



Institutions for Decreasing of Employee Opportunism¹

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ABSTRACT

In manufacturing plants opportunism is appear in the form of stalling, negligence, use of official position and hiding reserves jobs by the staff, also providing managers with incomplete or distorted information about the working conditions and the existence of personal sympathies in the distribution of incentive bonus, work task, awards, etc., There are technical and institutional factors influencing the level of manifestation of opportunistic behavior on the enterprises as a whole and in departments of various types. Identifying these factors and determining the nature of the relationship with the level of various forms of dishonest behavior is the basis to control the level of opportunism in manufacturing plants.

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of opportunism studying in firms is topical for several reasons. Employment relations mean always contractual relations that make the opportunism both of employee and employer possible (Williamson O.E., 1979). Opportunistic behavior causes high transaction expenses, connected with its prevention and limitation, and also decreases labor productivity level in firms. In the current context the rise of economic efficiency and the growth of labor productivity are the necessary conditions for competitive recovery.

The purpose of this scientific paper is a posteriori estimate of the opportunistic behavior of employees in firms in current conditions.

2. FORMS OF EMPLOYERS' AND EMPLOYEES' OPPORTUNISM

The Nobel Prize winner of 2009 O. Williamson defined opportunism as a form of «the economic agent's behaviour, when they were provided with the incomplete or distorted information (including deceit, delusion, holding back the truth, and other ways of partner's confusion)» (Williamson, 1993). It should be pointed out that the opportunism problem of economic agents is widely investigated in the political sphere. So, the political opportunism's limitations influence the economic overcoming crisis (Walter S., 2008). However, human opportunism can be surmounted, perhaps, through the governmental efforts (Kraft, 2010).

The development of presidential power in the USA has stimulated formation of the theory of aspirant opportunism (Brown, 2009). The political opportunism can be evaluated by the global financial system valuation (Wood S., 2012) or by the governmental regulation of the public organizations' activity (Zhenglai et Yi, 2013). Moreover, the influence of gender, age and qualification differences on the opportunistic behavior of researchers has been assessed in the scientific community (Acar et Ende, 2013). On the other hand, the assessment of agents' opportunism in the universities management is possible in the framework of principal-agent theory by the modeling (Kivisto, 2008).

However, the most important for the economic activity is to assess the opportunistic behavior in market relations (Roberts, 2012) and relations between agents within a firm (Squire, 2010). The decrease of opportunism in market relations is possible by regulations' institution (e.g., patents) for the new products launching on the market (Yoo, 2013) or by the psychological preparations of consumers to achieve specific goals (Seifert et Patalano, 2001). In case of intra-firm activity, the regulation of employee's opportunism is possible by the establishment of restrictive standards of behavior (Hirschmeier, 1970) or by the established rules of interaction (of economic institutes) between economic agents (Kostritsky, 2013).

Meanwhile, for the intra-firm relations application of the economic institutions for the opportunism's decrease is applicable both for employers (Note, 1989) and employees (Hansmann et al., 2006). Summarizing all the present published studies, we can emphasize the features that characterize opportunistic behaviour in employment relations. The first condition for the opportunism emergence in the system of employment relations is a clash of interests of interacting economic agents - an employer and an employee. The employer aims to maximize his profits and minimize expenses, but the employee is interested in pay rise and minimization of productive efforts.

The second condition may be either an asymmetric dissemination of information between an employee and an employer or the dependence of one of the interacting subjects of employment relations within a symmetrical dissemination of information that leads to the problem of inexpedient termination of established relations. The labor market is characterized by a mutual information asymmetry. The essence of mutual information asymmetry is that one party is informed more about some parameters and characteristics of the transaction and the other is informed about other characteristics. For instance, a wage earner is more informed about his own job characteristics, and an employer is more informed about job conditions offered to the job applicant. Thus, the adverse effects of information asymmetry may emerge both for one and the other party of employment relations.

Another important feature of opportunistic behavior is a deliberate act. This means that the employee or the employer consciously uses the existing opportunities for the opportunism manifestation and does not provide the contractor with the reliable information about the essence of his actions. In the employment relations the opportunism means the deliberate action of the employee and/or employer violating explicitly or implicitly the stipulations of an agreement in order to gain additional profit, not specified in the agreement, and damaging to the other party.

Thus, the intrinsic causes of opportunism in the employment relations are work division and alienation, incomprehensive rationality of economic agents, their tendency to opportunism and contractual incompleteness. The forms of opportunism manifestation in employment relations in firm sare extremely varied (Popov et Simonova, 2006). The forms of opportunistic behavior in firms summarized in the Table 1. The firms of different industries are characterized bytheir own particular forms of opportunistic behavior ofboth the employees and the employers. Therefore, for each firmfactors that influence the level of misconduct should be revealed, and institutions thatcan provoke its decrease should be identified.

Table 1.The forms of employee's and employer's opportunism

	<i>Opportunism form</i>
Ex-ante employer opportunism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the probation period- (It is imposed upon a candidate with premeditated subsequent dismissal) – conscious concealment of the negative aspects of work – unpaid overtime job – demonstration of personal sympathies (family, diaspora and others) in the work assignment, remuneration, job positions – the employer doesn't provide benefits and compensation prescribed by the law – undervaluation of the employee's work (demotion, cutting down remuneration) – the assignment of tasks beyond the employment contract without payment – Salary manipulation
Ex-post employer opportunism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – unfavorable activities (the candidate exaggerates his real abilities, skills, knowledge) – corporate espionage – concealment of the plans about the true purpose and duration of stay on the new position
Ex-ante employee opportunism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – unfavorable activities (the candidate exaggerates his real abilities, skills, knowledge) – corporate espionage – concealment of the plans about the true purpose and duration of stay on the new position
Ex-post employee opportunism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – shirking – using the working time for dealing with personal problems – work of lower quality – negligence – sabotage – different backstairs of the staff during the promotion of colleagues – concealment of their workplaces' reserve by the employees – pulling rank – fraud – blackmail – plunder

3. METHODOLOGY

For the research of employee's opportunism a large firm, which refers to the high-tech industry, has been investigated. The main directions of the firm's activities are research and development and small-scale production. In course of the study the employees of production and design departments were interviewed.

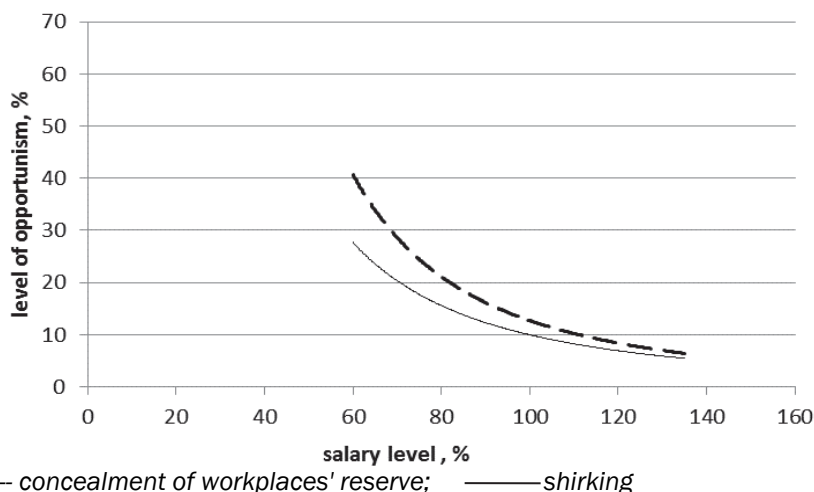
The offered questionnaire contained questions assessing the level of opportunism and potential factors that could influence it. In this work the most significant for the company forms of opportunistic behavior of employees and managers in the process of concluding the contract and after that were analyzed. Among these forms of opportunism in the system of labour relations in the firms are:

- shirking
- negligence
- concealment of workplaces' reserve
- pulling rank
- manager provides incomplete or unreliable information about the working conditions
- unpaid overtime
- the assignment of task beyond the employment contract without payment
- demonstration of personal sympathies and antipathies in the work assignment, remuneration, job positions, etc.

4. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTS OF THE DECREASE OF EMPLOYEE'S OPPORTUNISM

In the course of empirical research an assessment of different factors' influence on the manifestation of «post contract» opportunism of the employees has been conducted. Dependence analysis between the scale of employee's opportunism and established in the company financial systems simulation has shown that such factors as compliance salary setting to the average market level influences employee's opportunism manifestation in the form of shirking and concealment of workplaces' reserve. Figure 1 shows the dependence of employee's opportunistic behavior on the salary compliance to the average market level. The shirking level has been estimated as a fraction of time which employee does not use to achieve production goals.

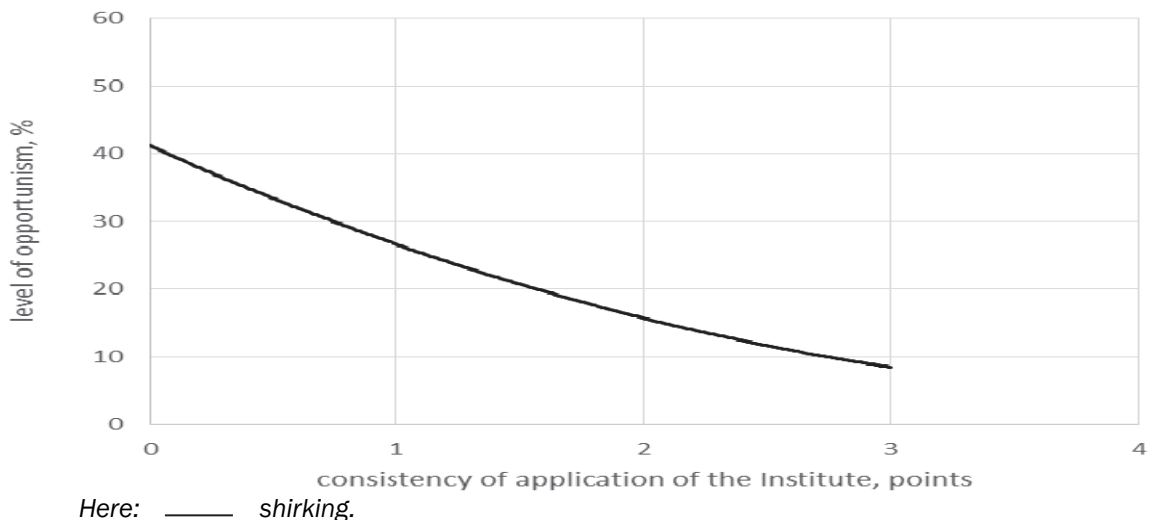
Fig.1. Dependence of shirking and concealment of workplaces' reserve on salary



The level of opportunism in the form of concealment of workplaces' reserve has been estimated as the difference between the technically (technologically) possible volume of production (performed work) and actual volume of production. As shown in the Fig. 1 with a decrease of salary level below the average a level of shirking and concealment of workplaces' reserve increase. While salary reduces more than 30% below the average, a level of concealment of workplaces' reserve dramatically increases and reaches 30% or more. However, in case of salary correspondence to the average market level employee's opportunistic behavior in these forms is also observed (its average value is $R1_{\text{average}} = 13.8\% = 17.6\% R3_{\text{average}}$). The minimum shirking level and concealment of workplaces' reserve is observed in a significant (30% or more) excess of salary level to the average market level.

In addition, as a result of the research it was found out that the dependence between the opportunism level of employees in the form of negligence and pulling rank from salary level relatively to the average market level is insignificant. The results of the research have showed that the reward system, specifically its use in the employee's promotion for specified behavior, influence the opportunism level of employees. As shown in the Fig. 2 the most obvious influence of the reward system is on the increasing level of shirking.

Fig. 2. Dependence of shirking level on reward system

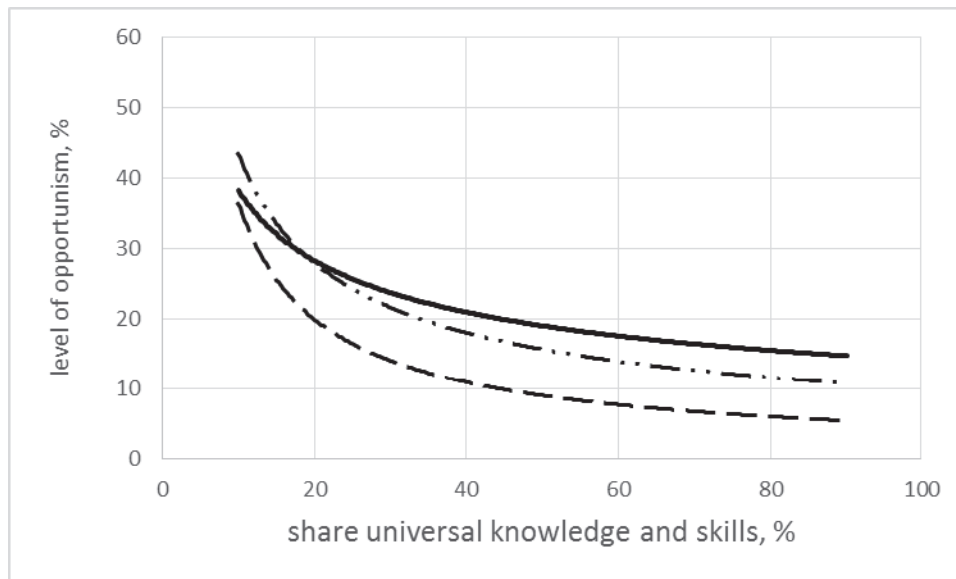


0 - the manager does not encourage conscientious behavior; 1 - the manager extremely rarely encourages the employees' conscientious behavior; 2 - the manager often encourages the employees who behave well; 3 - the manager encourages all employees who do not admit misconduct.

It should be noted that it does not matter what kind of rewards are there and how varied they are. Primarily, its regularity and interconnection with the "correct" behavior are of great importance. Therefore, we can talk about the real instruments of manager that can be used to influence the employee's opportunism, especially in the form of shirking through the encouragement including non-financial conscientious behavior of employees.

Uniqueness of knowledge and skills that employees possess is the factor affecting the misconduct. As shown in the Fig. 3 the more general knowledge employees have, the less they tend to behave opportunistically by shirking, showing negligence and concealing workplaces' reserve.

Fig. 3 Dependence of the level of shirking, negligence and concealment of workplaces' reserve on the degree of work force peculiarity



Here: — shirking; - - - negligence; - . - . - concealment of workplaces' reserve

Accordingly, in departments with a large proportion of employee's who possess unique (highly specific) knowledge and skills the level of employee's misconduct is higher.

5. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTS OF REDUCING EMPLOYEE'S OPPORTUNISM

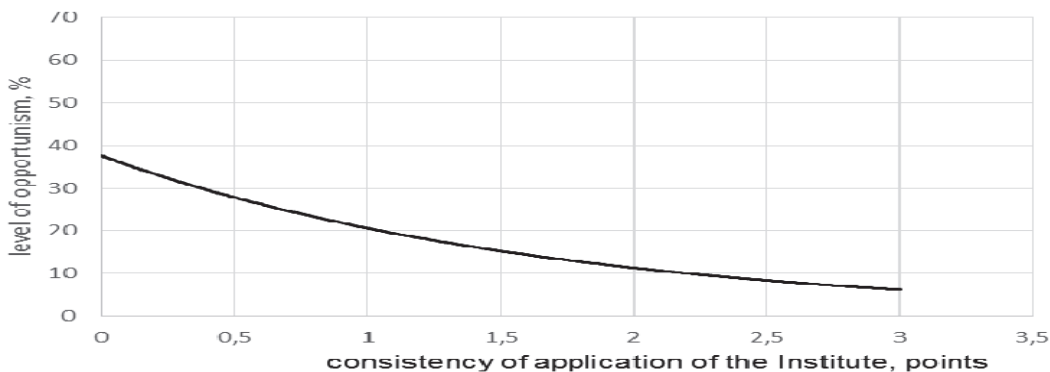
In production divisions of the enterprise mass and small-scale production are carried out. Specific features of these divisions are:

- Generally, a routine activity with a minimum share of creative process;
- A big parts of general knowledge and skills that employees possess;
- A big number of divisions
- An application of various forms of the organization of a working process

During the research it has been stated that the scales of "post-contract" opportunism are not connected with the number of divisions. It can be explained by the fact that at the state enterprises there is a multilevel hierarchical structure which is built on the basis of the standards of spans of control developed to take into account a chance of control over the employee's activities.

A poll conducted among the employees of production divisions has showed that the system of punishment has an impact on the level of opportunistic behaviour of employees. In the fig. 4 dependence of a level of shirking on the regularity of application of punishment in case of detection of similar opportunistic employees' behavior is shown.

Fig. 4 Dependence of a level of shirking on the regularity of the use of punishment system



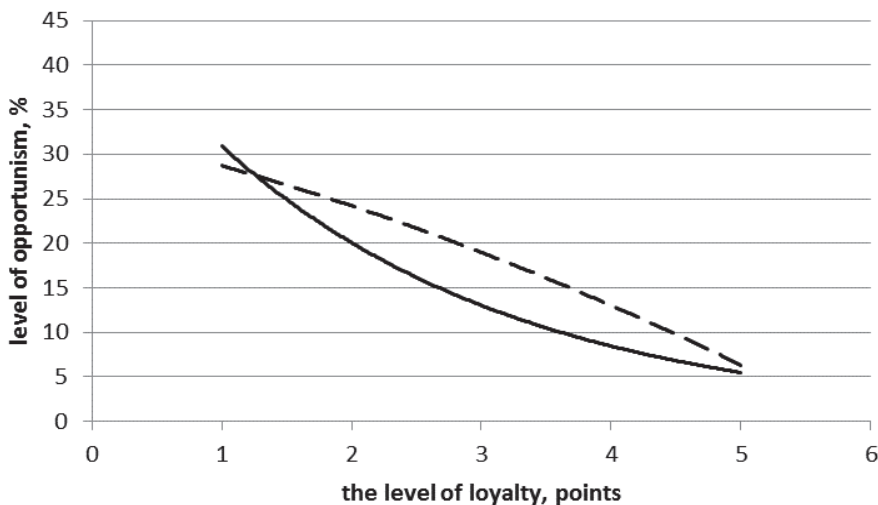
Here: _____ shirking.

0 – the manager never punishes employees for misconduct; 1 –the managerpunishes employees for misconduct when it becomes a standard of behaviour; 2 –the managerpunishes employees for misconduct when it starts to have negative impact on the productive process; 3 –in case of detection of an employee’s misconduct the manager surely applies punishment system.

Apparently, in the fig. 4, in divisions where the punishment system for suppression of employees' opportunistic behavior is more consistently applied, the share of working hours loss decreases, whereas in divisions where the punishment system is not applied or applied extremely irregularly, shirking level is much higher.

In the fig. 5. the dependence of employees' opportunism level in the form of shirking and negligence from the degree of loyalty (involvement) of employees of production divisions is shown.

Fig. 5. Dependence of a shirking and negligence level from employees' loyalty

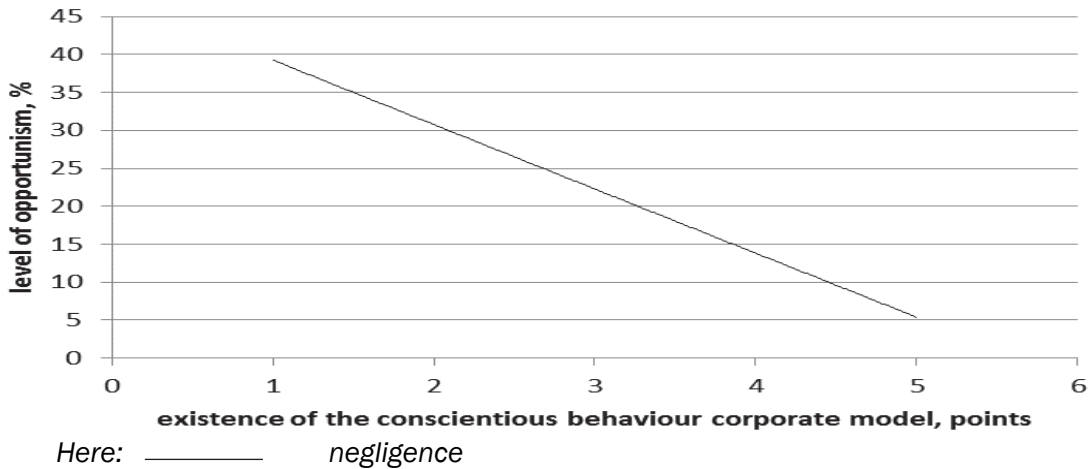


Here: _____ shirking; ---- negligence.

Thus, developing corporate culture and increasing the number of employees loyal to the enterprise losses of the enterprise from negligence of the production personnel and shirking will

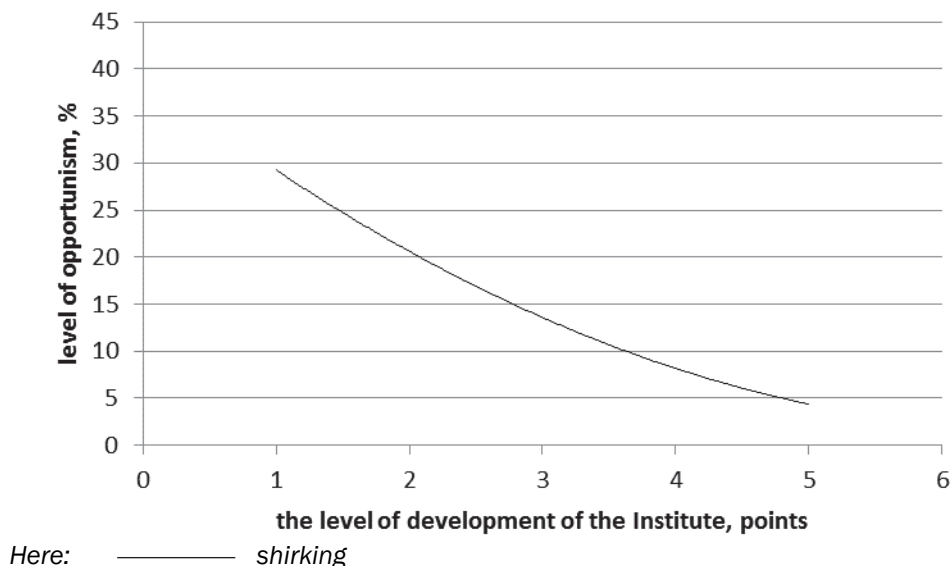
be minimized. The other aspect of the corporate culture development is the formulated and clear to the employees existence of the conscientious behaviour corporate model that have an impact on the level of negligence of the production personnel that is shown in the fig. 6.

Fig. 6. Dependence of level of the employees' opportunism in the form of negligence from the corporate culture development (existence of the conscientious behaviour corporate model)



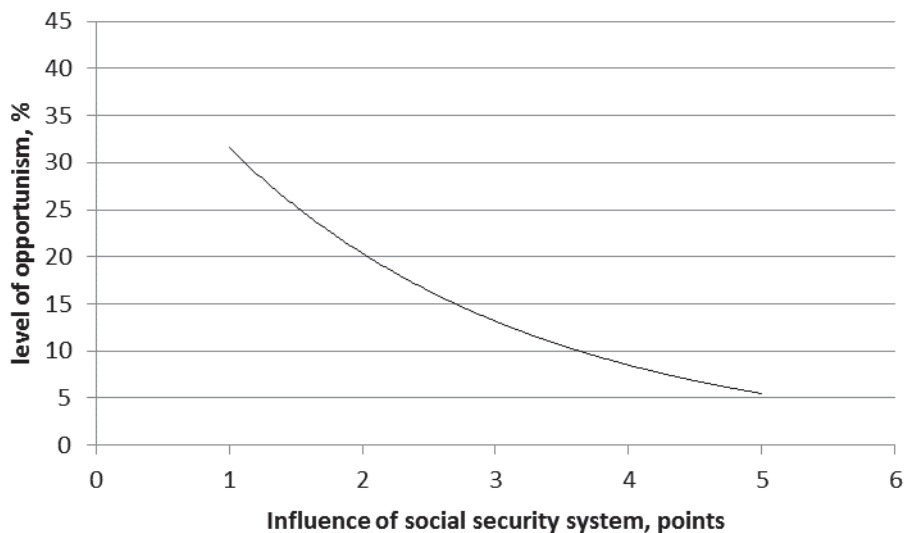
It should be noted that even with an insignificant decrease in employees' assessment of the perception of the conscientious behavior model the negligence level considerably increases, and in the situation of lack of conscientious behavior model clear to employees the level of negligence reaches 30% maximum. Thus, for minimization of losses of the enterprise from negligence of the production personnel it is necessary to formulate the norms and rules reflecting conscientious behavior of employees and provide their full understanding and employees' acceptance. Besides, in the fig. 7 and 8 the dependence of shirking level from the staff appraisal development system and employees' social security system is displayed.

Fig. 7 Influence of the system of staff appraisal on a shirking level



Thus, at the increase of the development degree of the staff appraisal system, the definition of the assessment criteria that excludes personnel shirking possibilities, its regular carrying out and bringing results to employees, and also the establishment of interrelation of assessment results with remuneration of labour level in production divisions of the enterprise conditions for the decrease in losses of working hours by employee's fault will be created.

Fig. 8 Influence of social security system on the employees' shirking level



Here: _____ shirking

In the fig. 8 it is clear that the social security system has an essential impact on the level of the opportunism of employees in the shirking form. Thus, the development of the social security system towards the differentiated provision of the additional social maintenance encouraging conscientious behavior of employees will promote the decrease in shirking.

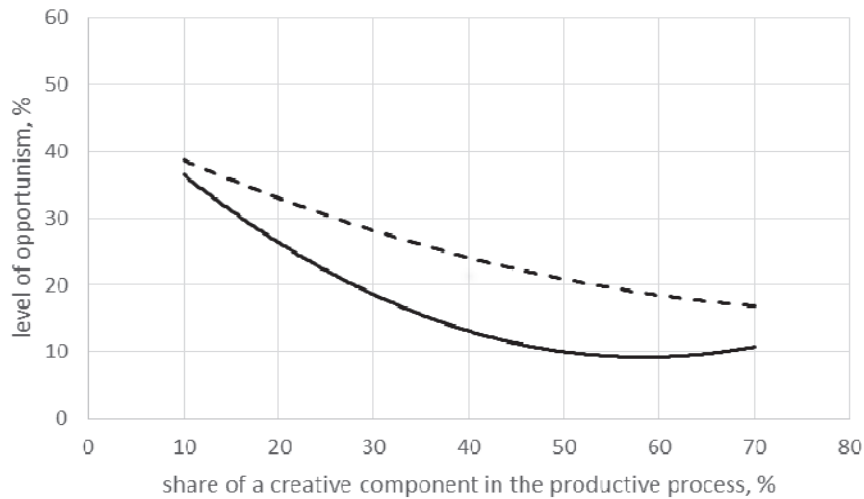
6. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTS OF THE DECREASE IN OPPORTUNISM OF THE SCIENTIFIC SPHERE EMPLOYEES

The main function of the scientific (design) enterprise divisions is the implementation of research and skilled-design works. For these divisions there are following characteristics:

- A significant part of the creative work connected with the generation of new scientific and technical knowledge,
- high peculiarity of knowledge which divisions employees possess,
- a rather low number of divisions,
- a big share of the employees who have been working at the enterprise more than 20 years.

According to the results of the research conducted among employees of design divisions the influence of a creative component of labour process on employees' shirking level and official position use (fig. 9) has been revealed. However, the dependence of the level of negligence demonstration and the concealment of workplaces' reserve has not been revealed.

Fig. 9. Dependence of the shirking level and pulling rank from a share of a creative component in the productive process

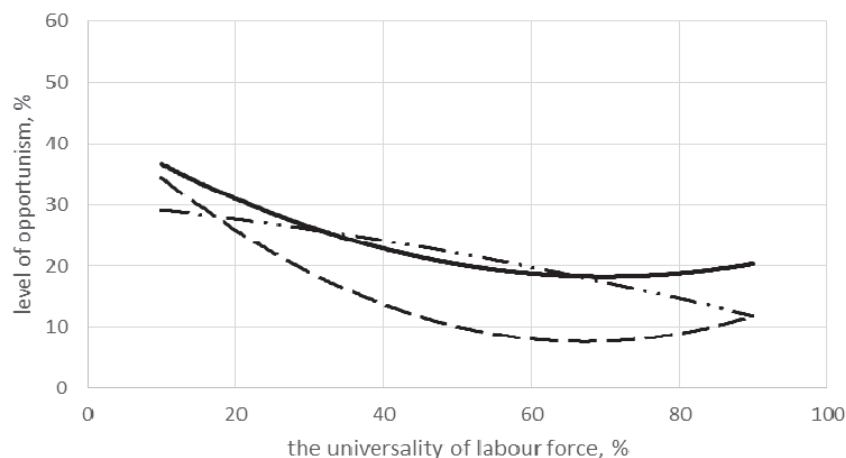


Here: - - - - shirking, ——— pulling rank

Apparently, in the fig. 9 it is shown that there is an inverse relation between a share of a creative component in the labour process of the employees of design divisions and scales of demonstration of such forms of the employee's opportunistic behavior as shirking and pulling rank. As the creative activity is inalienable in essence, one of the reasons of the employees' opportunism emergence disappears. Conformably, for the reduction of misconduct level of the employees of design divisions it is necessary to have a great number of employees been involved into creative work.

The other factor that has an impact on the level of employee's opportunistic behavior demonstration is uniqueness of knowledge and skills which employees possess. Apparently, in the fig. 10 it is shown that the more general knowledge employees possess, the less they are inclined to the manifestation of the opportunistic behavior in the form of shirking, negligence and concealment of workplaces reserves.

Fig. 10. Dependence of a level of shirking, negligence and concealment of workplaces' reserve from a degree of the universality of labour force

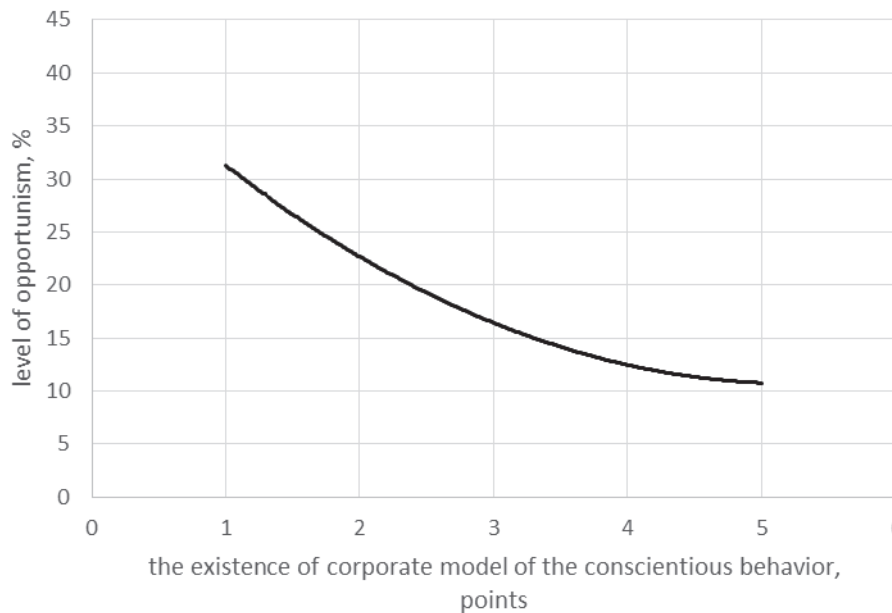


Here: ——— shirking; - - - - concealment of workplaces' reserve; - · - · - · negligence

Conformably, in the divisions with a big share of employees possessing unique (high-specific) knowledge and skills the level of manifestation of the employee's opportunistic behavior is higher. The influence of an institute of corporate culture on the extent of manifestation of employee's opportunism level has been estimated in two aspects. Firstly, such an element of the corporate culture as the existence of the accurately formulated and clear to the employees model of the conscientious behavior has been estimated, that is such a standard of employee's labour behaviour which is perceived by managers and employees as a correct one, corresponding to the interests of the enterprise and conditions of the employment contract.

In the analysis of the received results the interrelation between the employee's assessment of the expressiveness of conscientious behavior model and the level of the opportunistic behaviour of the employees of design divisions in the form of shirking (fig. 11) has been established. Apparently, in the fig. 11 it is shown that the minimum level of shirking is observed among the employees who are completely informed about the conscientious behavior standards.

Fig. 11. Dependence of employee's opportunism level in the form of shirking from the development of the corporate culture (the existence of corporate model of the conscientious behavior)



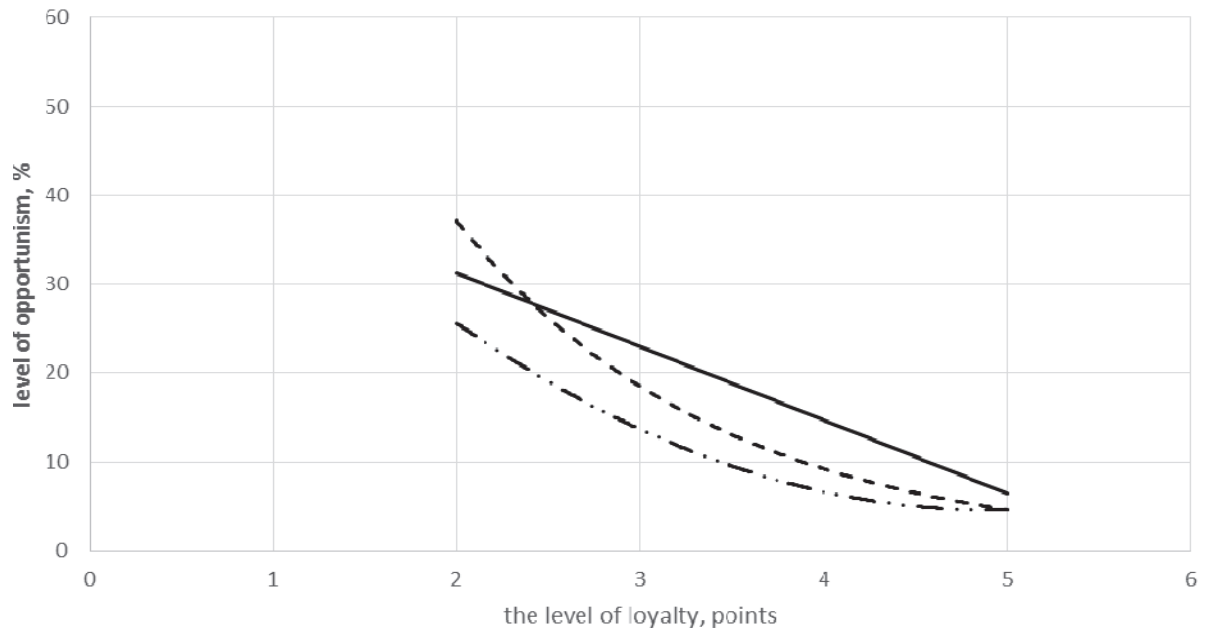
Here: _____ shirking

However, the influence of this factor on the level of manifestation of such forms of the opportunism as negligence, pulling rank and concealment of workplaces' reserve is not revealed; that can be an absence of emphases on unacceptability of such behaviour in the corporate model of the conscientious behaviour.

The second aspect of the assessment of influence of the corporate culture on the level of employee's opportunism is the involvement (loyalty) of employees. The involvement (loyalty) here means such a condition of employees when employees realize and divide values and the purposes of the company, and feel the internal need to do their work qualitatively thereby helping the enterprise to achieve the goals (Popov, 2012, P. 82).

Dependence of the level of manifestation of such opportunism's forms of design division's employees as negligence, concealment of workplaces' reserve and pulling rank is reflected in the fig. 12.

Fig. 12. Dependence of the level of manifestation of negligence, concealment of workplaces' reserve and pulling rank from the degree of employees' loyalty to the enterprise.



Here: ————— negligence; - - - - concealment of workplaces' reserve; - · - · - pulling rank

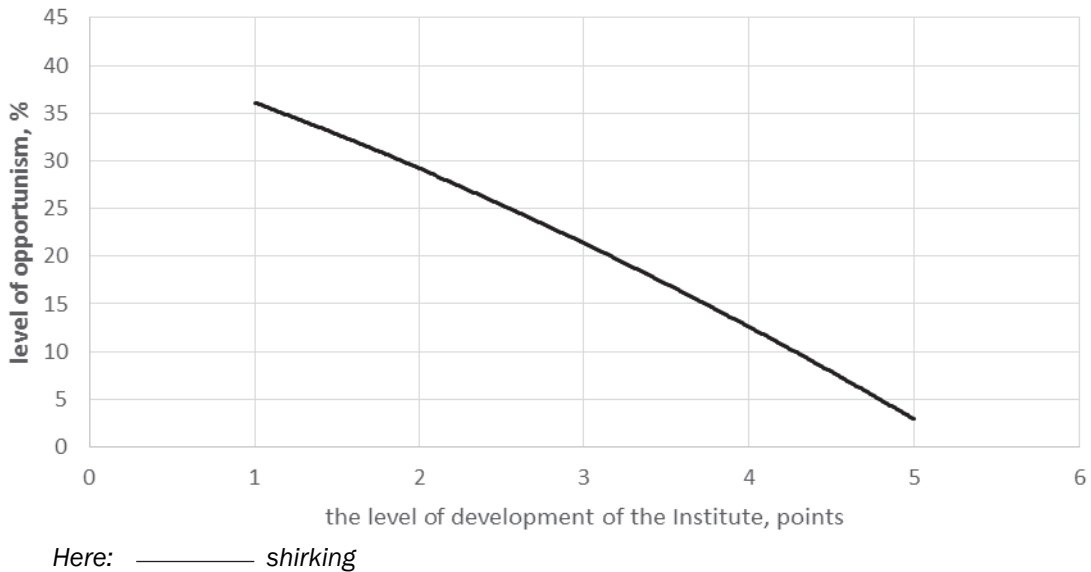
In the fig. 12 it is shown that at the highest loyalty of the employees connecting their lives with the enterprise and focusing on the «lifelong employment» the level of manifestation of the specified forms of employee's opportunistic behaviour is minimum. Thus, the level of negligence and concealment of workplaces' reserve are the most sensitive to the change of the loyalty of the personnel, whereas a significant increase in the pulling rank happens when the decrease in the loyalty of the personnel below the average level appears. Thus, implementing the personnel strategy focused on the long-term labour relations with the employees of design divisions and developing corporate culture for the purpose of the increase of the level of the personnel's loyalty (involvement) it is possible to reduce the level of the opportunistic behaviour of the personnel significantly.

Studying the influence of corporate training system and the development of a personnel professional career it has been found out that it is present at the relation of the extent of shirking manifestation, however, at the same time such an influence on the other forms of the opportunism has not been noted. In the fig. 13 it is shown that at a high level of development of the system of corporate training the employees shirking level is minimal.

Thus, developing the system of the corporate training and planning of a professional career at the enterprise, the conditions for a decrease of the level of employee's opportunism in the form of shirking are created.

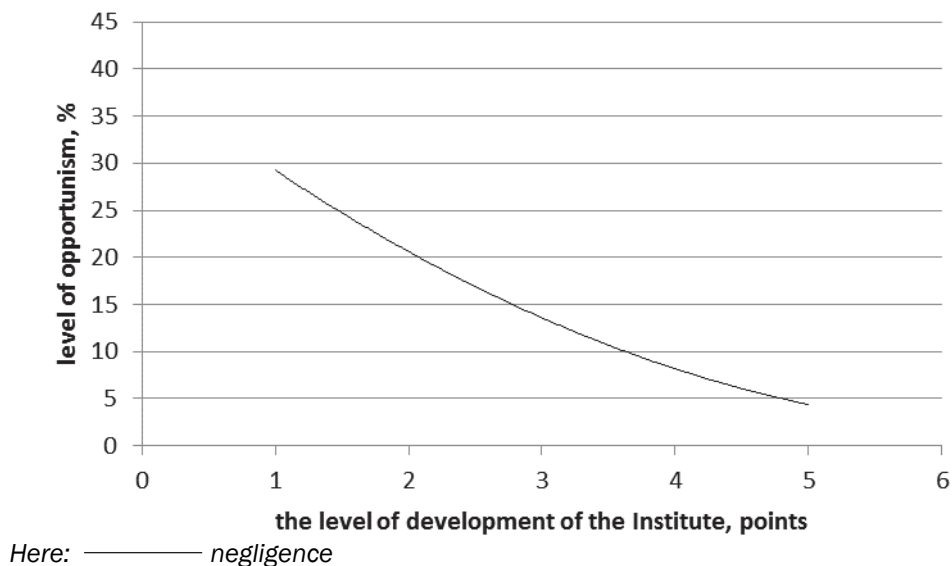
Besides, the development of an institute of personnel assessment, firstly, the establishment of interrelation between the results of an assessment with the remuneration has an impact on the level of manifestation of the opportunistic behaviour in the form of negligence.

Fig. 13. Influence of the system of training and professional development on the personnel shirking level.



In the fig. 14 it is shown that at a high level of development of the assessment system and its close interrelation with the level of remuneration the losses of the enterprise from employee's negligence are minimum.

Fig. 14. Influence of the staff appraisal system on the negligence level

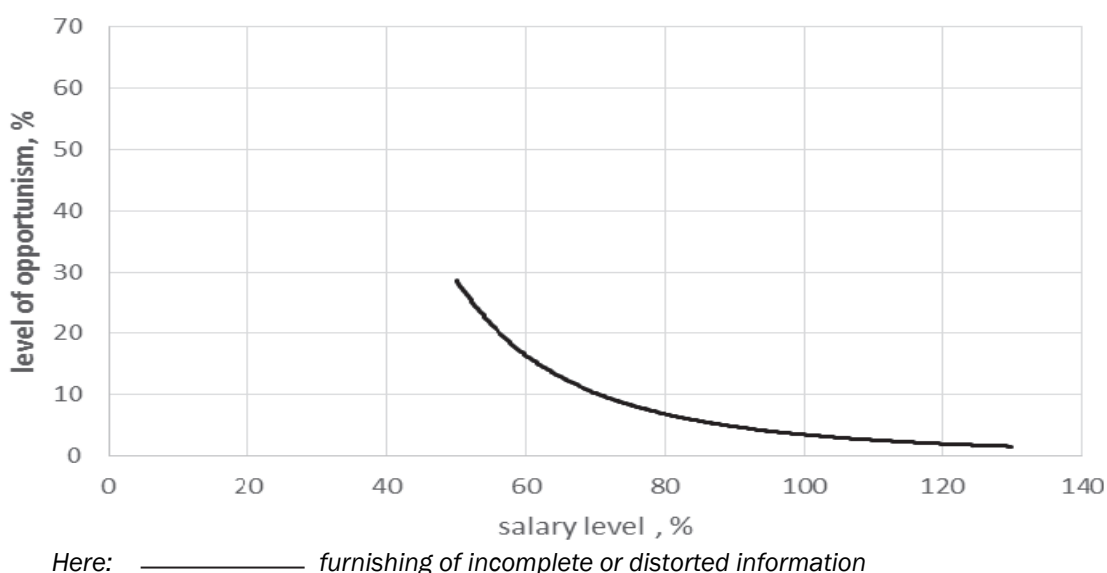


Thus, with the development of staff appraisal system, first of all, the definition of the criteria of the assessment, its regular carrying out and bringing results to the employees, and also the establishment of the interrelation of the assessment results with the level of remuneration, at the enterprise conditions for the decrease in the level of negligence of the personnel of design divisions are created.

7. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTS OF THE DECREASE IN OPPORTUNISM AMONG THE MANAGERS

The conducted research has revealed the existence of such a form of the precontractual manager's opportunism as providing a future employee with the incomplete or distorted information about working payment conditions. The dependence (fig. 15) of an extent of manifestation of this form of opportunism from the level of labour remuneration has been established.

Fig. 15. Frequency of giving the complete or distorted information about working conditions by the manager



Apparently, in fig. 15 it is shown that at the remuneration level in the division corresponding or a little bit exceeding the average level (to 15%) the frequency of manifestation of precontractual opportunism of managers is minimum, and at the excess of more than 15% the precontractual opportunism of managers is not noted. Thus, even a small lag of the level of remuneration from the average market level significantly increases the degree of precontractual opportunism of managers.

Within the empirical research the assessment of the following forms of the post-contract opportunism of managers has been carried out:

- The use of the over-employment mode without the corresponding payment
- An assignment of the additional works which are not provided by the employment contract without adequate payment
- Manifestation of personal sympathies and antipathies at distribution of works, rewards, additional social guarantees.

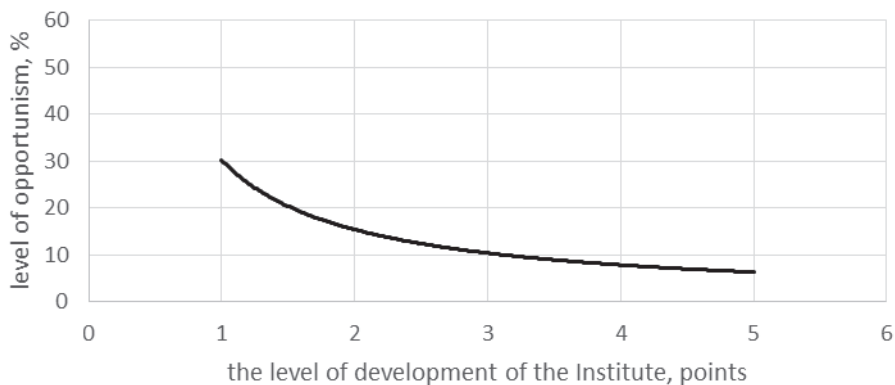
The analysis of the questionnaires completed by the employees of the enterprise showed that cases of manifestation of such forms of post-contract managers opportunism as overtime work and an assignment of the works which are not provided by the employment contract are rather rare. Less than 30% of respondents note that overtime work without the corresponding payment in the division is used and that employees are charged with the work which is not provided by the employment contract without adequate payment. Thus, the dependence of scales of

post-contract opportunism of managers in the specified forms from the relative level of remuneration has not been stated. Moreover, there is no interrelation between the levels of post-contract opportunism of manager's and the share of a variable part of employees' salaries.

Thus, as a result of empirical review, dependence of the level of post-contract opportunism of managers in the firms of RCP from the institute of material incentives has not been revealed. This is the consequence of the fact that in the firm the system of control over the implementation of requirements of the labour legislation is built. Therefore, manifestation of post-contract opportunism in the forms directly violating the current legislation has no systematic character and is incidental. It should be noted that the most widespread form of post-contract manager's opportunism is the expression of personal sympathies during the distribution of works, rewards, positions, additional social guarantees. All the interrogated employees note a manifestation of a similar form of manager's opportunism in a bigger or a smaller scale.

According to the results of the conducted research, the interrelation between the level of manifestation of manager's opportunism and the development of the protective function of the labour union has been established. Thus, the labour union is understood as the trade-union cell operating directly in the division, first of all, as a possibility of influence of the trade-union leader of the division on the manager for the purpose of protection of the division employees' interests. In the fig. 16 it is shown that the more employees estimate an extent of the development of protective function of the labor union, the lower likelihood of manifestation of personal sympathies of the unit manager is.

Fig. 16 Dependence of frequency of manifestation of personal sympathies and antipathies of the manager during the distribution of rewards, works, positions, etc. from the development of protective function of a trade-union cell in the division.



Here: ——— manifestation of personal sympathies and antipathies of the manager

Also, a mild negative dependence of the level of manifestation of a post-contract opportunism of the managers in forms of the over-employment mode use and an assignment of performance of additional work without payment from an extent of labor unions' institute development is observed. Thus, as a result of the empirical research, the influence of production factors and institutes of intra-firm management (Popov, 2012) on the level of manifestation of post-contract opportunism of employees and firm managers of hi-tech knowledge-intensive sector of economy has been defined. The assessment of influence of such economic institutes as institutes of corporate culture, system of corporate training and professional development, system of personnel assessment, material stimulation, system of encouragement and punishment, and also institute of labor unions on the decrease in opportunism of the employees of the firm has been carried out.

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