

THE PROBLEM OF CHOICE - ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SMES VS. MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES IN THE PERCEPTION OF POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The present paper addresses the issue of multinational companies and small and medium enterprises, in terms of advantages, disadvantages, and opportunities that candidates have when deciding to engage in one of these types of organizations. Through qualitative research, we tried to determine what is the perception of respondents on the issues listed above, and also what is their level of knowledge about these two categories of organizations.

Keywords: *SME, multinational company, human resources, pandemic*

JEL Classification: *F23, J24, M54*

1. Introduction

The topic of the advantages and disadvantages of both small and medium-sized enterprises and large companies has been addressed over time by many authors in the literature. It is vital to mention the particularly important role that SMEs play (Herr & Nettekoven, 2017) in the economic growth of a country (Keskin et al, 2010), the directions in which their influence is felt being numerous. Authors such as Bauchet & Morduch (2013) or Savlovski & Robu (2011) point out contributions such as the creation of new jobs, bringing income to the state, and, overall, reducing the level of poverty (in Manzoor et al, 2021). Of course, these aspects are not the only directions in which SMEs contribute to the economic well-being of a country, the reports also indicate the contribution to increasing the level of well-being of a nation, diversification of activities, and encouraging also the development of family business (Keskin et al., 2010).

Through SMEs, we can say that the whole economy is stimulated, their share in the total number of enterprises in the European Union, according to data provided by the European Commission, exceeding 99%. Also, one of the most important contributions is the creation of jobs in various fields, we can say that they differ in significance and importance from large organizations. At the same time, we notice, in this sense, a great diversification of specializations, through the wide area in which SMEs can activate. The main contribution in this regard suggests a correlation between the development trend of the activity, the ability to generate new jobs in different specializations, respectively the reduction of poverty, an aspect also mentioned by Oba and Onuoha (2013). The importance of the development of SMEs, as well as their relationship with a “productive employability” was also studied by Bui et al (2021), which centralizes the ideas stated by various authors in the literature (Rosa, 2017, Hilson, 2020, Rai et al, 2019, in Bui et al, 2021) and recognizes the importance of SME development about job creation, GDP growth and the achievement of local and global sustainable development goals.

Advantages of small and medium-sized enterprises can be considered even some of their characteristics - thus, small firms prove to be much more innovative (Ismail et al, 2014, Edwards et al, 2005) sometimes than large ones, although their capacity in this regard, as the OECD itself states, is much lower and long-term development is conditioned by well-known factors. Although they have a much lower capacity to conduct complex research, small businesses can even become revolutionary, showing greater versatility than we see in large companies, often aligned with strict and sometimes even rigid policies where change can be implemented in a harder manner.

The short-term orientation of smaller businesses is not necessarily a weakness, even if, especially in the current context, we face the inability to make long-term plans in the context of continuing economic and social uncertainty.

It becomes interesting to study, taking into account this information, what is the perspective of the employee or that of the future employee in the labor market. Which of the two options would a young college graduate go to? Would he/she prefer the long-term security and the prospect of a higher salary level in a large company or, on the contrary, the flexibility and challenges offered by a small company?

From the perspective of the future employee, choosing a job can be a real challenge because when a person is at the beginning of his career, various factors can influence the decision-making process. In the case of some people, it had nothing to do with their place of work in the field in which they completed their higher education. Also, at the beginning of the road, few individuals analyze in detail the opportunities or disadvantages presented by a company and their relevance to a future CV. But along the way, people become more experienced, attentive, and curious, so that their desires and needs develop, which makes them analyze in more detail the job market, respectively the companies in which the jobs are found. Starting from this idea regarding the analysis of the bidding companies, the question arises “what will the potential candidates choose on the market: an SME or a multinational company”?

Therefore, this paper is realized to analyze the main advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and perceptions of SMEs and multinational companies, so that we can answer the above question.

2. Literature review

The characteristics of small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as those of large companies, have been analyzed by many authors, identifying both the advantages and disadvantages of each of these categories of enterprises. Mainly, the differentiating element from which it starts is represented by the number of employees found within each of the 2 categories of enterprises mentioned. We are talking thus about SMEs by referring to those companies with less than 250 employees, while large companies are the ones that exceed this number of employees.

Thus, if we previously mentioned the much more dynamic nature of small firms, we cannot ignore the much greater capacity of corporations to provide the necessary infrastructure to carry out the activity at the best performance parameters. These are generally companies with much higher financial coverage, having the opportunity to make significant investments in equipment and technology, and employees being, in turn, remunerated at a higher level, which, in the case of SMEs, is not always possible. On the other hand, in the case of large companies, we can talk about the existence of well-established standards, which, however, also require a much higher level of involvement on the part of the staff.

Modigliani and Miller (1958, in Melesse et al, 2021) state that "without corporate taxes, bankruptcy risks, and related distortions, a firm's balance sheet structure would not affect its market value if capital markets are competitive." In countries with well-developed legal and financial systems, both multinationals and SMEs may face lower funding constraints, but, according to Bloom (2010, in Bui et al, 2021), such barriers to the development of companies, are easier to meet in terms of small and medium enterprises, compared to large organizations. According to the World

Economic Forum (2019), SMEs face difficult situations, especially in low-income countries, even though they contribute greatly to a country's economy and create jobs permanently. Funding opportunities are indeed a launching pad for many SMEs, allowing them to expand their business and create new jobs, but these aids also require compliance with certain conditions. So is it possible for such companies to offer an attractive salary to their employees if there are conditions regarding certain clauses regarding the funding received?

The need to implement a more attractive salary system is also justified by the higher requirements of new employees, in the conditions of a "war to attract talent" (Eriksson et al, 2022) and the obligation to offer surplus value (Benitez, Ayala & Frank, 2020), in this sense, the financing intended for SMEs representing a new way to grow on the market by increasing the number of employees and developing the activity.

By comparison, in a large company, the responsibilities of employees will also be more extensive, the short-term consequences often consisting in increasing the level of stress, and in the long term - the accumulation of professional dissatisfaction, provided that the criterion of equity does not is always respected.

Speaking of the issue of choice, salary is not the only determining factor in the case of an employee (Siyal & Garavan, 2020), just as experience is not the only requirement made by companies. Looking at the two types of business in parallel, SMEs and large firms, we can see that, in general, the requirements set by large employers are more difficult than in the case of small firms and can be formulated, in addition to criteria on the candidate's experience, some related also to skills or competencies required. The choice can also be influenced by the employee's ability to integrate into the new team, which can be easily achieved in the case of a company with ten employees, but much more difficult if we speak about a team of hundreds of people. On the other hand, if the atmosphere in a small company is not always warm and friendly, certainly in the case of a large company, the level of formality may be higher, as well as the degree of security of operations and compliance with deadlines.

The problem of choosing the type of company in which an individual wants to work will certainly take into account both economic determinants and others of a psychological or behavioral nature. Thus, a person who works more efficiently in small teams or even alone will prefer an SME from this point of view, while the more sociable people, open to interaction, will opt for large companies. Regarding the compensation granted for the work performed, although the salary level may be a motivating element in itself, other benefits offered will certainly be a plus (SHRM, 2018).

By the background of the changes that the company is facing in terms of the specifics of the new generations of employees, the challenges imposed by an increasing digitalization, but also by the accentuation of the migration phenomenon, companies, regardless of size, have been subjected to new attempts given by the sanitary sphere.

A new challenge in this regard has been the period of the last two and a half years, in the context in which the entire planet has been subjected to severe trials, both economically and socially. Since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, both small and medium-sized enterprises and large companies have been affected to varying degrees, which is true, but the effects on some are still felt today, in the context in which each enterprise is dependent on human activity, regardless of the field of activity. Shafi et al (2020) identify numerous effects, generated both from the perspective of logistics and human resources, indicating small and medium-sized enterprises as "victims" to a greater extent.

Prasad et al. (2015) argue that the emergence of a crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, could seriously affect SMEs as they will interruptions of activity, employees being the first to feel the effects. In this sense, we can notice a much higher degree of sensitivity, vulnerability, and even fragility of these enterprises, characteristics that are determined at least in part by the small size of the companies. Also, based on the size of the companies, we can say that this fragility is also felt

financially compared to large companies, which demonstrate greater market stability and a much greater ability to cope with unforeseen shocks.

The global spread of the COVID-19 virus began in late 2019, gradually gaining momentum, leading to the introduction of measures to prevent the spread of the disease. Even so, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been devastating for the entire world economy (World Economic Forum, 2020). During this period, the International Labor Organization claimed that there was a possibility that 25 million people would lose their jobs (IOM, 2020).

Soeling et al (2022) point to human resources as one of the most important factors without which societies cannot function, an idea shared by many other authors in the literature (Sivertzen et al., 2013, in Soeling et al., 2022). These ideas are supported by the quality of human resources to ensure added value, contributing to increasing the level of competitiveness of companies. Human resources themselves can therefore turn into a competitive advantage for a company, with reports from specialist bodies arguing that a level of employee qualification can become the distinguishing factor between a successful and a generic organization. However, regardless of the effort made by the company in the effort to recruit staff, the employment decision is up to the individual, who will make the decision based on personal factors of influence.

In this sense, the interview is the tool through which both the employer and the employee find out information about each other (Norskov et al, 2022), is the most used method that employers use to secure their workforce and ensure market competitiveness (Norskov et al, 2022). The selection of future employees may be influenced by certain factors or implicit prejudices that are difficult to control, thus giving rise to unintended biases or discrimination (Rivera, 2012). This type of procedure can affect the company's image (Gilliland, 1993) which could later have effects such as bypassing vacancies by applicants. The image that society manages to create is very important, regardless of its size. Many successful companies have a high profit but always have problems with the staff because they do not focus on human resources, do not care about their well-being, and do not reward them properly after the work is done.

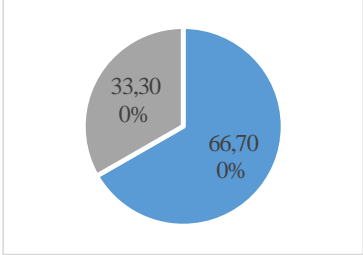
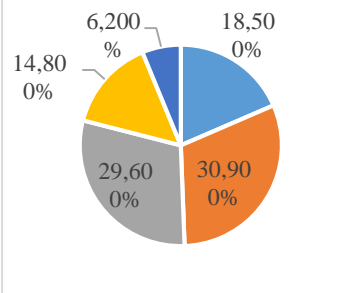
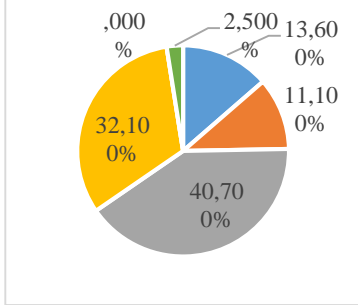
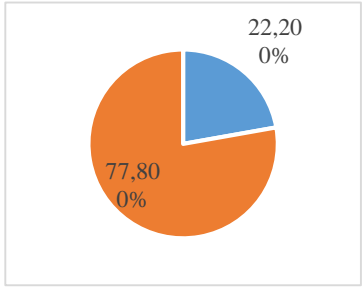
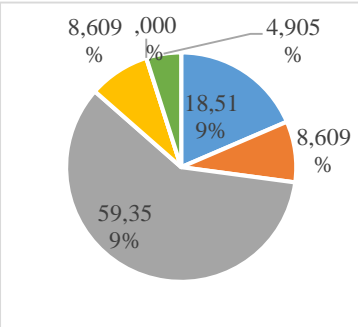
Romanian society, due to the socio-political changes of the 1990s, experienced a political, economic, and social dynamic, so these changes influenced individuals to make various changes regarding jobs but also offered the possibility to set up the first private companies (Dumitrescu & Dumitrescu, 2013). Due to poor control over small and medium-sized companies, employers often took advantage of the lack of it and did not offer employment contracts to their employees, which is why employees looked at small companies in particular with skepticism. This practice is still present today, especially in disadvantaged areas such as small towns and rural areas. Among the reasons why employers do not take their employees seriously are the high taxes they have to pay to the state, as well as the total lack, in some cases, of state aid for SMEs.

The stressful situations we talked about above can influence the employee's activity so that his level of performance would decrease significantly (Cicei, 2012), compared to the situation of Multinational company employees who have a lower stress level ensured by the stability of the job, the constant level of requirements at work, the coverage of a single field as well as the stable schedule.

3. Research methodology

To be able to study the issue of the choice made by an individual in the context of the pandemic, regarding working in an SME or a multinational company, a research was carried out, having as the main tool an online questionnaire. It was applied using a form made in Google Forms, between March 28, 2022 - May 10, 2022, on a sample of 81 people from Caraș-Severin County, aged between 20-60 and years. Distribution of the sample according to the following socio-demographic characteristics:

Table no. 1 – The socio-demographic variables

Gender criterion	Age	Level of education
		
66,7% female 33,3% male	18,5% - under 25 years old 30,9% - 26-34 years old 29,6% - 35-44 years old 14,8% - 45-54 years old 6,2% - over 55 years old	13,6% - highschool education 11,1% - post-secondary education 40,7% - bachelor studies 32,1% - master studies 0% - PhD studies 2,5% - other
Residence	Labor market status	
		18,5% - employed student 8,6% - unemployed student 59,3% - active person on the labor market, other than employed student 8,6% - entrepreneur 0% - unemployed / person without activity 4,9% - self-employed
77,8% - urban area 22,2% - rural area		

The questionnaire included a number 29 questions, of which 6 were identification questions and 23 were content questions. The structure of the questionnaire was complex, containing both closed, multi-answer questions and scale-based questions, with respondents scoring for the proposed criteria, according to Likert's scale, from 1 to 5. The identification questions were aimed to establish the gender of respondents, age, residential environment, level of education, respectively the status in the labor market.

To be able to determine which of the two options - SMEs or large multinational companies are of greater interest to respondents, as well as to study their motivation to choose one or the other of the two options, we proposed for our study the main objective, respectively several secondary objectives. The latter consisted of:

Table no 2 – Secondary objectives

OS1	Analysis of the respondents' perception regarding the comparison of multinational companies - small and medium-sized enterprises
OS2	Identifying the level of familiarity of the respondents with the concepts of “multinational” and “small company”, as well as with their particularities
OS3	Identifying the main challenges faced by these companies during the pandemic and the solutions implemented for survival on the market
OS4	Study of the respondents' perception regarding the management processes, comparatively in multinational companies and SMEs
OS5	Studying the challenges posed by the pandemic and assessing the chances of survival of multinationals vs. small enterprises in this context;
OS6	Analysis of employee satisfaction in multinationals vs small companies, respectively of the determining factors;

OS7	Determining the advantages and disadvantages of multinational companies vs. small and medium-sized enterprises;
OS8	Identifying the main opportunities of human resources in multinational companies vs. small and medium-sized enterprises;

4. Results

The analysis and interpretation of the research information were performed, at the level of the entire sample, depending on the answers of the respondents to the questions in the questionnaire.

In terms of distribution in the business market, at the European level, more than 98% of companies are in the SME category. Large firms and multinational companies represent competitors with significant importance in the market, often contributing to hampering the survival of small firms.

In correlation with the established objectives, and especially with the secondary objective no. 1, through the first question in the questionnaire, we tried to determine the level of familiarity of the respondents with the notion of the multinational company. The results are arranged according to the figure below, and from the results obtained, we can see that 33.8% of respondents are familiar with this notion to an average extent, indicating that they have only general knowledge of this topic. Very close is the percentage of those who say they have a great deal of knowledge on this issue, 20% being very familiar with the term. The percentage of those who identify a low level of familiarity with this term is quite small, with 7.5% of respondents declaring that they are very little acquainted, and 6.2% - to a small extent.

The conclusions of the present research will therefore be influenced by this unequal distribution regarding the degree of familiarity with the studied term.

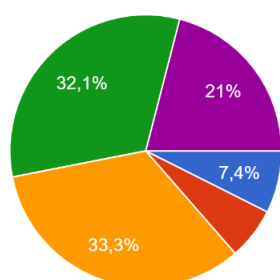


Fig. 1 Level of familiarity with the notion of the multinational company

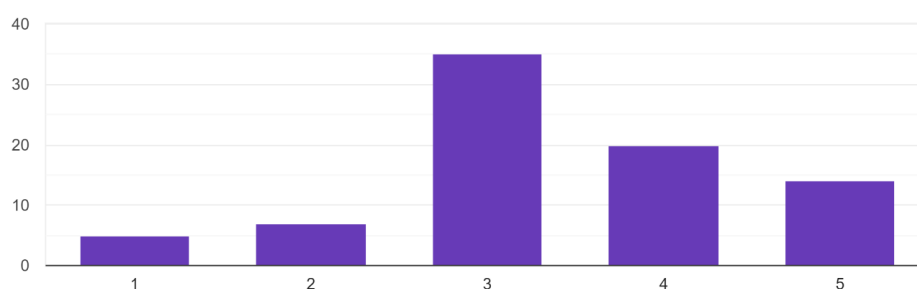


Fig. 2 Level of familiarity with the notion of SME

Regarding the term SME, the distribution of answers provided by respondents is as follows: the highest percentage of respondents (43.2%) state an average level of knowledge about this term, while only 17.3% of respondents are familiar with this notion and know more details about SMEs. Out of the total number of respondents, 6.2% have a very low level of knowledge about this notion.

The confusion regarding the notion of small and medium-sized enterprises, respectively multinational companies can be justified by the long transition period that our country went through in the years after the Revolution, a period that was marked by a difficult process of privatization of enterprises.

Each of the two categories of organizations has important characteristics in the market (Fig. 3). Regarding multinational companies, a significant percentage (32.1%) of the total respondents consider that it is an advantage for multinational companies to diversify their production and sales markets in different geographical areas. The relevance of the other features is between 1.2-25.9% as follows: 25.9% of respondents believe that multinationals contribute greatly to job creation in

the market, so from their point of view this is an important characteristic, while 16% of respondents indicated as a significant advantage the job stability. Other features, such as the high share of capital investment, training, and other employee benefits, are mentioned by 9.9% and 7.4% of respondents, respectively, and the possibility of using advanced technologies are considered relevant by 6.2% of respondents.

One of the important features of multinational companies, namely the intense development of research activity is considered important by 1.2% of respondents, while a similar percentage recalls the important role that plays in the export of production. It is interesting to note that none of those who responded to the questionnaire consider it important to make significant expenditures on advertising.

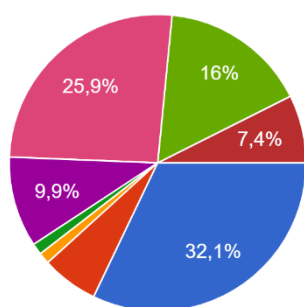


Fig. 3 The most important features of multinational companies

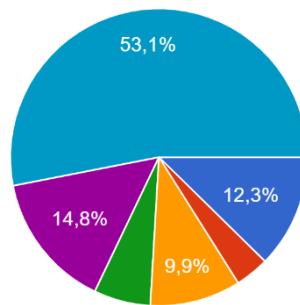


Fig. 4 The most important features of SMEs

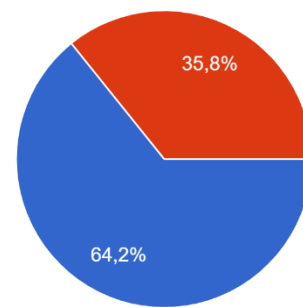


Fig. 5 Companies that bring the greatest benefits to the Romanian economy

Regarding SMEs, on the other hand, out of the total respondents, a percentage of 53.1% consider it more important to promote close interpersonal relationships. The small number of staff thus has a major advantage, which allows, on the one hand, a much better mutual knowledge of employees, and on the other hand, encourages easier and more efficient collaboration. The relevance of the other features is low, below 10-15% as follows: 14.8% of respondents say that the higher dynamism of small companies is a relevant feature, while 12.3% of respondents indicated it as important in companies' small leadership customization.

Asked which of the two categories of enterprises: SMEs or large companies bring the most benefits to the Romanian economy (Fig. 6), we find that a percentage of 64.2% of respondents opt for multinational companies in this regard and 35.8 % for SMEs, but this is a questionable statement given that the capital of multinationals is often foreign, and SMEs are still the "engine of the economy".

During the COVID - 19 pandemic, the European Commission allocated several funds to Romania, through various operational programs, which are intended mainly for SMEs. Respondents were asked to express their views on the effectiveness of these allocated funds, and from the results we can see that 49.4% of them consider that these funds were relatively effective, followed by a percentage of 23.5% who argue that the funds allocated to SMEs have been very effective. On the other hand, 22.2% consider that the efficiency of the allocation of these funds was poor, while a percentage of 4.9% claim that their efficiency was very low or not mentionable.

As a solution to ensure business continuity, we can also refer to an action implemented by most of the large companies during the pandemic or at least during the lockdown, namely the transfer of work in the virtual environment. Working from home has thus gained a great deal of popularity, as has the use of various online platforms, which need to be used to ensure the flexibility and efficiency of the communication process at the company level. But how was this measure appreciated by the respondents?

We notice that the answers provided vary quite a bit. We can see that the majority of respondents, ie 46.9% believe that working from home was largely a good choice, even a very good

one, as stated by 27.2% of the subjects. A percentage of 17.3% indicates a medium-level agreement, the difference up to 100% being represented by people who did not agree with this measure.

But *working from home* was just one of the solutions implemented during the pandemic. In addition, another solution for the survival of multinational companies during the pandemic was to *adapt their activities to the online environment*, with 12 respondents out of 81 indicating in this case a low or very low efficiency. On the other hand, 17 respondents consider this solution to be beneficial at an average level, while 52 respondents consider this solution to be effective or even very effective. *The implementation of digitalization solutions in the work process* was also a measure taken for the companies to survive on the market in these 2 years. In the study, however, 12 respondents indicated a low level of effectiveness of this measure, with most respondents, 48, expressing a dissenting opinion, while 21 respondents stated an average level of effectiveness of this measure.

Another solution to pandemic survival was to let go of several employees, a solution that was not beneficial for the staff. Following the results obtained, we could observe that only 8 respondents out of 81 consider that such a solution would be appropriate, while an average level of efficiency in such situations is indicated by a number of 5 respondents, with opposing opinions being expressed by to 68 people (about 84%).

Adapting the product range to market requirements is seen by 48 respondents as an effective solution, while 14 respondents rate an average level of efficiency on this action, and at the opposite end, we find 13 respondents who express a negative opinion on this strategy, stating that a traditional approach would be more appropriate.

We cannot deny that the COVID 19 pandemic has challenged the economic activity of SMEs. During the two years of the pandemic, small and medium-sized companies implemented various solutions to survive and continue to operate safely for both their customers and their employees.

As in the case of multinational companies, the first solution for the survival of SMEs during the pandemic was to adopt *telework solutions*. In the study, 38 respondents considered that such a solution was effective or even very effective, while 14 respondents agreed with it to an average extent. On the other hand, 29 respondents believe that this is to a lesser extent an effective solution.

In the case of SMEs, *the adaptation to the online environment of the activities* carried out is considered to be to a small extent effective by 18 respondents. An average level of efficiency is recognized by 22 respondents, and 41 of the 81 respondents surveyed indicate the high efficiency of this measure.

In the case of SMEs, as well as in the case of multinational companies, managers resorted to the implementation of solutions to digitize the work process, a measure accepted by 38 respondents as largely effective, but also the measure of unemployment was in adopted in some cases, although from this point of view, it remains to a large extent little or not at all popular among employees, 52 respondents (64.2%) considering it as effective to a small or very small extent. In addition, the adaptation of the product range to market requirements is more widely accepted by respondents in terms of SME activity.

The challenges faced by the companies during the last two years were not few, these being analyzed by the respondents as follows:

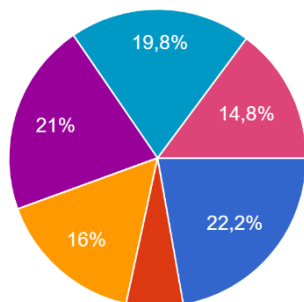


Fig. 6 The main challenges faced by multinational companies

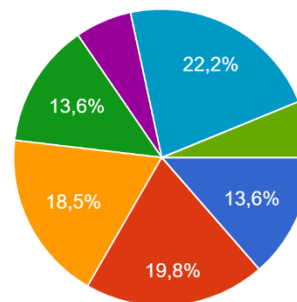


Fig. 7 The main challenges faced by SMEs

In the case of multinational companies, 22.2% of the respondents consider that the biggest challenge that these companies faced was the provision of employees with equipment, to carry out telework. On the other hand, about 21% of respondents mention in this sense the reduced capacity of companies to make long-term planning, while 19.8% indicate an increased level of absenteeism among staff.

Regarding SMEs, the most important challenge is considered to be the periodic interruption of activity, mentioned by a percentage of 22.2% of respondents, while 19.8% mention the reduction of revenues, 18.5% indicate a decrease in the number of customers, and 13.6% - the increase of expenses, respectively the insufficiency of the support granted by the State.

Consequently, some of the respondents question whether the situation within the Romanian companies would be better if the manager of the respective organization were a foreigner. The results obtained in the case of such a question are interesting, which aim to identify the preferences of individuals for a Romanian or a foreign manager. The majority of respondents (35.8%) are undecided in giving an answer in this regard, motivating both negative and positive aspects of both variants, many people are still quite faithful to the traditional, showing a greater degree of reluctance to change. 29.6% believe that their level of satisfaction as employees would be higher if they had a foreign manager, being more curious, open, and willing to try new options, or some of them have already had the opportunity to work in a company with a foreign manager, opting for this option based on one's own experience and knowledge. On the other hand, a significant percentage, 34.6% of respondents, consider that they would not have any additional satisfaction working in a company with a foreign manager.

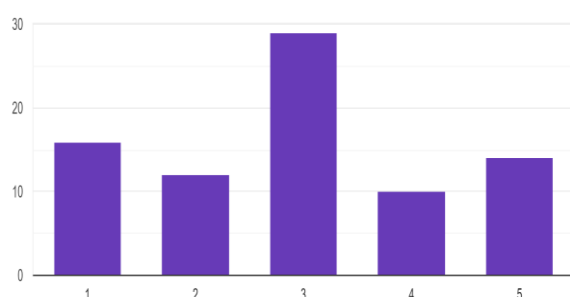


Fig. 8 The level of satisfaction in the case of employees with a foreign manager

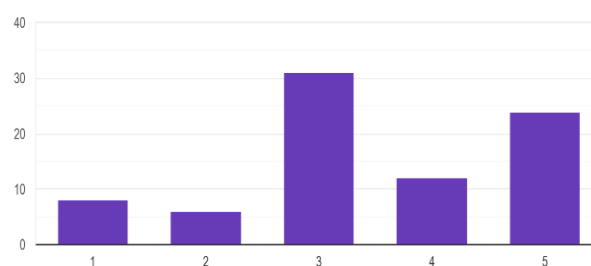


Fig. 9 The level of satisfaction in the case of employees with a Romanian manager

On the other hand, in the situation where we are talking about a company with a Romanian manager, the percentage of those undecided is close to the previous case, 38.3%, which reflects a normal situation given that most respondents had no experience with foreign managers. We also find a percentage of 44.4% of respondents, who believe that to a large extent they would obtain a significant level of job satisfaction from a Romanian manager. This is because every year a

significant number of managers go abroad and return with the experience and education gained, managing in return to combine this international vision with a superior understanding of the typical and the local context. The low percentage of 7.4% and 9.9% belongs to the respondents who do not see any satisfaction in having a Romanian manager, and here we can conclude that they had negative experiences at work, with Romanian managers.

Respondents were asked to tell us to what extent they consider the level of satisfaction of multinational companies' employees to be influenced by several factors such as salary package, promotion opportunities, work for the team, optimal working environment, training, and vocational training and personal, flexible work schedule, job stability and last but not least the existence of strong leadership. From the answers given by the respondents, we notice that at the level of multinational companies, the level of employee satisfaction is greatly influenced by the salary package, followed by the establishment of the job, the possibility of promotion, the optimal working environment, these options meeting most scores 4 and 5. Most respondents believe that the level of satisfaction is higher when it comes to strong leadership in these companies.

Regarding SMEs, on the other hand, the degree of employee satisfaction is influenced by the following factors: the salary package, the possibility of promotion, teamwork, and the optimal working environment. The largest number of respondents consider the salary package as the main motivating and influencing factor of employees. We note that the possibility of promotion, as well as the team and the work environment are considered by the respondents as factors of satisfaction, but at a lower level than the elements listed above.

If respondents were to choose a job in a multinational or an SME, the key factors that would lead to a decision in this regard would be higher salary, bonus system, employment in a higher and better position after the experience gained, but also the packages offered additionally, the option of multinationals acquiring in this sense land to the detriment of small and medium enterprises. When we discuss the idea of being employed in an SME to the detriment of a large company, opinions are divided, but we can also point out some of the arguments that would tip the scales in favor of small firms, but which are disadvantages of multinationals: higher requirements for employment, longer and more difficult accommodation period, very strict monitoring of employees, difficulty in accepting new ideas.

In the case of those who would opt for an SME, most respondents are attracted by the flexibility and reorganization of activities and consider that it is a strength and close relationships between employees in smaller groups. Responding quickly to employee needs is also seen as an advantage by respondents. However, even in the case of small companies, we face disadvantages, namely lack of job security, mistakes would be more easily observed affecting the entire organization, lack of clear tasks, lack of prospect of promotion, low salary, and a small staff with low socializing capacity. Also, especially in SMEs, the fluctuation of human resources can affect the activity much more acutely than in the case of multinational companies.

As the main causes in this regard, we can list inadequate working conditions and high stress, this factor being highlighted by respondents in a percentage of 48.1%. The following factors of influence are professional incompetence, mentioned in a percentage of 34.6%, and, in the case of multinationals, the low capacity to be noticed individually as an employee (33.3%). All this directly or indirectly concerns the well-being of employees. The next influencing factors are the restructuring or reorganization of companies, with a percentage of 30.9%, the lack of correspondence with the requirements of the organization (27.2%), respectively the characteristics of the work performed (18.5%).

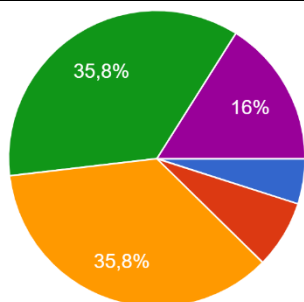


Fig. 10 Promotion opportunities

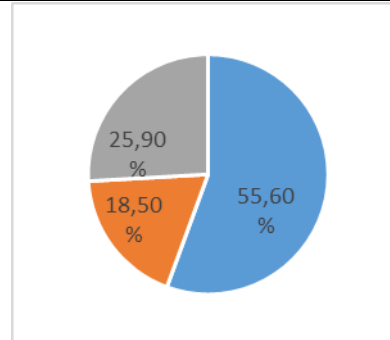


Fig. 11 The employment option

Asked to what extent they consider the promotion opportunities to be greater in the multinationals, we find 2 answers that predominate, namely "at a medium level" and "to a large extent". We can thus conclude that it is not very clear to respondents what it means to work in a multinational and how it works, the working environment, and the policy that multinationals have in terms of human resources.

On the other hand, when asked where they would like to work in a multinational or an SME, we notice that the majority of respondents (55.60%) would choose the first option, while SMEs would be preferred by a relatively small percentage of respondents (18.5%). A significant percentage of respondents (25.90%), on the other hand, are undecided or do not know exactly what they would choose.

5. Discussions and conclusions

The calculation of the descriptive statistical indicators reveals the following situation regarding the variables for which the evaluation was performed using the Likert scale.

Table no 3 – The calculation of the statistical indicators

Variable	N	Weighted arithmetic mean	Dispersion	Standard deviation	Variation coefficient
Level of familiarity with the term multinational company	81	3.53	1.237	1.112	31.498%
Level of familiarity with the term SME	81	3.38	1.125	1.060	31.357%
Work from home - solution for multinational companies	81	3.93	0.858	0.926	23.60%
Multinational company's survival solutions – Telework	81	3.568	1.455	1.206	33.811%
Multinational companies' survival solutions - adapting activities to the online environment	81	3.753	1.297	1.139	30.345%
Multinational companies' survival solutions - Digitizing Work Processes	81	3.753	1.247	1.117	29.762%
Multinational companies' survival solutions – firing employees	81	1.728	0.988	0.994	57.508%
Multinational companies' survival solutions - adapting the product range	81	3.543	1.532	1.238	34.934%
SME survival solutions - Telework	81	3.235	1.809	1.345	41.584%
SME survival solutions - adapting activities to the online environment	81	3.432	1.579	1.256	36.609%
SME survival solutions - Digitizing Work Processes	81	3.457	1.557	1.248	36.094%

SME survival solutions – firing employees	81	2.123	1.244	1.115	52.526%
SME survival solutions - adapting the product range	81	3.667	1.333	1.155	31.492%
Satisfaction of having a foreign manager	81	2.926	1.748	1.322	45.181%
Satisfaction of having a Romanian manager	81	3.469	1.582	1.258	36.260%
Choosing to work in a multinational company - higher salary determinant	81	4.173	1.056	1.028	24.632%
Choosing to work in a multinational company – a bonus system determinant	81	4.037	1.072	1.035	25.655%
Choosing to work in a multinational company – determinant: the experience gained	81	4.024	1.135	1.065	26.473%
Choosing to work in a multinational company – determinant: training offered at employment	81	3.876	1.244	1.115	28.772%
Choosing to work in a multinational company – determinant: the opportunity to use new technologies	81	3.839	1.147	1.071	27.895%
Choosing to work in a multinational company – determinant: additional benefits	81	4	1.136	1.066	26.643%
Choosing to work in a multinational company – determinant: the possibility of relocation	81	3.345	1.707	1.307	39.058%
Choosing to work in a multinational company – determinant: the possibility to travel	81	3.592	1.278	1.130	31.472%
Disadvantages of multinational companies - high employment requirements	81	3.024	1.086	1.042	34.450%
Disadvantages of multinational companies - long accommodation period	81	2.987	1.148	1.071	35.862%
Disadvantages of multinational companies - too high-security level	81	2.765	1.315	1.146	41.472%
Disadvantages of multinational companies - strict monitoring of employees	81	2.950	1.306	1.142	38.734%
Disadvantages of multinational companies - targets that are difficult to reach	81	3.086	1.338	1.156	37.480%
Disadvantages of multinational companies - high-stress level	81	3.308	1.299	1.140	34.458%
Advantages of SMEs - flexibility	81	3.543	1.186	1.089	30.741%
Advantages of SMEs – close interpersonal relations	81	3.667	1.259	1.122	30.604%
Advantages of SMEs – quick response to employee needs	81	3.592	1.229	1.108	30.859%
Disadvantages of SMEs – the lack of job security	81	3.506	1.211	1.145	32.665%
Disadvantages of SMEs - low promotion prospects	81	3.296	1.097	1.047	31.780%
Disadvantages of SMEs - low salary level	81	3.555	1.185	1.088	30.618%

Regarding the obtained results, the calculated level of the coefficient of variation shows us the degree of homogeneity and implicitly representativeness of the sample of respondents. In most cases, observing the data in the table above, we find that the analyzed sample is a representative one, the V values registering in the case of many variables below 35%.

Of course, there are exceptions, so in the case of questions about the usefulness of implementing solutions such as employee firing or telework, respondents' opinions are divided and the indicator shows a higher degree of spread. These views, whether referring to SMEs or multinationals, are largely influenced by the socio-demographic characteristics set out above. However, there is a greater openness to the solution on telework, where we notice a relative

homogeneity of answers, while a more acute challenge we notice in the case of the solution on unemployment.

We also observe relative homogeneity in the case of implementing a solution such as relocating an employee. This is because it is a solution that can be implemented unevenly, depending on the family status, mentality, or openness of employees to such solutions.

The question is, however, what factor is most influential in deciding whether to join a multinational company or an SME. The following are taken into account: employment requirements, the possibility of promotion, the accommodation period, the degree of monitoring or the level of stress or even the targets to be reached. In all these respects, concerning multinationals, the level of representativeness of the answers is average, with the coefficient of variation registering values close to the maximum homogeneity limit or even exceeding the 35% threshold. We notice a higher degree of homogeneity in the case of the answers provided regarding the advantages presented by SMEs.

Any genuine market economy works with the support of both small and medium-sized enterprises and large enterprises, but the former predominate numerically, even if their market power is much more limited than that of large companies. However, we cannot deny the existence of complementary relationships between SMEs and large companies. The strongest differentiation is when choosing a potential candidate, who, after a long or brief analysis, can identify both the advantages and disadvantages of each of the two categories of companies. Currently, part of the workforce found in large enterprises has previously worked in SMEs, which in turn "absorb" some of the former employees of large enterprises.

Acknowledgment: we would like to express our gratitude to the students of the study program Accounting and management information systems (Reșița), the third year, within the Department of Business Administration - Reșița, FSEGA, UBB, who supported this research approach through a valuable contribution in collecting answers to the questionnaire for this study.

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