.66% of the

respondents. The structure of the sense of community support of both groups is illustrated in the chart below (Fig. 10).

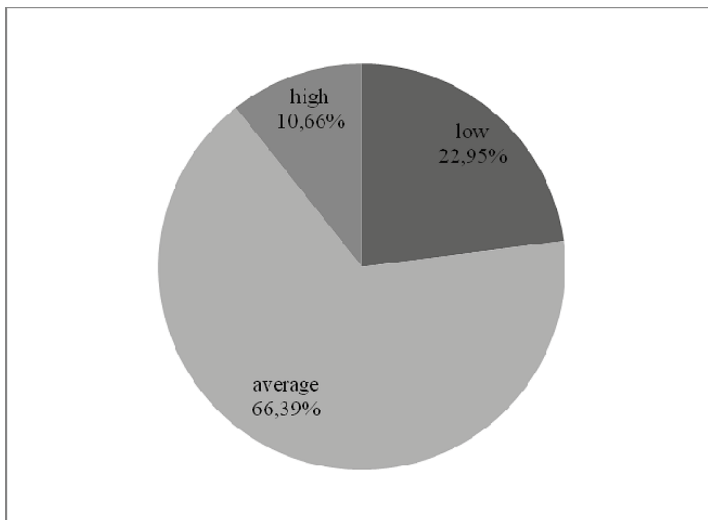


Fig. 10. The structure of the level of community support at work of working individuals serving a sentence of imprisonment

Source: author's own study.

The analysis with the Student's t-test showed that the assumption of homogeneity regarding the results obtained on the community support scale should be made in the group of convicts working inside and outside the prison. The analysis of the research material allows us to state that the respondents, both working inside ( $M=16,08$ ;) and outside ( $M=16,70$ ;  $t= 0,75$ ;  $p>0,05$ ) the prison, have similar level of community support experienced at work. No statistically significant differences were found between the groups in this regard. The average results in all subgroups indicate an average level of community support. The frequency distribution of the studied groups allows to notice that the convicts working outside the prison report experiencing community support at a high level more often. This difference, however, is not statistically significant.

Table 12. Comparison of groups of respondents working inside and outside the prison for the community scale

Variable	Work inside the prison (N=63)		Work outside the prison (N=59)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Community support	16.08	4.29	16.70	4.81	0.75	0.46

Source: author's own study.

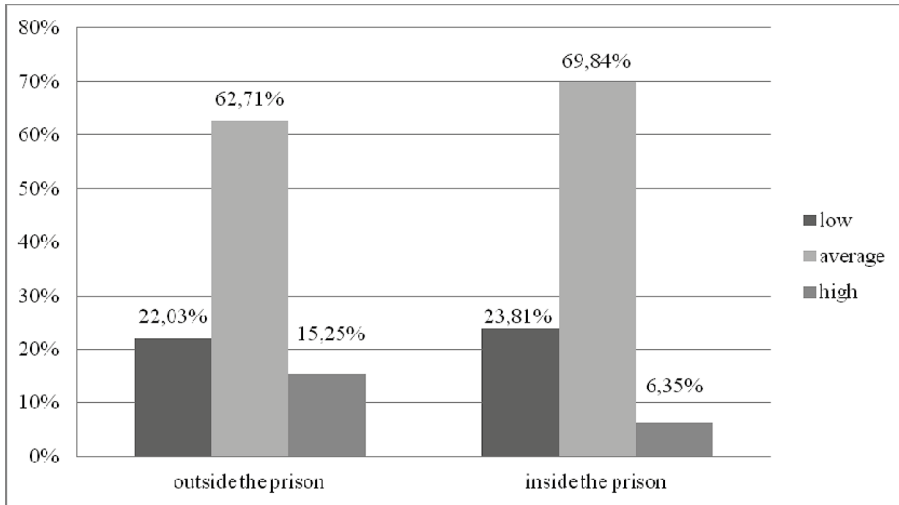


Fig. 11. Structure of the level of perceived community support of individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the groups working outside and inside the prison

Source: author's own study.

The analysis of the research material allows us to conclude that there are statistical differences in terms of the experienced community support between the convicts performing paid ( $M=15.74$ ) and unpaid work ( $M=17.33$ ,  $t=-1.91$ ;  $p=0.05$ ). The mean scores of the groups indicate a higher level of community support in the group of convicts performing unpaid work.

In that group we observe almost 10% more participants experiencing a high level of community support. In the group of the convicts working for pay, on the other hand, there are 4% more convicts assessing the support they experience as low.

Table 13. Comparison of groups of respondents performing paid and unpaid work for the community scale

Variable	Paid work (N=73)		Unpaid work (N=49)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Social support	15.74	4.40	17.33	4.63	-1.91	0.05

Source: author's own research.

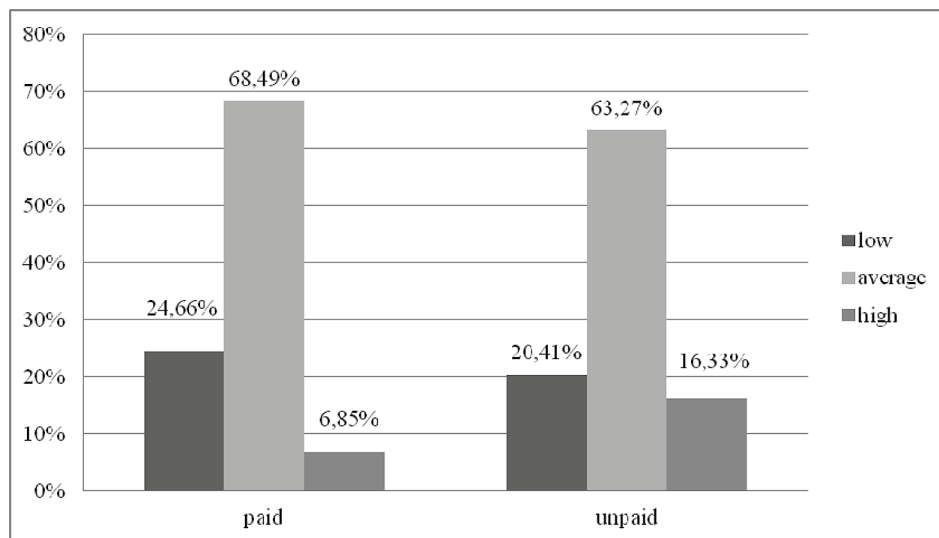


Fig. 12. Structure of the level of community support at work of individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the groups performing paid and unpaid work

Source: author’s own study

The next scale analyzed is the subjective sense of fairness related to, among other things, rewards at work. The sense of fairness scale refers to the employee’s feeling of being treated fairly or not and deals with such aspects of work as clear rules, distribution of wealth, and opportunities for promotion.

Table 14. Norms for the sense of fairness scale

Variable: sense of fairness	M	SD
Norm	2.71	0.90
Sense of fairness of the participants in the study	3.16	

Source: author’s own study based on norms for the “Areas of Worklife” Questionnaire.

The analysis of the collected research material shows that the majority of the surveyed working individuals serving a sentence of imprisonment, i.e. 59.02%, obtained results indicating an average generalized sense of fairness. Scores indicating higher than average intensity of the sense of fairness, were obtained by about 33% of the respondents. Low scores on this scale, meanwhile, were obtained by 7.38% of individuals from the research sample. The following chart (Chart 13) presents the structure of the generalized sense of fairness in the study group.



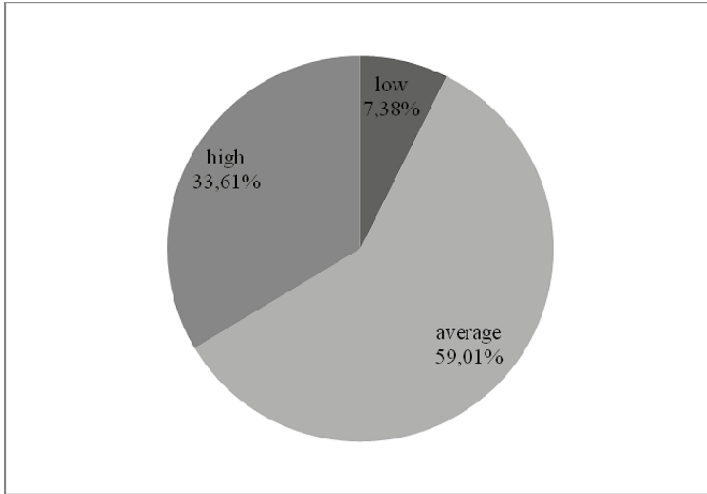


Fig. 13. Structure of the sense of fairness of working individuals serving a sentence of imprisonment

Source: author’s own study.

The comparison between the groups of respondents working inside and those working outside the prison (Table 15) shows statistically significant differences in the sense of fairness. Those working outside the prison in characterized by a higher sense of fairness at work than those working inside the facility. Among those working outside the prison, as compared to those working inside it, there are more individuals obtaining high scores at the level of sense of fairness. It is worth noting that both among those working inside and outside the prison there are relatively few people who perceive the situation at work as unfair.

Table 15. The Student’s t-test for the groups of convicts working inside and outside the prison for the sense of fairness scale

Variable	Work inside the prison (N=63)		Work outside the prison (N=59)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Sense of fairness	18.03	4.68	19.90	4.44	2.26	0.03

Source: author’s own research.

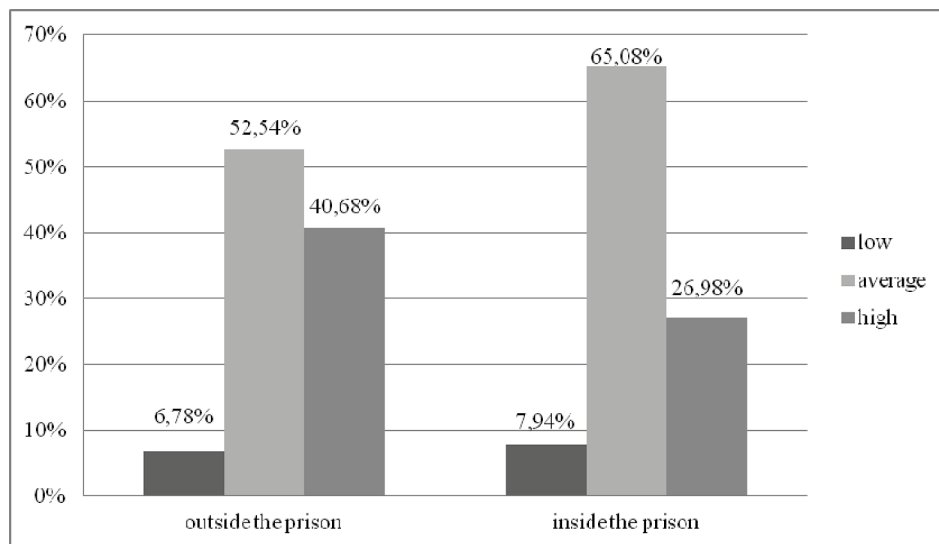


Fig. 14. Structure of the level of sense of fairness of individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the groups working outside and inside the prison

Source: author’s own study.

The comparison between the groups of respondents performing paid and unpaid work demonstrates statistically significant differences regarding the sense of fairness. Those who work unpaid are characterized by a higher sense of fairness at their work than those who work for pay. This implies that unpaid work may be perceived by convicts as a compensation to community for the harm caused. This is an indication of the link between social rehabilitation efforts and the idea of restorative justice (Opora 2015).

Table 16. Comparison of groups of respondents performing paid and unpaid work for the sense of fairness scale

Variable	Paid work (N=73)		Unpaid work (N=49)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Sense of fairness	18.36	0.56	19.80	0.61	-1.69	0.093

Source: author’s own study.

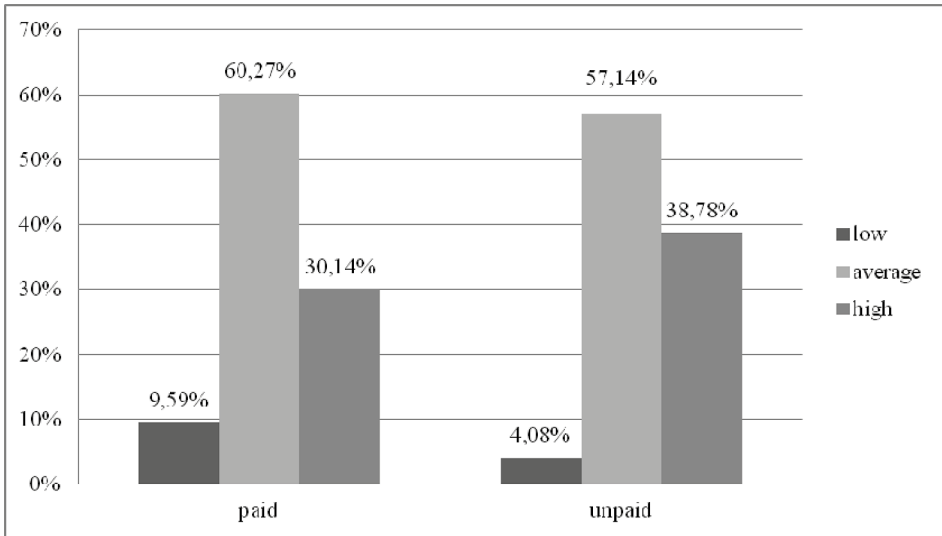


Fig. 15. Structure of the level of sense of fairness of individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the groups performing paid and unpaid work

Source: author's own study.

Leaving the convicts without the possibility to undertake any activity, including work, causes a considerable amount of free time that is difficult to fill. This causes the prisoners to experience various processes of physical and mental deprivation and triggers phenomena that disrupt correctional activities. Among some of the convicts, besides financial motives for undertaking any job, there also appear motives resulting from the desire to make use of the existing free time and stop the accompanying boredom and idleness (Ambrozik 2016).

The last of the presented analyses refers to the scale described as: values. It concerns the compatibility between the employee's and the organization's value system. Of course, the optimal situation is when there is harmony between the value model of the company and the value model of the individual. The fit and balance of these models increases the likelihood of positive attitudes of employees toward their work. This manifests itself in greater commitment to work, job satisfaction, less willingness to change jobs, and greater optimism.

Table 17. Norms for the values scale

Variable: Compatibility between the organization's and the employee's value system	M	SD
Norm	3.28	0.75
Compatibility between the organization's and the participants' value system	3.38	

Source: author's own study based on norms for the "Areas of Worklife" Questionnaire

The majority of the respondents, that is, approximately 64%, scored average in terms of compatibility between the employee's and the organization's value system. The next largest group, nearly 19%, constituted respondents who obtained scores indicating higher than average levels of intensity of the variable measured by this scale. A slightly smaller percentage of respondents, about 17%, obtained low scores that suggest that these individuals may be experiencing adaptation difficulties at their workplace. The following chart (Chart 16) depicts the structure of the level of compatibility between the value system of the employee and the organization in the participants of the study.

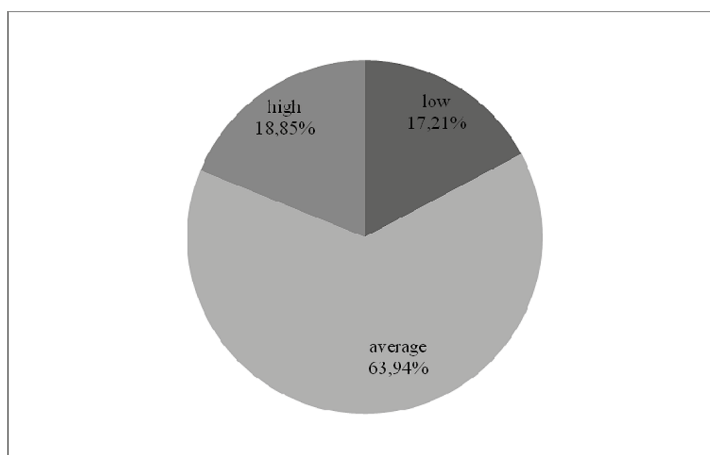


Fig. 16. The structure of the level of compatibility between the value system of the employee and the organization of working individuals serving a sentence of imprisonment

Source: author's own study.

When comparing the groups of participants in the study working inside and outside the prison (Table 18), no connection was found between the place of work and the level of compatibility of the value systems of the employee and the organization.

The comparison between the groups of convicts performing paid and unpaid work (Table 19) also showed no correlation between receiving remuneration for the work performed and the level of intensity of the investigated variable. The average results of both the groups of convicts working inside the prison and the groups of individuals performing paid and unpaid work indicate an average level of compatibility between the employee’s and the organization’s value system. The obtained frequency distributions give an indication that in all the compared groups, more than 60% of the respondents are at an average level, and about 20% assess the compatibility of their value system with the organization’s culture as highly consistent. Thus, the number of convicts indicating difficulties in adjusting their own value system to the one of the organization does not exceed 18%.

Table 18. Comparison of groups of respondents working inside and outside the prison for the values scale

Variable	Work inside the prison (N=63)		Work outside the prison (N=59)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Compatibility between the organization’s and the employee’s value system	17.03	4.45	16.98	4.33	-0.06	0.95

Source: author’s own study.

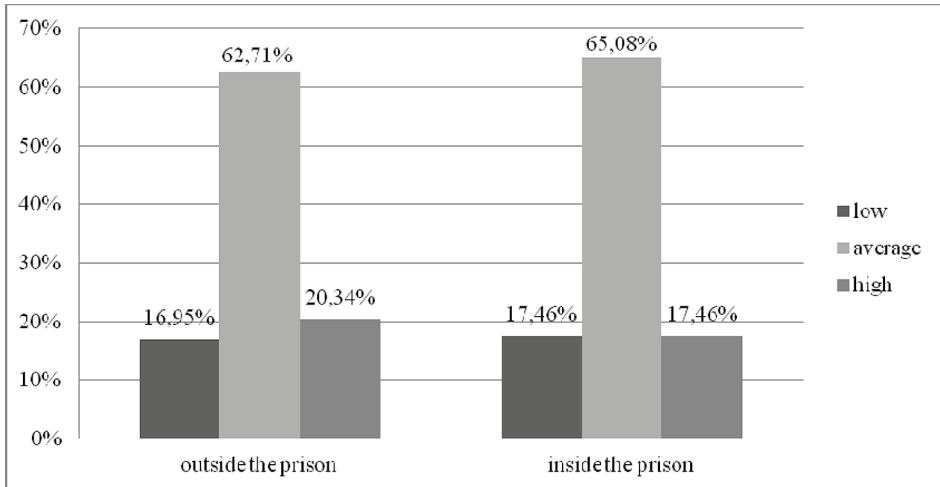


Fig. 17. The structure of the level of compatibility between the value system of the employee and the organization of individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the groups working outside and inside the prison

Source: author’s own study.

Table 19. Comparison of groups of respondents performing paid and unpaid work for the values scale

Variable	Paid work (N=73)		Unpaid work (N=49)		t-distribution	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Compatibility between the organization's and the employee's value system	16.89	4.36	17.18	4.43	-0.36	0.72

Source: author's own study.

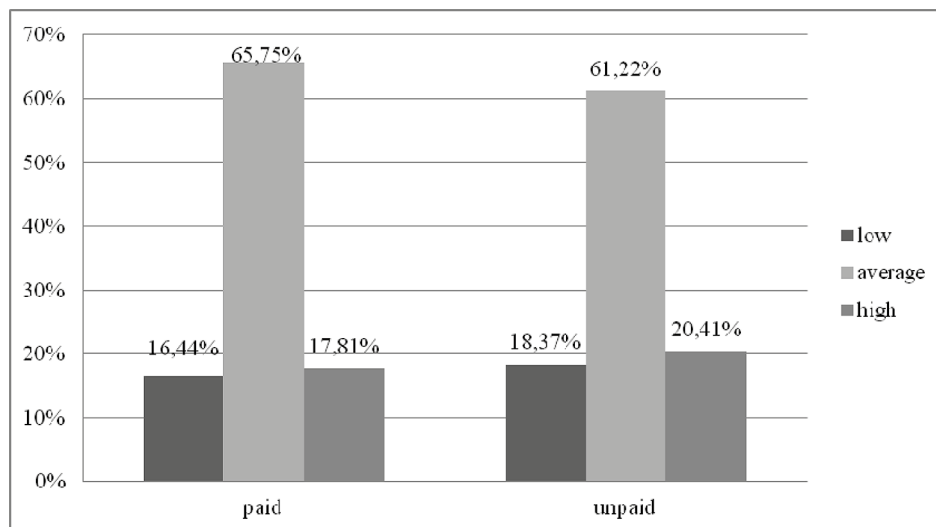


Fig. 18. The structure of the level of compatibility between the value system of the employee and the organization of individuals sentenced to imprisonment in the groups performing paid and unpaid work

Source: author's own study.

## Conclusions

From the obtained results of the research it can be concluded that taking up employment by individuals sentenced to imprisonment makes them function according to patterns that bring them closer to life outside prison. It prevents their idleness, obliges them to a sense of responsibility, punctuality, respect and all socially desirable behaviors, which by definition should be learned at the family home, as a foundation for proper functioning in community (Kuč 2013). Within the variables studied, most of the convicts score in the normal range, and this may be interpreted that the subjective perception of the work they perform does not differ from the perception of working individuals who are not in prison

isolation. This indicates the readaptive values of performing work by convicts. Work is of particular importance when it comes to positive influence on convicts, as it enables practical verification of the level of their social rehabilitation, as well as opens up to prisoners the possibility of obtaining employment already outside the prison. This is crucial because upon leaving prison, an individual experiences particularly intensely the discomfort of losing the job they had before their time in prison isolation (Osiatyński 2003).

A relatively small number of working convicts perceive the tasks they receive at work as excessively burdensome. Most of the prisoners have a sense of influence over the tasks undertaken and what happens in the workplace, which can produce positive effects not only for the employer but can also be generalized on other social situations. The sense of control experienced at work allows for building and strengthening one's responsibility for one's own choices and increasing self-awareness (Witkowski 2016). Work creates an opportunity for prisoners to define themselves through the choices they make at work, their perception of the world, and their behavior. Thus, they can search for the meaning of their own actions. Noteworthy is the fact that those who work outside the prison experience more support from the facility than those who work inside it. Hence, the convicts performing work outside the prison are more satisfied with the experienced recognition from the employer and the rewards received at work. In contrast, the individuals performing unpaid work experience more support from community than those working for pay. This means that in society there is acceptance for sentences that take into account the aspect of compensation for the harm caused by the offender to the society. The unpaid convicts have a sense of belonging to a group of people carrying out a joint task. By being in their natural social environment, they improve their ability to socialize, communicate effectively, show emotion and develop their own sensitivity. Not only do they fill their time with meaningful work, but they also make new social contacts.

A relatively small number of the convicts surveyed believe that they are not treated fairly at work. On the other hand, among the convicts working outside the prison there are much fewer individuals who share this belief. Additionally, convicts who perform unpaid work are characterized by a higher sense of fairness compared to those who work for pay. Arguably, there is a link between offenders engaging in altruistic prosocial activities and positive cognitive-behavioral changes that reduce the likelihood of recidivism (Witkowski 2016). Prisoners sent to work in the vast majority do not encounter major adaptation difficulties resulting from the adaptation of their own system of values to the culture of the organization where they work, which probably proves, among other things, the accurate matching of the job to the personal characteristics of the convict. This fulfils the recommendation formulated in the European Prison Rules (Recommendation Rec (2006) 2 of the Committee of Ministers to the Member States of the Council of Europe) that the work performed by the prisoner should contribute to the

development of their skills so that they are willing and able to find employment after completing their prison sentence. The documents referred to also note that, as far as possible, the work should be performed outside the penitentiary unit.

## Conclusions

The theoretical reflections on the issue of taking up employment by individuals sentenced to imprisonment, as well as the research results obtained, indicate that the knowledge of organizational factors responsible for the social climate at the workplace may be important for the effectiveness of the process of social readaptation of the convicts working there.

It should be emphasized that the social processes taking place in the workplace are a reflection of its system of values, judgments, practices, norms of conduct. Knowing the organizational factors of the workplace it is possible to control the processes occurring in it, and thus to influence its readaptive dimension in relation to convicts. Thus, in order for the work of convicts to be readaptive, it should be organized in such a way as to be similar to the work of those without a criminal record, with fair rules for remuneration, division of tasks, and should guarantee safety and proper hygiene.

Of course, the mere employment of prisoners is not sufficient to achieve any positive social rehabilitation effects. Only the provision of appropriate working conditions, community support and incorporation of the work into the entirety of readaptation measures can affect the outcome of the social rehabilitation process.

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## Legal acts

- [14] Act of 6 June 1997 Executive Penal Code (Journal of Laws No. 90, item 557, as amended).
- [15] Act of 28 August 1997 on employment of persons serving prison sentences (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 179).