

SELECTED ASPECTS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE WITH REGARD TO PANDEMIC CHALLENGES

Agnieszka BARCIK

University of Bielsko-Biala, Faculty of Management and Transport; abarcik@ath.bielsko.pl,
ORCID: 0000-0003-0865-2161

Purpose: Determining and discussing various aspects of crisis management in the organizations in perspective of pandemic challenges with particular emphasis on the workplace conditions.

Design/methodology/approach: The research method used in the paper is mainly a standardized survey conducted on the basis of a questionnaire containing closed and open questions carried out in two exemplary enterprises. The research process was also accompanied by analysis of source documentation.

Findings: Research results verify research hypotheses formulated on basis of the paper's objectives, enabling general conclusions.

Research implications: Future research directions should focus on further, expanded research exploration in the area, taking into account various industries.

Practical implications: The results of the research discussed in the paper have a number of practical implications mainly for the management staff in terms of use of crisis management tools and improvement of crisis management strategies.

Social implications: Building awareness of crisis management issues.

Originality/value: The paper has cognitive value for the development of knowledge, science and quality in terms of crisis management in the light of pandemic.

Keywords: crisis management, pandemic, employees, working environment.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

The major concept of the paper is to examine the enterprise crisis management in the face of Covid-19 pandemic challenges and mostly focus on the workplace conditions. The above was carried out based on the case-studies of two selected companies that belong to different industries and markets, operate in different countries and which have different organizational structures. As the effects of the pandemic are visible in every aspects of life the analysis of its impact on working environment remains constant concern of today's reality in order to enhance

future preparedness on similar occurrences and development of effective measures in order to stay resilient and capable for adaptation.

Examination of soft aspects of managing human resources and challenges of leaders remain valuable in context of building the strong team of motivated employees thus raising the chances for the company to survive the crisis. The state of social responsibility of companies during pandemic have been analyzed as the concept supporting the development of whole markets, and mutual support on local level. Currently, the world is going through the phase of recovery and gaining new stabilization, thus it is a good moment to analyze the previous year of insecurities and struggles within markets to discover real bottlenecks of the situation and draw constructive conclusions.

Although there are numerous analyses of particular companies and markets within specific countries available, the author finds it important to present deeper analysis of the specific sectors and the consistent comparison of two different environments, with regard to the soft values of management, based on the opinions of target teams of employees. According to the theoretical goal of the paper the approach towards crisis management have been presented through the concept of good practices, strategic planning and analyses of enterprises' environments. Cognitive goal of the paper was to apply theoretical methods into chosen enterprises' analyses from the pandemic perspective and to examine the employees opinions on how the current global crisis situation influenced their well-being and organizational changes in company's management.

Through the following questions based on the research the condition of the pandemic market was explored:

1. Did the companies succeed in crisis management during pandemic and did not let the crisis to develop in the company?
2. Are the communication and motivation responsible for well-being of the employees during hard times?
3. Was the sector, range of activities, place of performed duties, type of contact among people and the size of the company crucial during current pandemic to continue the company's activity and preserve the feel of security of employees?
4. Is there any possibility that the company could benefit from crisis situation develop and improve?

2. Covid-19 pandemic crisis and its impact on enterprises

The global history is full of the critical situations of human life safety breach, variety of financial collapses and the situations especially of natural character which resulted in the overall misery. The situations which convulsed the world's or more local environments' safety and

economy refer to political including numerous wars and rebellions, economic with financial crises, and technological when errors occur on the way of human usage of technology and science, but also social crisis situation causing humanitarian problems and natural disasters wholly men independent (Khodarahmi, 2009).

Epidemics, according to classification of crisis situations, belong to social crises, influencing every part of human life, forcing enormous organizational changes and posing direct danger to human lives (Cai, Tindal, Tartanoglu Bennett and Velu, 2021).

At the end of 2019, the world was surprised by the new coronavirus called SARS-coV-2, causing the emergence of new disease named Covid-19, which was firstly recognized in Wuhan, China. On 11 March, 2020 the pandemic of Covid-19 disease was announced by World Health Organization (WHO), clarifying and confirming the severity of the worldwide situation (Zhong, Li, Ding and Liao, 2021).

Covid-19 pandemic crisis situation resulted in global crisis, as the virus failed to be scotched at the beginning and spread across the globe. Shortly after the emergence of the virus, people over the world suffered from the disease, experiencing fear for their own and relatives' health, for the very existence and the lack of means to live, and fear connected with the economic and political stability of the world. The safety means that have been implemented across the countries include the insistence on keeping the hygiene standards together with raising awareness about the hygiene, the control over the infected and exposed individuals in the form of quarantines, social distance restrictions, limitations of gatherings, lockdowns and closures of various institutions, boarders closures and travel restrictions (Pallvi, Suri, 2020).

The pandemic uncompromisingly had strong impact on people's everyday life (Nowacki, Grabowska and Łakomy, 2020). To overcome the difficulties and problems during crisis situation, a set of steps needed to be applied to control and improve the situation. Also during Covid-19 pandemic, new practices had to be created to adjust to the needs of this specific situation, having available the resources of contemporary world (Wojciechowska-Filipek, Mazurek-Kucharska, 2019).

In times of strong digitalization which source goal remains to create virtual world from which we steer the physical world there are appropriate tools available to manage problems with help of technology (Mourão, da Silva Abbad and Legentil, 2022). The easy way of gaining information and using it for future researches became the privilege of nowadays healthcare. During pandemic the need of quick adjustment of the technology meant quicker reaction to the pandemic effects. The tracing application, controlling the state of infections became the new normal however posing the questions about the limits of interfering with people's privacy and collection of data. Not only the healthcare systems used the technology to improve their work. But also various organizations implemented the digital tools to develop and preserve relations with clients and as an alternative channel of communication. The storage of documents and remote office issues processing gained on time and money saving. Ecological issues can be also noticed through digital practices like using less paper and no need to travel to arrange issues.

Remote work is also a helpful fruit of digitalization, being beneficial during lockdowns, but also showing the potential of new solutions even after pandemic (Wang, Liu, Qian and Parker, 2021).

The Covid-19 pandemic can be considered crisis itself or crisis situation depending on the perspective. Looking globally, pandemic caused a crisis having universal mutual consequences (Kouzmin, 2008). From more internal point of view, it is the crisis situation whose effects are influencing the emergence of crisis in particular enterprises and environments which are most vulnerable (Fagel, 2013). In this case, the more environment is resilient to arise of crisis, the impacts of the pandemic will be smaller. Mentioned dimension for pandemic impacts refers to more serious damages in closed environments, and the outbreak of the internal crisis, in which the pandemic situation itself is only the motor power for crisis arising (Rautela, 2006). As long as the pandemic had an impact on more general spheres of public life it could bring smaller consequences within particular units, because the two spheres and the existence of their content depends and counts on different aspects. While the existence and security of public health depends on the availability of the protection masks, high quality of hygiene and the availability of the vaccine, the security and existence of the company depends rather on determinants like movement limitations specific for particular country or the aspects which influence the effectiveness of the branch like production temporary suspend or temporary lack of the workforce due to the high number of infections and quarantines. In fact, each crisis situation is complex, exceptional and novel (Fagel, 2013). Its complexity arises from the fact, that it can be fixed in many ways, variety of units are usually involved in the situation and there is possibility of emerging new problems. The same crisis situation having place in different organizations, involving different people will have completely different course and results (Haddow, Bullock, and Coppola, 2011).

The creation of internal crisis during Covid-19 pandemic depended on the position of the company on the market, affiliation to particular branch, the financial reserves, the individual health situation among workers and their specific life situation (Bierema, Laura, 2020).

Organizations due to high resilience dictated by good management and the favourable conditions like branch affiliation or the size of the company and high position on the market do not let their structures to develop internal crises (Barcik, Dziwiński and Jakubiec, 2015). In such examples pandemic, with its character, creating crises in general spheres, did not influence the well managed places directly and straightforward but it influenced only the basic and natural aspect of fear for human health and availability of employees able to work. This on the contrary, could influence everything, because any place with exemplary organization will lose everything while physically losing the human capital.

Considering various local environments, the effects of the pandemic may differ. To what extent they influenced the business and daily life depends on the level of particular environment's economic advancement, diversity of the market and the access to life convenience (Grocki, 2020).

Each environment, area, branch and organization must consider risks that may appear, having various roots. The risk of epidemic outbreak is dangerous and unknown, its character brings back to situations far-distant in time, and wakes very new instincts. Each crisis situation poses the businesses in a situation when the economic value goes to the background, and the safety of people becomes most important. Spreading a virus is not an instantly touchable problem of readymade hard solutions to implement. The reality shows that this process takes time, may change multiple times and the consequences may be irreversible or hard to fix (Mather, 2020). The core of the crisis management is to reconcile the people's safety with the safety of the business. Thus the biggest risk of conducting a company during pandemic is the possibility to bankrupt and end the activity.

The features of the enterprises that make them vulnerable on the impacts of the pandemic and which the same way define the level of resilience on the crisis situations and chances to survive on the market are: the size of the company, the position and successes of the company on the markets and the places of their activities from the international point of view, the branches the companies belong to, and the general demand on the goods and services in the scope of the company (Carnevale, Hatak, 2020).

Although the impact of Covid-19 pandemic varies among the countries due to the specific economic situation as well as the content of the market, the sectors which suffered most during pandemic are hospitality with food, accommodation, leisure services and tourism, reaching between 50% up to 90% decline of the activities in April 2020 (OECD, 2020). Those branches also experienced the biggest recovery in September 2020, after situation have been controlled to some extent. Transportation and admin with support services activity decline varied from 20% up to 40% in particular countries and the recovery in September 2020 was less significant (OECD, 2020). The difference between April and September was also noted at the level of 30-40% in retail and wholesale trade and also manufacturing. The best situation from the analysed sectors experience retail and trade, despite the strong decline after the time of first effects of pandemic in April 2020 (OECD, 2020). The demand for goods and services continues to be the motor of consumer spending, supporting the trading market during crisis situation (Aguinis, Burgi-Tian, 2021).

Some branches, although being vulnerable on radical environment changes, found the niche on the pandemic market and the chance for demand for the services they can provide among the branch they deal with, but also risking the requalifying to different branch. This demand services include remote working tools and software, e-learning equipment, entertainment in the boundaries of restrictions, virtual reality, pharmaceutical and medical devices, logistics and transportation as the online shopping and food delivery boosted, virtual healthcare, contactless technology and electronic transfers (Financial Management Magazine, 2020). Another sectors that in April 2020 were being predicted of increased interest during pandemic, were ecology supporting initiatives like air purification and biodefense, technological improvements like biometrics and cybersecurity, needs from chemical sector like sanitizing detergents and

diagnosing methods and online support of restricted branches like e-commerce and e-sport (Businesswire, 2020).

Analysing the opportunities which sectors gain during current pandemic, crisis situation not necessarily brings only the worst consequences but may result in good experiences and success. Crisis possesses the building feature, which in specific cases can lead to the changes in the company that have positive impact. The increased speed in transformations of the systems and organization along with sales processes was noted among companies along with introducing remote work on daily basis (Deltra, 2021). In such critical situations, the organization can benefit in the final report of the whole situation and find the improvement in building the team and sense of the community as well (Forbes. 2020).

3. Selected research results

The first enterprise which example have been used for the purpose of analysis of pandemic market's condition, places its services in the international transportation and storage sector. The headquarters of the company is located in Spain, and the international operations of the company are focused on operation logistics between Spain and Central Europe countries through the road transport and distribution of goods. The company within its internal departments consists in transport department, providing managing and monitoring over the freight round-the-clock; administration department which provides contact in many languages; and sales department which deals with offers.

The second enterprise which was analyzed in respect of pandemic challenges, concentrates its operations in the sector of wholesale and retail trade. It is a French origin, sports products trading corporation, present in many countries around the world and hiring almost 90 thousand employees, thus it is classified as large company. In one of the company's stores located in Poland, which is the subject of analysis, the corporation employs 60 people, who work on managerial and non-managerial positions, on daily basis staying in direct contacts with clients. Except direct retail, the company also conducts sales through online store, and provides variety of additional services connected with the directional type of products. Except the activities performed at the stores, there are warehouses and headquarters of the company in countries around the world, with own supporting departments of different kind, dealing with logistics, production, customer service, etc.

First three questions in the survey concern metrics data – gender, period of employment in the company and the type of position filled in the company.

In both companies the survey was answered almost by the same proportion of men and women. In enterprises A and B, the amount of women engaged into the answers represent about 54.5% of all answers, while the amount of men represents about 45.5%. In case of enterprise A

all team answered the survey, thus women pose the majority of employees at the office. In case of enterprise B, only half of the team answered on the survey, and the interest was higher in the group of female respondents.

Similar situation with almost the same proportions among the respondents as in previous question, concerns the period of employment in the companies. In enterprise A, 81.8% of employees work in the company more than a year, and 18.2%, less than a year. In case of enterprise B respondents, 77.4% work in the company more than a year, and 22.6% less than a year.

The results of analyzing managerial and non-managerial positions in the company presents that in enterprise A, 63.6% of employees work on non-managerial positions, 27.3% are managers and 9.1% preferred not to answer. In case of enterprise B, 77.4% of respondents work on non-managerial positions, while 19.4% are managers.

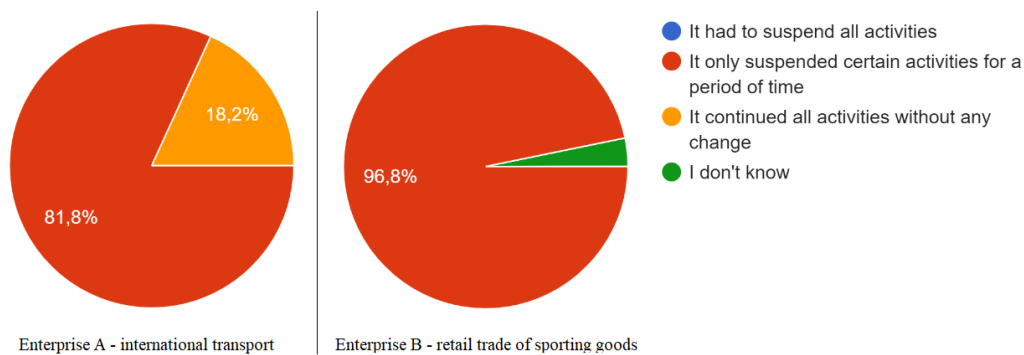


Figure 1. Suspending of the operations. Own study.

The next question concerned the information about suspending the companies' operations due to the outbreak of the pandemic (Figure 1). In the international transport company 81.8% of the respondents claim that the company suspended certain activities for a period of time, however 18.2% respondents provides information that the company continued all activities without any change. This percent is equal to the percent of people employed in the company for less than a year, so the employed who were not employed in the company at the pandemic outbreak, and at possible suspension of activities. In the retail trade sporting goods company, 96.8% of the respondents provide the information that the company suspended certain activities. Comparing both companies, and based on the fact that some percent of employees were hired in the middle of pandemic, it can be concluded that international transport sector came back to normal functioning quicker, than in case of retail trade.

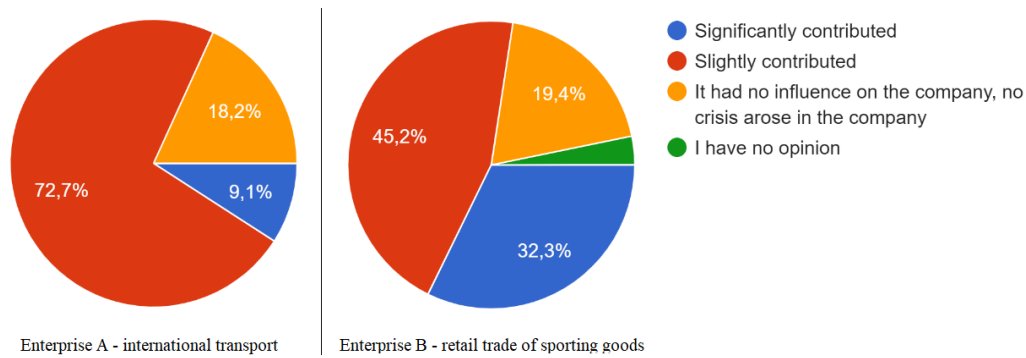


Figure 2. The impact of pandemic on the internal crisis in the workplace. Own study.

The Figure 2 shows, how according to the employees, the pandemic contributed to the internal crisis in the companies. The majority of respondents from enterprise A (in total 81.8%) claim that the pandemic slightly contributed or significantly contributed to the internal crisis. One more time, the same percent of the employees who work in the company less than a year, claim that the pandemic had no influence on the company's internal crisis, which may be interpreted as the quick recovery of the company from the critical situations from the beginning of the pandemic. In case of enterprise B, in total 77.5% of respondents claim that the pandemic had slight or significant impact on the internal crisis creation, while 19.4% of respondents claim that the pandemic did not had an impact on internal crisis. The answers depict that the industries were not prepared on the pandemic outbreak and they characterize in vulnerability to crises to some extent.

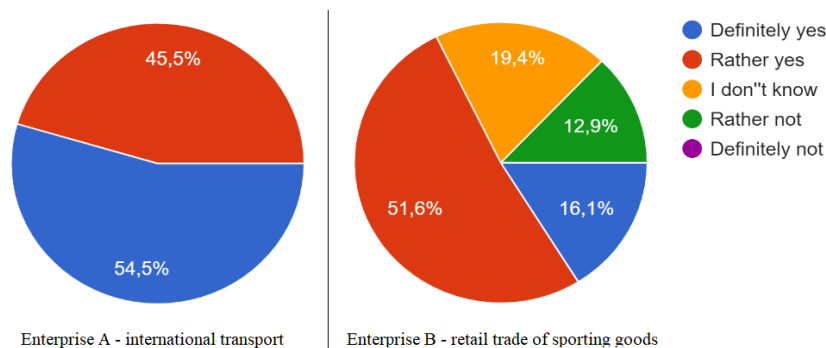


Figure 3. Safety at the workplace in times of the pandemic. Own study.

Being asked about the feeling of safety at the workplace (Figure 3), the respondents of enterprise A who work in the office or have no contacts with other people besides the colleagues during work, in total 100% of employees feels definitely safe, or rather safe. In case of enterprise B, respondents at daily basis work with more people and have direct personal contacts with customers. In 66.7% they feel definitely or rather safe, while 19.4% have no opinion, and 12.9% rather feels unsafe.

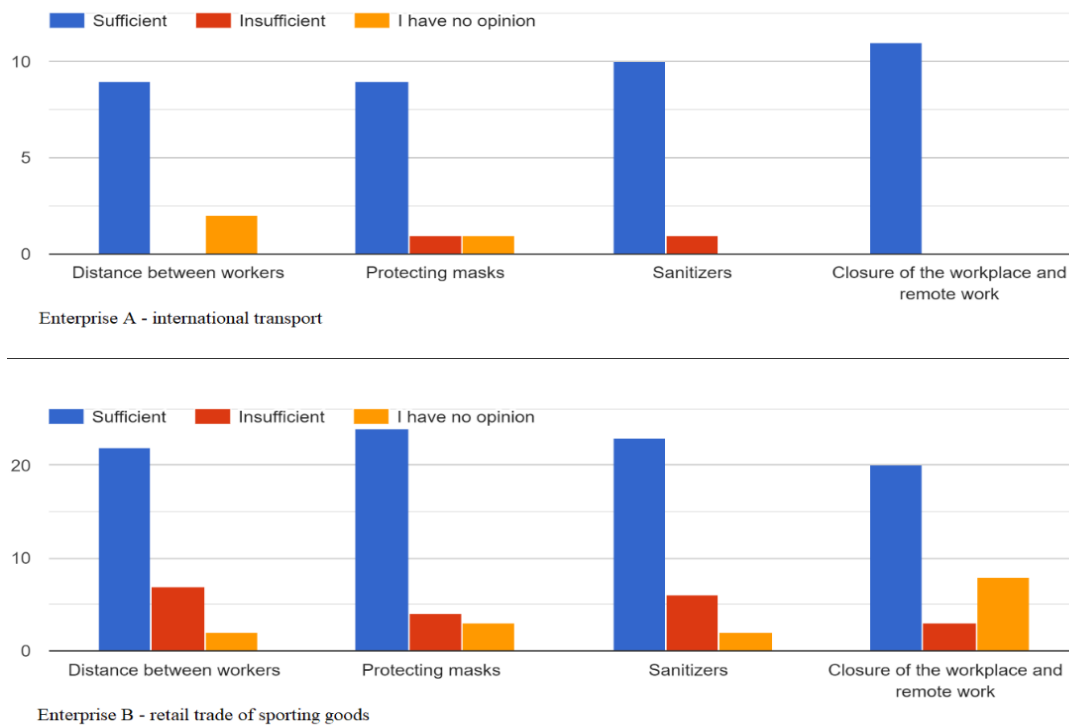


Figure 4. Measures and procedures supporting safe work during the pandemic. Own study.

Figure 4 presents which of the measures and procedures supporting safe work during a pandemic are sufficient to stay safe in the opinion of respondents. According to the surveyed employees of enterprise A, distance between workers, the usage of protecting masks and sanitizers, but also closure of the workplace and remote work are enough to stay safe. Minority of the respondents claim that they have no opinion of the efficacy of distance between workers as the only safety measure. The majority of the respondents from enterprise B claim that mentioned safety measures are enough to stay safe. However, compared with enterprise A, they feel more concerns about the safety measures or insecurity about them – 7 employees claim that the social distance is not enough, 4 that the masks are insufficient and 6 that the sanitizers are insufficient as well. 3 people claim that the closure of the workplace and remote work are not sufficient, which may be interpreted that they consider also external insecurities after working hours.

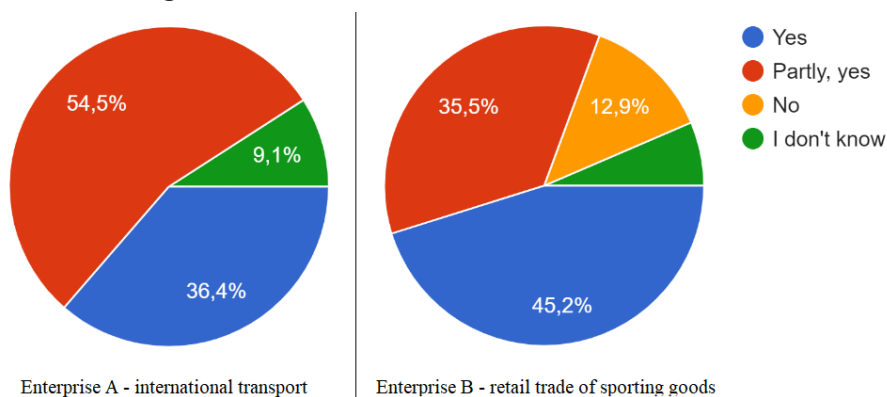


Figure 5. Implementation of remote working at the workplace. Own study.

Another question refers to the implementation of the remote work to the working mode of enterprises (Figure 5). In case of enterprise A, 90.9% of the respondents claims that remote work was implemented in the company, and 9.1% claim that they do not know, thus these group may consist in people who work in the company shorter than others who experienced working remotely at the beginning of pandemic. In case of enterprise B, 80.7% of respondents claim that remote work was implemented in the company, while 12.9% and the rest claim that it was not implemented or they do not know. The percent's can be interpreted in the way, that enterprise B hired more people after first waves of the pandemic, or the exchange of the employees is on higher level than in enterprise A.

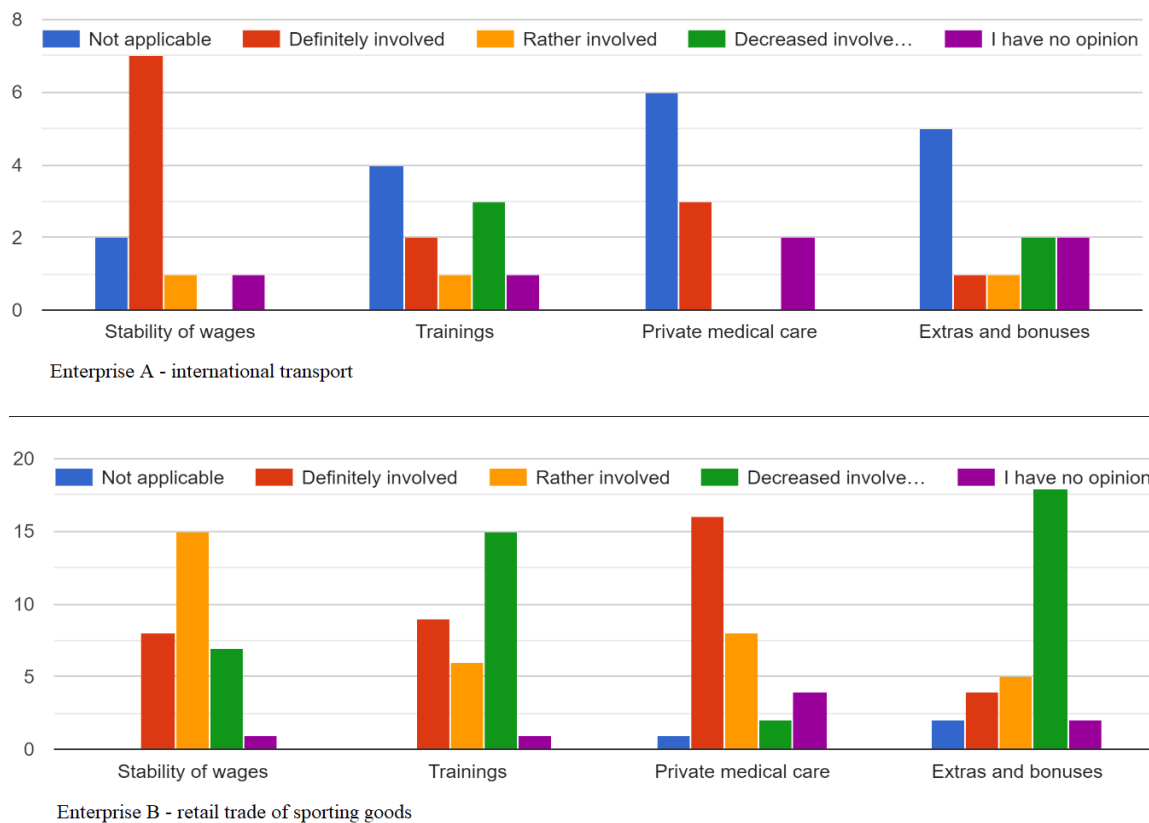


Figure 6. Rate of company's commitment to maintenance of following standards. Own study.

Figure 6 and Figure 7 depict employees answers to the question on the rate of commitment of the company into maintenance of following standards. In terms of stability of wages, both companies present significant involvement. In terms of trainings provided to the employees, answers of the enterprise's A respondents are various, however majority claims that they have no trainings. Respondents of enterprise B claim that the company is definitely involved into providing trainings, but the involvement decreased during pandemic. Enterprise A seems not to provide private medical care to their employees, while in case of enterprise B, the involvement into providing private medical care is definitely continued despite the pandemic. In terms or bonuses and extras, enterprise A seems not to practice such rewarding and motivation, as distinct from enterprise B, which in turn seems to provide such benefits, however the involvement decreased during pandemic.

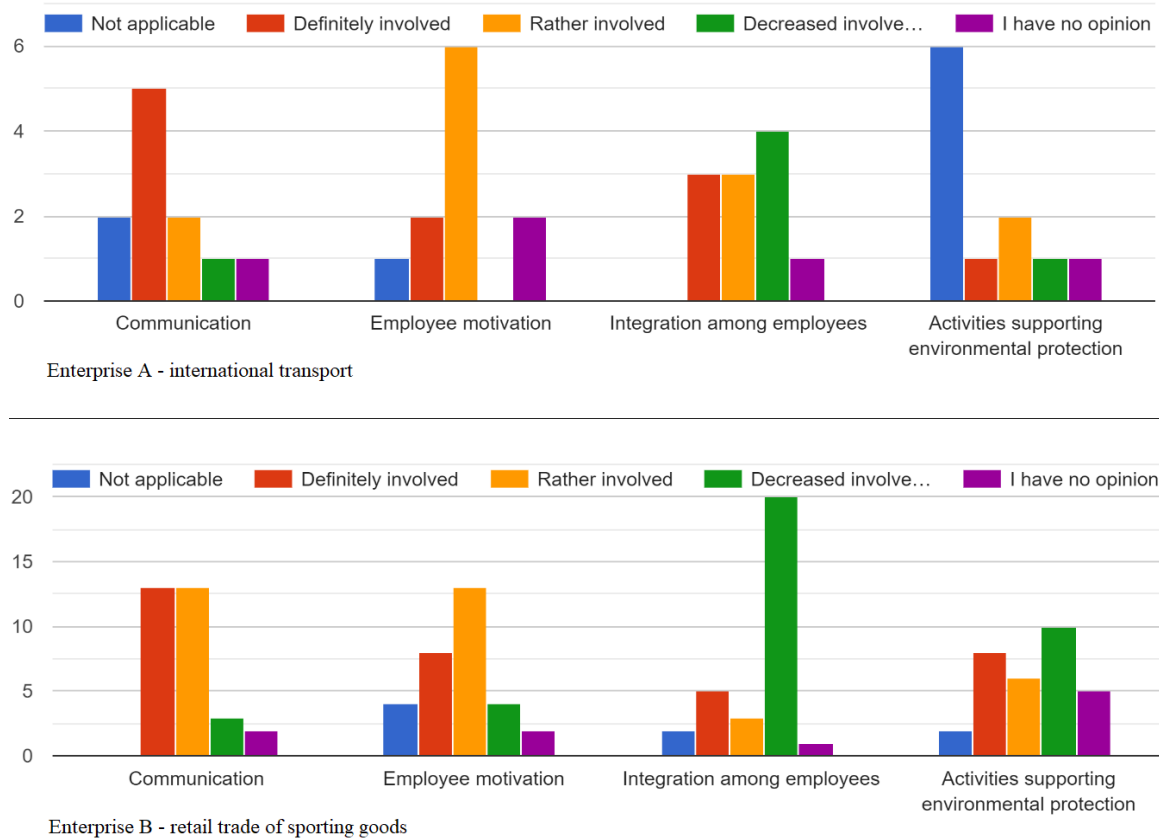


Figure 7. Rate of company’s commitment to maintenance of following standards. Own study.

The respondents of both companies claim that their employers and definitely or rather involved into good communication, which is similar in case of motivation which employees gain from the employer. According to respondents from enterprise A, the company involves into integration among employees however the involvement decreased during pandemic. Respondents from enterprise B, in majority claim that the company decreased its involvement into integration of employees during pandemic. In terms of supporting environmental protection, the majority of answer from enterprise A depict that the company is not involved into such activities. In case of enterprise B, respondent point the decreased involvement during pandemic, along with being involved in such activities in general.

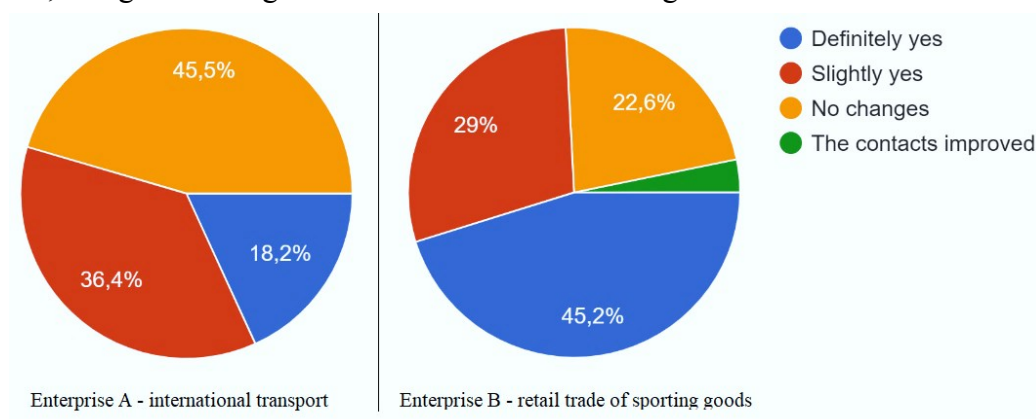


Figure 8. The impact of pandemic on contacts between colleagues. Own study.

Another question refers to the pandemic impact on contacts between colleagues (Figure 8). In case of enterprise A, the answers are 54.6% for change in the contacts, and 45.5% for no changes in this sphere. 74.2% respondents of enterprise B claim that the contacts changed, while 22.6% claim that the pandemic brought no changes in this sphere.

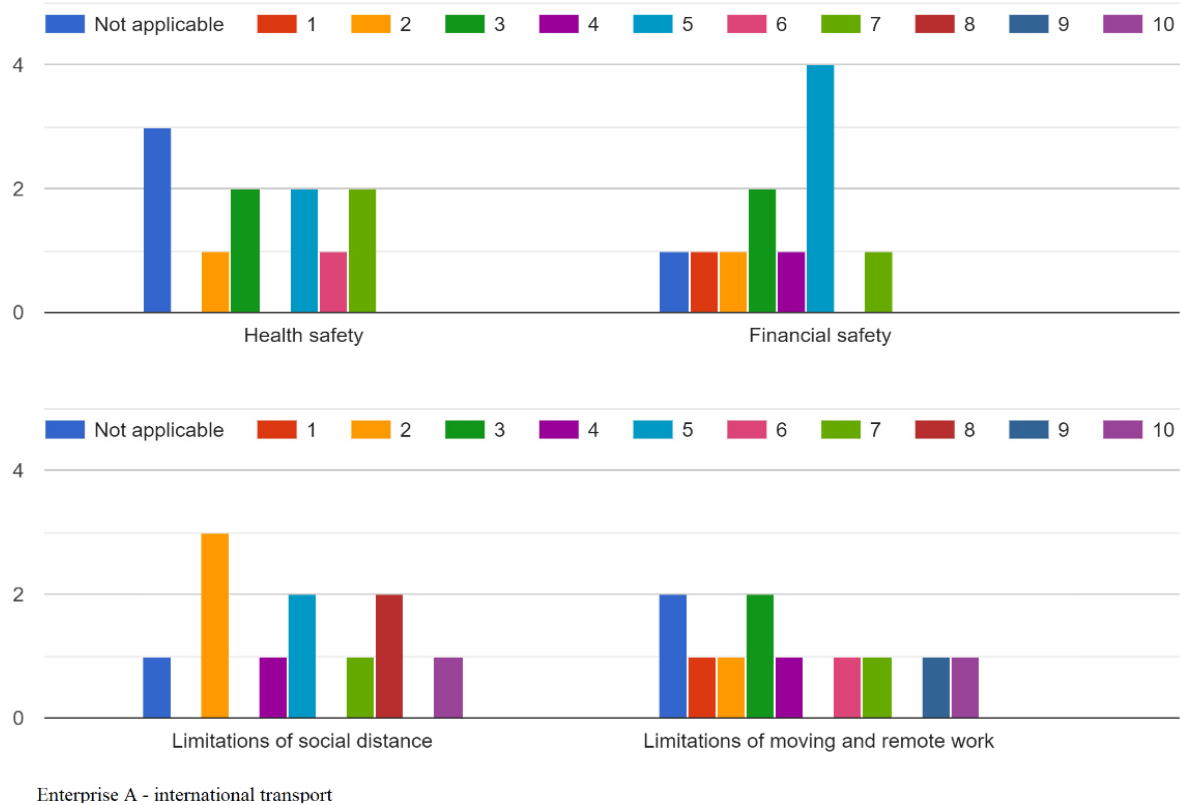


Figure 9. Experience of stress related to the aspects listed below where 1 means little impact and 10 means huge impact. Own study.

Figures 9 and 10 present the pandemic impact on employees well-being and how it evokes stress connected with pandemic concerns. The scale from 1 to 10 have been applied in the question, to estimate how much the problem influenced people's well-being, where 1 means little impact, and 10 means huge impact. In case of respondents from enterprise A, the concern on the health safety was quite low, only 2 employees estimated it on 7 points, the rest opted for below and even 3 people did not feel such stress. Financial safety received 4 answers with score 5, thus this concern is not crucial for the employees. Limitations and social distance evoked average concern, and only 1 person scored it on 10 points, and 2 respondents on 8 points. Limitations on moving and remote work is quite divided, as almost each point on the scale has just one follower.

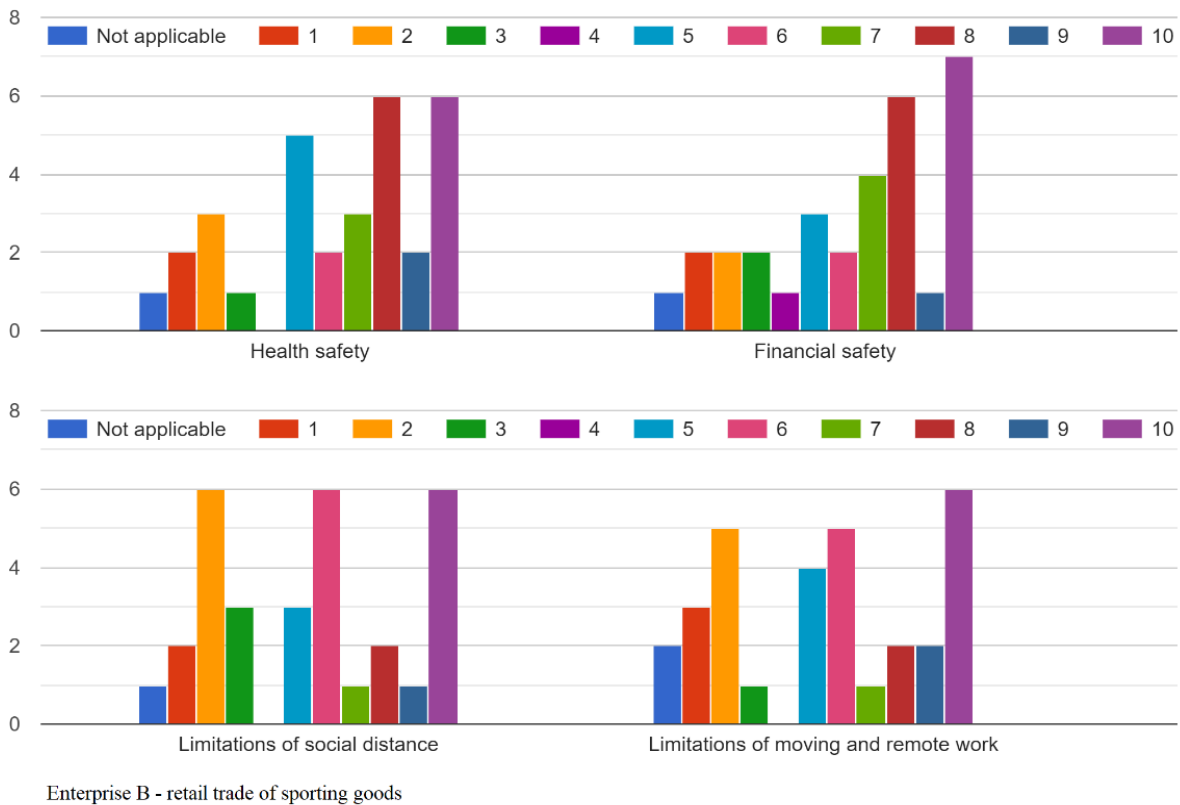


Figure 10. Experience of stress related to the aspects listed below where 1 means little impact and 10 means huge impact. Own study.

The majority of respondents from enterprise B feels that health safety issue evoked quite strong concern, however there is a group of people who did not care much about this factor. 24 people scored their concern from 5 to 10 points. Financial safety similarly to health safety was quite serious concern for the respondents, while 23 people estimated it on points between 5 and 10. Limitations on social distance received various marks – 6 people opted for each 2 points, 6 points and 10 points. Comparing, the stress connected with limitations on moving and remote work was divided. 5 people opted for each 2 and 6 points, while 6 people considered this stress having huge impact on their well-being.

To compare both companies, respondents of enterprise A seem to bother less about the pandemic concerns, while respondents of enterprise B, seem to feel more stress connected with mentioned aspects. This may be caused by the type of contacts their job relies on, the wages rate and the overall stability of the job place and individual material condition along with approach towards pandemic.

Respondents were asked also about what are the most significant effects of a pandemic in their industry.

Employees of enterprise A, which belongs to international transport sector, pointed following aspects:

- No access to products for society due to production limitation and shutdown of big factories especially in automotive industry,
- Less shipments and lower incomes,
- Delays of payments and cash flows,
- No drivers available to cover ordered loadings,
- Delays in deliveries,
- Decline in orders and higher prices,
- The fact that the work can be done remotely.

Employees of enterprise B, which belongs to retail trade of sporting goods sector, pointed following aspects:

- Sales decline, smaller revenues, production limitations – no stock, no workers due to quarantines and the malpractices due to lower number of workers available during pandemic wave,
- Higher prices of products, low raises of payments or lower wages, decrease of satisfaction from work,
- Huge amounts of clients in short time straight after loosen restrictions, thus no ability to serve everyone, overloaded workers. Clients do bigger shopping,
- Restrictions in social contacts which influences the working efficacy, no integration,
- Closed sports clubs,
- Fear of doing shopping in person, increased online sales,
- No recruitment of new people, unstable employment due to closures of stores, the fear of losing the job, firing due to the store closures and no recruitment when they open again, suspension of activity during lockdowns,
- Misinformation, poor communication,
- New tools of working with clients, digitalization, raising competitiveness on the market in the sports industry,
- Company's economy in danger, as well as social interests of employees, financial problems, no bonuses, insecurities.

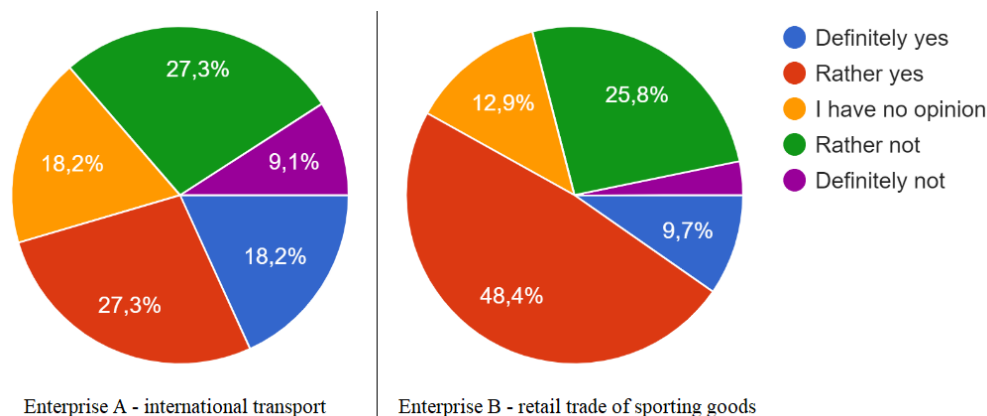


Figure 11. Perception of industry's resistance to the crisis during pandemic. Own study.

Being asked about the resistance of the industry to the emergence of crisis during pandemic (Figure 11), 45.5% respondents of enterprise A claimed that the industry is definitely or rather resilient, while 36.4% opted for vulnerability of the industry in face of crisis emergence. 18.2% of the respondents have no opinion, which once more confirms the theory of new team members who do not suffered much from the effects of pandemic at the company.

58.15% of the respondents from enterprise B opts for industry being definitely or rather resilient, 29% claims that the industry is vulnerable on the crisis arise, while 12.9% of the respondents have no opinion.

Being asked about day-to-day functioning of the workplace and what changed most during pandemic, the respondents of the examined enterprises answered in the following way:

Enterprises A: hygiene and distance restrictions, remote work, less work, working hours, protecting masks, finishing earlier, new security measures, stability, organizational changes. Couple of answers suggested that besides hygiene standards nothing else changed.

Enterprise B: more remote conferences and online contacts, conscience on hygiene and distance, protecting masks, sanitizing, no stock, relations with colleagues, no integration, exaggeration in keeping distance between workers, restrictions from the government on the number of clients on particular area, and controlling the limits of customers in at the entrance to the store, company's finances, remote work possible, knowledge of employees about the online sales, more work, atmosphere, change in contacts, new procedures, employees care about others, increased communication. However, the respondents claimed also that after more difficult periods, everything is back to normality.

The last question in the survey concerned the possible positive practices that the workplace developed as the result of pandemic.

The answers of employees from enterprise A included new channels of communication, cleanliness, hygiene, distance, temperature control, ventilation, the structure of the working day, finishing earlier, remote working if required and possible. 5 people claimed that nothing much changed.

The answers of enterprise B included hygiene standards, enabling of remote and online possibility to manage issues, however not practiced anymore, information flow, new technologies and sanitizing systems, no need to physically attend meetings due to online forms of contact, organizational and communicational changes, employees safety, awareness on ecological issues and the value of eco products, boost of new sales channels, reorganization of strategic point of the store to be more effective, actualization of systems, new ideas to work better and more pleasant, quicker adjusting to the changes, e-sport, new organization of settling the working period. There appeared concerns that nothing else besides the pressure on hygiene standards and development of digital sales will remain from the positives. On the contrary, some answers however pointed, that there is nothing positive that comes from pandemic.

4. Conclusion

The following conclusion have been reached from the analysis and research.

1. The results of the survey presented that employees of both enterprises felt safe in the companies' environments (enterprise A – 100%, enterprise B – 66.7%). Unlike the office workers of international transport industry, employees of second enterprise working in the industry of retail trade of sporting goods, and whose contacts with wider group of people are personal and direct, felt some insecurities (12.9% of respondents from enterprise B did not feel safe).
2. According to the answers of respondents, both companies suspended only some of the activities for a period of time, coming back to normality (81.8% respondents from enterprise A, and 96.8% from enterprise B), thus their resilience to the internal crisis creation have been confirmed. Transportation sector however seemed to recover from restrictions and inconveniences quicker than retail trade.
3. Communication and motivation came out to be strong sides of both enterprises according to employees answers, thus they are possibly aware of the values during the pandemic and the support which these aspects of leadership provided to the well-being and of employees (63.6% and 72.7% of respondents from enterprise A, and 77.4% and 64.5% from enterprise B, claimed that the company was involved consecutively in the communication and motivation).
4. Employees of corporation seemed to feel more committed to company's issues which might be possible natural reaction of gaining bonuses, as opposed to smaller and private business which do not provide bonuses, extras or private medical care. On the contrary, analysing the concern of the financial safety, despite more involvement into bonuses and extras of the bigger enterprise B, people's stress was higher than in smaller company which does not provide additional benefits. It brought the conclusion that the company in transport industry provides more stable and higher wages, than the company operating in retail trade. This observation might also pose the difference between countries as Spanish environment seemed to care less about particular concerns than Polish environment.
5. On the example of enterprise B, the commitment showed through the answers of respondents to the open questions, presents the interest in the company's functioning and the amount of information available for employees. It depicted how organizational culture influences the moods in a company and mutual goal during crisis situation. In turn, employees performing managerial activities in the companies, seemed to have more expanded analytical opinions on the company's condition during pandemic and what measures are beneficial to its constant development.

6. The character of the work and the differences in working in smaller and larger company, were observed to be determinants of the well-being and the feel of security. The employees working at the office in smaller company seemed to feel less concern connected with health security, than the employees from bigger company in which they are exposed to numerous direct contacts with colleagues and customers.

The major assumption in the paper was that as long as the proper tools are implemented in the company's management and approach toward employees the company will be able to conquer the crisis of pandemic character and even benefit from positive changes. Thanks to the open questions which were supposed to extract the main changes in the industries the main impact on functioning of the company and the possible changes within the companies' practices, following conclusions have been made:

- Crisis management means observed in both enterprises are the implementation of safety measures like hygiene standards, social distance, sanitizing and masks, but also the remote work, and temporary closure during the most dangerous periods. The strategical and communicational changes concerned the realization of the use of online ways of communication at work, enabling online conferences and possibility to perform work remotely, but also adjustments of the work organization according to the needs.
- The leadership supporting employees' issues, through caring about their motivation, the flow of information and involvement into providing the bonuses, enhances the human capital well-being. Financial security plays a big role in times of crisis thus appropriate earnings in relation to performed responsibilities and their risks, are crucial.
- The pandemic was observed to carry the building and developing features to some extent. According to the respondents it caused the quick development of needed means and implementation of beneficial systems and practices in the form of respecting the hygiene standards, being more effective thanks to new digital means, possibility to work remotely, organizational changes and boost of innovative ideas. Crisis helped to cherish spheres people forgot about in modern world, like the possibility to physical direct contacts which people were suddenly deprived of. (74.2% of respondents from enterprise B claim that the relations with colleagues have been affected; to compare – 54.6% of respondents from enterprise A marked the change in the relations between colleagues).

From the perspective of two different European countries the companies preserved high quality of sense of security, stability and care towards the employees. However the course of the events was highly depended on how dangerous the situation would have turned out and on the hard to predict factors specific for particular organization. The current state of economic situation, human resources and very unique epidemic situation, influencing the ability to performing a work are also important determinants of the situation.

CSR and ecological approach of companies may build the world of possibilities thank to open-mindedness and set on creating the unity and cooperation towards world environment security, thus the personal suggestion of the author is to contribute even more into mutual sustainable development of the various organizations and environments. Contemporary world being filled with high technology development, digitalization, globalization, cooperation, knowledge, consciousness and the information flow through various channels, have enormous impact on reducing the time of crisis situation phases and gaining quick stabilization. Contemporary mankind is lucky to live in the world of such possibilities, because experiencing similar disaster could be far more difficult without a help of modern accomplishments.

References

1. Aguinis, H., Burgi-Tian, J. (2021), Measuring performance during crises and beyond: The Performance Promoter Score. *Business Horizons*, 64, 149-60.
2. Barcik, A., Dziwiński, P., Jakubiec, M. (2015), *Management of enterprise in the 21st century: conditions and perspectives of growth*. Warszawa: Difin, pp. 119-120.
3. Bierema, L. (2020). HRD research and practice after ‘The Great COVID-19 Pause’: The time is now for bold, critical, research. *Human Resource Development International*, 23, pp. 347-60.
4. Businesswire. Available online <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200406005311/en/30-Industries-Seeing-a-Surge-in-Demand-Due-to-the-COVID-19-Pandemic---ResearchAndMarkets.com>, 15.04.2022.
5. Cai, M., Tindal, S., Tartanoglu Bennett, S., Velu, J. (2021). ‘It’s Like a War Zone’: Jay’s Liminal Experience of Normal and Extreme Work in a UK Supermarket during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Work, Employment and Society*, 35(2), pp. 386-395.
6. Carnevale, J.B., Hatak, I. (2020). Employee adjustment and well-being in the era of COVID-19: Implications for human resource management. *Journal of Business Research*, 116, 183-87.
7. Deltra. Available online <https://www.deltragroup.com/article/covid-19-could-there-be-a-positive-impact-on-business>, 01.04.2022.
8. Fagel, M.J. (2013). *Crisis Management and Emergency Planning: Preparing for Today’s Challenges*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
9. Financial Management Magazine. Available online <https://www.fm-magazine.com/news/2020/apr/business-sectors-boosted-by-coronavirus-concerns.html>, 15.04.2022.
10. Forbes. Available online <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2020/05/04/five-positive-impacts-the-pandemic-has-had-on-franchising/?sh=7eadf2041cda>, 01.04.2022.

11. Grocki, R. (2020). *Zarządzanie kryzysowe: dobre praktyki*. Warszawa: Difin, pp. 14-17.
12. Haddow, G.D., Bullock, J.A., Coppola, D.P. (2011). *Introduction to Emergency Management*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
13. Khodarahmi, E. (2009). Crisis management. *Disaster Prevention and Management, Vol. 18, No. 5*, pp. 523-528.
14. Kouzmin, A. (2008). Crisis Management in Crisis? *Administrative Theory & Praxis, 30, 2*, pp. 155-183, DOI: 10.1080/10841806.2008.11029631.
15. Mather, P. (2020). Leadership and governance in a crisis: Some reflections on COVID-19. *Journal of Accounting & Organizational Change, 16*, 579-85.
16. Mourão, L., da Silva Abbad, G., Legentil, J. (2022). E-Leadership: Lessons Learned from Teleworking in the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Leadership in a Changing World* [Working Title], 10.5772/intechopen.99304.
17. Nowacki, K., Grabowska, S., Łakomy, K. (2020). Activities of employers and OHS services during the developing COVID-19 epidemic in Poland. *Safety science, 131*, 104935. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2020.104935>.
18. OECD. Available online <https://oecdoscope.blog/2020/12/12/the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-sectoral-output/>, 01.04.2022.
19. Pallvi, A., Suri, D., (2020), Redefining, relooking, redesigning, and reincorporating HRD in the post Covid 19 context and thereafter. *Human Resource Development International, 23*, pp. 438-51.
20. Wang, B., Yukun, L., Qian, J., Parker, S. (2021), Achieving Effective Remote Working During the COVID- 19 Pandemic: A Work Design Perspective. *Applied Psychology, 70*, 16-59. 10.1111/apps.12290.
21. Wojciechowska-Filipek, S., Mazurek-Kucharska, B. (2019), *Zarządzanie w kryzysie: aspekty organizacyjne i psychologiczne*. Warszawa: CeDeWu, p. 19.
22. Zhong, Yifan, Yameng Li, Jian Ding, Yiyi Liao (2021). Risk Management: Exploring Emerging Human Resource Issues during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management, vol. 14, no. 5*, 228.