

Satisfaction with the Quality of Life in Employees of Russian Enterprises in the Social Partnership System

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Abstract

The present research aims to identify the characteristics of satisfaction with the quality of life in employees of Russian enterprises: elected trade unionists, trade union members, and non-union workers. Methods used in the study include a questionnaire, detailed focused interviews, participant observation, and content analysis with further data analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 22. An original version of the questionnaire has been constructed using the Likert scale. Results: The mass dissatisfaction of all categories of workers with received salary is revealed. The results indicate that the level of workers' satisfaction with the quality of life depends on their affiliation with trade unions and participation in the organization of trade union activity. Satisfaction with the quality of life in employees of Russian enterprises is largely dependent on their status, membership in a trade union, and the geographical location of the enterprise. Moreover, the level of non-union workers' satisfaction with various aspects of the quality of life is generally higher than that of trade union members. For the first time, the authors comprehensively study the problems of enterprise employees' satisfaction with the quality of life from the standpoints of elected trade unionists, regular union members, and non-union workers. The practical implications of the study are found in the possibility of improving the effectiveness of social partnership and workers' satisfaction with the quality of life. The main advantage of the study lies in the identification of a stable relationship: the longer the employee's working experience, the more they are dissatisfied with the value of their work at the enterprise; satisfaction with wages depends on the employee's status and the duration of their work at the present enterprise.

Keywords: satisfaction; quality of life; social partnership; trade union; social dialogue.

1. Introduction

The intensification of the struggle on almost every economic issue in the international arena makes employers look for ways to involve workers in business processes. Simultaneously, management and owners of enterprises with various forms of ownership are trying to find their rightful place in the system of social partnership. An active search for forms and ways of improving the quality of life and the effectiveness of social and labor relations takes place (Daneshjo et al., 2019; Ibrahim et al., 2019).

Scholars find it expedient to approach the quality of life and labor relations systemically (Dunlop, 1958; Salamon, 1987; Moerel, 1994). This approach ensures better protection of the employees in the labor market (European Parliament, 2016). However, the data provided by the International Labor Organization indicate that traditional labor relations cover only about one-quarter of workers (International Labour Organization, 2015), which affects the quality of life negatively (Mühlberger, 2009). The resolution of the said problem is complicated by the dynamically developing digitalization of the economy and society (Rasca, 2018; Coordination of European, national & regional initiatives, 2017).

Cross-sector social partnerships (CSSP) produce a positive

effect on the quality of life, especially if the partners in forming teams are chosen (Intindola et al., 2019). Employers strive to improve working conditions (Bronkhorst et al., 2015; Rogach et al., 2016), achieve social stability (Awan et al., 2020) and participate in attaining the goal of sustainable development (Ridho et al., 2018).

Despite the high income in dynamically developing sectors of the economy, the issue of increasing the loyalty of oil and gas sector employees by improving the quality of life is becoming ever more acute (Chulanova et al., 2018b). A number of scholars suggest increasing the loyalty of talented employees through the use of artificial intelligence (Antonescu, 2018; Vinichenko et al., 2019a) and improvement of workers' motivation (Belle & Cantarelli, 2015; Karácsony et al., 2018), especially in the younger generation (Chulanova et al., 2018a).

The gender differences in satisfaction with social life in mobile work conditions (Nisic & Kley, 2019), and the process of overcoming racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination are examined (Oseev et al., 2018; Demeneva, 2007). Studies also address the possibilities of partner relationship development and improving satisfaction with the quality of life for mentally healthy and unhealthy individuals with high involvement of the employers (Deckert & Statz-Hill, 2016). The role of public-private partnerships (PPP) in improving the satisfaction in enterprise

workers (Badasyan & Riemann, 2019), in the leadership system in the public service, and in society as a whole is increasing (Bolden et al., 2020).

Unresolved social issues result in tension in social and labor relations and in deterioration of the quality of life at local and regional (state) levels (Duval & Furceri, 2018). Complications emerge in performing labor functions in part-time or seasonal employment (International Labour Organization, 2011), as well as in precarious and unstable employment (Fudge, 2011; Cranford et al., 2003). Wage arrears appear and sometimes increase (Kalleberg, 2014). Labor unions fight against such phenomena, but not always successfully. Further, this can result in more active forms of protest, especially among the younger generation (Demchenko et al., 2018), which will negatively affect the economic indicators of the enterprise, the economy, and, consequently, the quality of life.

Social partnership is one of the most effective instruments for attaining satisfaction with the quality of life. The social partnership allows finding a compromise between the employer and employees in a civilized manner (Frolova et al., 2016). In the current period, research is conducted on the issues of increasing the negotiation process efficiency in the system of social partnership at the local level by improving the unified negotiation campaign (Vinichenko et al., 2019b).

Despite the high need for the development of social environment and a large number of scientific works on improving the quality of life, research on identifying workers' satisfaction with the quality of life in the system of social partnership in modern conditions is not presented. This factor determined the need for conducting the present study.

2. Methods

The research methodology developed by us was based on general scientific approaches, as well as on general and special research methods, united by a common goal.

Research objective: to identify the manner of satisfaction with the quality of life in employees of Russian enterprises: elected trade unionists, trade union members, and non-union workers.

The following **research tasks** were solved in order to attain the main research objective:

1. Assessing the satisfaction with the system and the size of wages;
2. Identifying the degree of satisfaction with labor safety and work and rest regime;
3. Determining the effectiveness of social dialogue (partnership) between the trade union, the employer, and authorities of different levels.

We proposed the following hypothesis: the degree of satisfaction with the quality of life in employees of Russian enterprises depends on their affiliation with trade unions and participation in the organization of trade unions' activity.

Limitations of the study, method of participant involvement

The quality of life was studied with a limited number of indicators determined in a pilot survey aimed to identify the indicator significance for various categories of employees of Russian enterprises.

The sociological research was conducted during August, September, and October of 2019. The range of participants included trade union members and elected unionists, workers of enterprises in the oil and gas industry, industrial, and construction enterprises.

The main research methods included a questionnaire, detailed focused interviews, participant observation, and content analysis.

The questionnaire was administered on 4,258 participants in 3 types (No. 1 for labor union members, No. 2 for non-union workers, No. 3 for the elected members of primary trade unions).

The detailed focused interview was implemented in order to discover opinions of representatives of the social partnership parties at enterprises, as well as of representatives of the executive, legislative, and municipal authorities of regions (territories). The interviews were conducted using three types of interview questionnaires (for enterprise executives or managers authorized for the interview by an executive; for chairmen of trade union committees; for representatives of authorities), as well as using detailed non-standardized interviews for the representatives of the industry social partnership parties. Participant observation and analysis of documents (collective agreements, publications in the press, samples of informational work of trade union organizations, letters, resolutions and other documents collected during the field phase of the study and necessary to disclose its problem) were used in order to enhance the reliability of the obtained results.

The study involved multistage and regionalized sampling methods; the corporate affiliation of enterprises and socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents were also taken into account.

The research was conducted at 11 enterprises in 9 cities (regions) of Russia: "Slavneft-Megionneftegaz" OJSC, Megion, Tyumen region; "Surgutneftegas" OJSC, Surgut, Tyumen region; "Centrsibnefteprovod" (Closed Administrative-Territorial Formation (CATF) Seversk) ("Transneft" OJSC), Tomsk; LUKOIL-Perm LLC, Perm; two industry service organizations in Ukhta, Komi Republic: SeverNIPigaz – a branch of "VNIIGAZ" LLC; Ukhta State Technical University; "Voronezhskintezkauchuk" OJSC, Voronezh; "Astrakhangazprom" LLC ("Gazprom" OJSC), Astrakhan Oblast; "NK Rosneft – Dagneft" OJSC, Republic of Dagestan; two service industry organizations in Moscow: "Giprotuboprovod" OJSC and Institute of Geology and Combustible Mining (IGCM).

Characteristic of the sample of trade union workers, $N = 4,258$ respondents. By gender: 56.5% male, 43.5% female. By age: 19.6% of respondents – under the age of 30, 28.7% – 31 to 40 years old, 34.3% – 41 to 50 years old, 15.9% – 51 to 60 years old, 1.5% – over 60 years old. By work experience at the present enterprise: 4% of respondents – with less than one year of experience, 23% – 1 to 5 years of experience, 26.4% – 5 to 10 years of experience, 46.6% – over 10 years of experience. By status in the production hierarchy: 8.4% – middle or lower-level managers, 43.3% – engineers and specialists, 48.3% – enterprise workers. By trade union membership status: 3.1% – elected trade unionists, 96.9% – regular union members.

Characteristics of the sample of non-union workers, $N = 678$ respondents. By gender: 59.9% male, 40.1% female. By age: 24.9% of respondents – under the age of 30, 29.7% – 31 to 40 years old, 34.7% – 41 to 50 years old, 7.6% – 51 to 60 years old, 3.1% – over 60 years old. By work experience at the present enterprise: 4.5% of respondents – with less than one year of experience, 28.7% – 1 to 5 years of experience, 35.2% – 5 to 10 years of experience, 31.6% – over 10 years of experience. By status in the production hierarchy: 9.7% – middle or lower-level managers, 49.6% – engineers and specialists, 40.6% – enterprise workers.

Characteristic of the sample of elected trade unionists, $N = 370$ respondents. By gender: 45.8% male, 54.2% female. By age: 8.1% of respondents – under the age of 30, 23.8% – 31 to 40 years old, 41.5% – 41 to 50 years old, 22.7% – 51 to 60 years old, 3.8% – over 60 years old. By work experience at the present enterprise: 1.5% of respondents – with less than one year of experience, 15.8% – 1 to 5 years of experience, 24.6% – 5 to 10 years of experience, 58.1% – over 10 years of experience. By status in the production hierarchy: 11.2% – middle or lower-level managers, 59.2% – engineers and specialists, 15.8% – enterprise workers. By trade union membership status: 48.5% of respondents are engaged in union work at the trade union committee level, 48.5% – at the level of the manufactory committee level, 18.1% – at the level of trade union groups (trade union bureau).

Data processing was performed digitally via Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics 22; open questionnaire items were processed manually with the further systematization of the received responses.

All three categories of questionnaire participants (trade union members; non-union workers; elected trade unionists) were asked about the level of their satisfaction with such essential aspects of the quality of life in their organization as the size of wages, wage system, work and rest regime, labor safety, social benefits, and the attitude of the management towards employees.

3. Results

3.1. Characteristics of employees' satisfaction with the wage system

Assessment of the size of wages

The analysis of data presented in Figure 1 allows concluding that the dissatisfaction of the industry workers with the size of their wages can be called a mass phenomenon. Complete or partial dissatisfaction with the current monetary value of their work was reported by 68.6% of trade union members, 58.7% of non-union workers, and 67.7% of elected trade unionists.

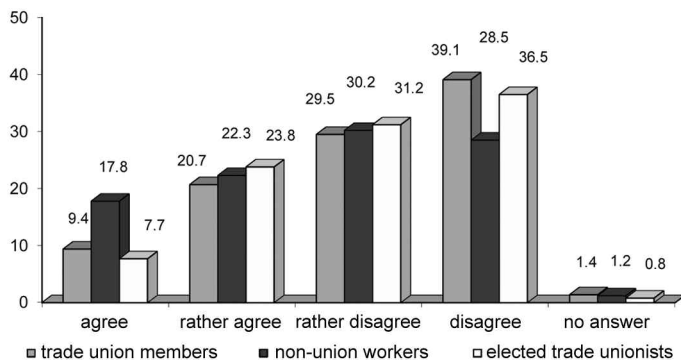


Figure 1. The results for the questionnaire item "Are you currently satisfied with such an aspect of your work at the enterprise as the size of your wage?" (percentage of the total number of respondents in each category)

Source: Designed by the authors

The maximum level of dissatisfaction was recorded in regular trade union members in Megion (the proportion of "rather disagree" and "disagree" answers summed – 100%), Voronezh (92.8%), Dagestan (84.7%), Samara (81.7%), and Orel (79.1%). An increased level of dissatisfaction in all aspects of labor relations was recorded among the trade union members from the "Slavneft-Megionneftegaz" OJSC. However, the size of this sample subgroup is statistically insignificant (24 respondents) and it had to be excluded from further analysis of the results. The most satisfaction with the size of wages was demonstrated by trade union workers from Astrakhan (the proportion of "rather agree" and "agree" answers summed – 63.6%) and Tomsk (55.1%).

Among non-union workers, the results of the questionnaire indicate that the Megion sample subgroup had an approximately equal percentage of respondents satisfied and unsatisfied with the size of their wages. In the "other enterprises" sample subgroup three quarters (76.3%) of the sample experience dissatisfaction with the salary.

Employees' attitude to the wage system

As shown in Figure 2, the wages system at the enterprises caused mixed feedback from the respondents, with a slight prevalence of positive responses.

In a survey of trade union members the greatest level of dissatisfaction was found in Dagestan (proportion of "rather disagree" and "disagree" answers summed – 66.9%), Moscow (65.6%), and Surgut (60.5%). The respondents from Tomsk

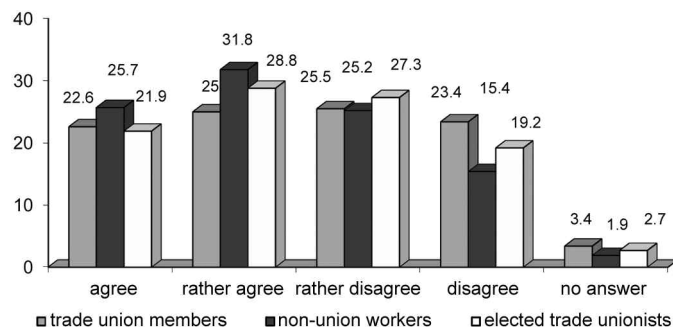


Figure 2. The results for the questionnaire item "Are you currently satisfied with such an aspect of your work at the enterprise as the wage system?" (percentage of the total number of respondents in each category)

Source: Designed by the authors

(74.2%), Astrakhan (73.5%), and Perm (67.2%), on the other hand, were the most satisfied with the wage system established at their enterprises.

According to the survey of non-union workers, in the "Megion" subgroup of the sample, the present wage system satisfied 65.4% of respondents, while in the "other enterprises" subgroup it satisfied 42.3% of workers.

3.2. Satisfaction with working conditions at the enterprise

Assessment of work and rest regime

Analysis of the data presented in Figure 3 shows that the work and rest regime aspect of labor satisfied the most part of all categories of the respondents.

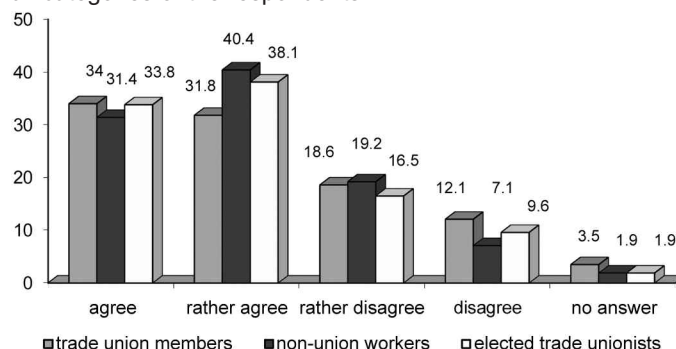


Figure 3. The results for the questionnaire item "Are you currently satisfied with such an aspect of your work at the enterprise as work and rest regime?" (percentage of the total number of respondents in each category)

Source: Designed by the authors

The situation differed across various regions. The most satisfaction with the work and rest regime at the enterprise was reported by trade union workers from Astrakhan (81.5%), Perm (75.7%), Voronezh (73.4%), and Orel (73.3%). Maximum dissatisfaction was reported by respondents from Surgut (60.5%), Moscow (59.5%), and Dagestan (50.8%). Among the non-union workers, in the sample subgroup from Megion, satisfaction with the work and rest regime was reported by 79.4% of respondents, and in the "other enterprises" sample subgroup – by 56.9% of workers. Differences were also observed in the aspect of gender – men reported lower satisfaction with the work-rest balance aspect than women (the proportion of "rather agree" and "agree" answers summed – 63.5% and 68.9% for men and women respectively).

Labor safety

As the research indicates, labor safety can be considered the most "impeccable" aspect of labor at the examined enterprises (Figure 4).

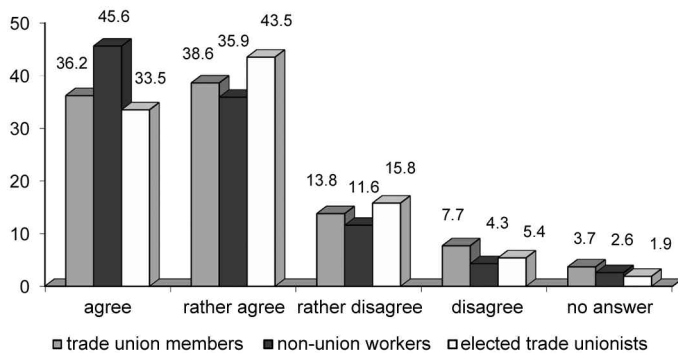


Figure 4. The results for the questionnaire item "Are you currently satisfied with such an aspect of your work at the enterprise as labor safety?" (percentage of the total number of respondents in each category)

Source: Designed by the authors

The most satisfaction with labor safety among the trade union members was reported by respondents in Perm (88.1% in sum), Astrakhan (88%), and Tomsk (82.1%); among non-union workers – in Megion (83.4%). The greatest dissatisfaction with that aspect was displayed by trade union members from Moscow (32.9%) and Dagestan (27.7%).

Social benefits

Opposite attitudes were found in the respondents regarding the social benefits provided by the enterprise (Figure 5). Positive and negative feedback was almost equal in value.

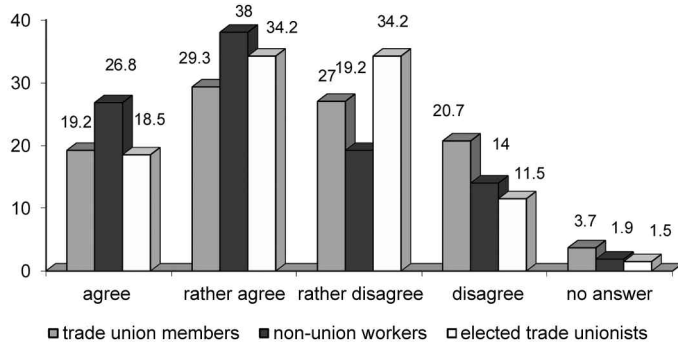


Figure 5. The results for the questionnaire item "Are you currently satisfied with such an aspect of your work at the enterprise as social benefits?" (percentage of the total number of respondents in each category)

Source: Designed by the authors

The most satisfaction with the social benefits was reported by trade union workers in Astrakhan (74.6%), Perm (74%), and Samara (57.7%). The most dissatisfaction was found in trade union workers in Dagestan (75.8%) and Orel (62.2%). The most part (72.6%) of non-union workers from Megion was satisfied with the social benefits package provided by the enterprise, while among the non-union workers from other enterprises this index was lower (50%).

3.3. Overall assessment of satisfaction with the quality of life in the labor collective

Summary indicators obtained as a result of survey data processing using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 are reflected in Figure 6. In the process of calculation, the obtained data were summed, the values "agree" and "disagree" were multiplied by the coefficients "1" and "-1" respectively, and the values "rather agree" and "rather disagree" were multiplied by the coefficients "0.5" and "-0.5" (i.e. were considered to be averaged indicators of partial satisfaction or partial dissatisfaction respectively). The scale presented in Figure 6 has a maximum value of 100 obtainable in case of 100% of participants responding "agree"

and the minimal value of -100 obtainable in case of 100% of participants responding "disagree".

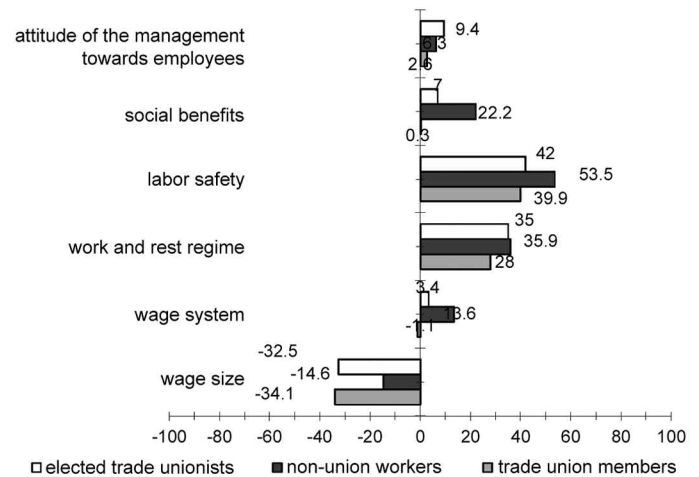


Figure 6. Summary indicators of satisfaction with the aspects of the quality of life

Source: Designed by the authors

To the greatest extent, workers in the industry were found to be satisfied with labor safety, as well as with the work and rest regime in their organizations. Satisfaction with the social benefits and attitude of management towards employees was in the zone of weak positive values. Satisfaction with the wage system was in the zone of weak negative values as reported by trade union workers and in the zone of weak positive values for the answers of non-union workers and elected trade unionists. Finally, all three categories of workers were unsatisfied with the size of wages. Dissatisfaction was most actively reported by elected and regular trade union members and reached the zone of medium negative values.

The diagram clearly indicates that the level of non-union workers' satisfaction with the various aspects of quality of life (with the exception of corporate culture considered in terms of the attitude of the management towards employees) was generally higher than in trade union workers (regular and elected trade union members).

4. Discussion

The analysis of satisfaction with the quality of life in Russian enterprise workers allowed us to establish that the level of satisfaction depends on the workers' affiliation with trade unions and participation in the organization of trade union activity.

Dissatisfaction with the current size of wages was characteristic of all respondents. It was found to be a mass phenomenon in the studied organizations and regions. The most discontent was reported by trade union members and elected trade unionists. This effect is explained by the more radical standpoint of these categories of workers, their active life position, and struggle for their rights (Lang & Rumsey, 2018; Liu & Perry, 2016).

The presented result appears to be paradoxical at first sight, since the wages of most of the enterprises covered by the study significantly exceed the average level of wages in the region (with the exception of only a few industry service organizations in Moscow and the Komi Republic). Observations made at the research objects and communication with respondents during the survey lead to the conclusion that the main source of employee dissatisfaction is the incoming information about the increase in world energy prices and the company production volumes, as well as rumors and fragmentary information on the incomes of top managers, all compared with their own financial situation.

The answer received in one of the surveys to the question of

what should the trade union committee of the enterprise pay increased attention to can be considered the leitmotif of the identified attitudes: "Salary and its ratio with the income of the enterprise and its managers. Oil is getting more expensive and we are getting less and less".

A stable relationship can be observed: the larger the work experience, the greater the worker's dissatisfaction with the value of their work at the enterprise. In the group of trade union members with over 10 years of work experience, 74.7% of respondents were completely or partially dissatisfied with the size of wages, while in the group of workers with 5 to 10 years of experience this percentage reached 66.3%, in the group with 1 to 5 years of experience – 65.7%, and in the group with less than 1 year of work experience – 50.6% of respondents.

Satisfaction with the size of wages was found to be dependent on the respondent's status. Among the non-union workers, this aspect completely or partially satisfied 65.9% of middle or lower-level managers, 43.5% of specialists and only 29.9% of regular workers. Dissatisfaction with the received salary was reported by 31.7% of managers, 54.5% of specialists, and 70.1% of workers. In the trade union members subcategory of the sample, dissatisfaction with wages was reported by 57.6% of managers, 62.6% of specialists, and 75.7% of workers.

The degree of satisfaction with the wage system was also found to be largely dependent on the longevity of work experience in the organization. Among the regular trade union members with over 10 years of work experience, positive judgments were made by 44.5% of the respondents, while among the workers with less experience this ratio reached 64.8%. Considering the age distributions, the salary system was most satisfactory for young people (57.4%); in older age groups, satisfaction with this aspect decreased and among trade union workers aged 51 years old and older, the salary system was suitable for a little over 40% of respondents.

Satisfaction with working conditions at the enterprise lied in the positive zone. This especially concerns the assessment of work and rest regime. Prioritizing the construction of favorable working and resting conditions for workers in order to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of the enterprise correlates with several prior studies (Shi, 2019; Bronkhorst et al., 2015). The vital factor significantly affecting the activity of any enterprise is safety, especially in conditions of artificial intelligence use (International Conference on CSIA, 2019; Neri et al., 2019). The majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with industrial safety, which is indicative of the modern management approaches to the organization of the production process.

Social benefits matter for the workers. A wide range of research is indicative of that (Guerci et al., 2019; Rasca, 2018). The study revealed the dependence of satisfaction with social benefits on the duration of work at the enterprise: the greater the working experience at the present enterprise, the less the satisfaction with provided social benefits. This indicates a slight deterioration in the sphere of social benefits both at a particular enterprise and compared to other enterprises. Workers who had been working at the enterprise for a long time (over 10 years) and were able to compare the previous amount of social benefits with the current one, expressed dissatisfaction with this aspect much more often (in 50.5% of the responses of trade union workers) than workers who came to work at the enterprise recently (31.4%). A rather high level of dissatisfaction with the provided social benefits was found in the group of elected trade union members (58.3%).

In general, all respondents expressed the most satisfaction with the aspects of labor safety and work and rest regime. All three categories of surveyed workers were united in a negative opinion on the size of wages. Comparative analysis revealed a higher average satisfaction with the studied quality of life indicators in non-union workers. This may be indicative of higher standards for the studied aspects of quality of life among regular

and elected trade union members, their increased social activity, and the desire to obtain more favorable conditions from the employer.

2. Conclusion

The social partnership system involves improving the quality of life that is satisfactory for all the members of the labor process. Practice indicates that currently, the system does not satisfy either non-union workers or regular and elected trade union members. Herein, the degree of Russian enterprise workers' satisfaction with the quality of life depends on their affiliation with trade unions and participation in the organization of trade union activity. This confirms the proposed research hypothesis.

The study results demonstrate that satisfaction with the quality of life in Russian enterprises in the aspects of size of wages, wage system, work and rest regime, labor safety, and social benefits are largely dependent on the respondents' status, trade union membership, and the geographical location of the enterprise.

The stable dependencies of employee satisfaction with the size of wages on the longevity of work experience at the enterprise, social status, age, and geographical location of the enterprise revealed during the study indicate the need to create a flexible, responsive wage system depending on changes in social factors. This will increase staff loyalty and labor productivity.

Elements of working conditions, especially work and rest regime and labor safety, well-worked out by the enterprise management, work in favor of the employer. This is indicative of a high level of production organization. At the same time, social benefits have not yet found their rightful place in ensuring favorable working conditions and quality of life. This is noted especially clearly by the workers with long work experience in the enterprise. The standard social package no longer satisfies experienced employees who notice some lag from other enterprises in this issue. A delay in resolving this problem may increase the tension in the workforce and adversely affect enterprise performance.

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