

MANAGERIAL INSTRUMENT FOR THE DIFFERENTIATED ASSESSMENT OF THE MOTIVATIONAL PHENOMENON -PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS VERSUS PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract: : The complexity of the motivational process has not allowed, up to now, the design of a theoretical model/pattern which might clarify and define operationally the modality of measuring motivation. Nowadays, the validity of the method of measuring motivation generates a great number of critics regarding its methodological exactness; therefore it is necessary to have a methodology for the differentiated assessment of the motivational phenomenon, based on the interactionist theory, in order to apply it to different types of organizations. This way, the process of assessing the employees motivation becomes more important and could be considered a genuine managerial instrument used in a precise environment, the organization.

JEL classification: M12, M52

Key words: motivational phenomenon, managerial instrument, differentiated assessment, interactionist theory

1. INTRODUCTION

The differentiated investigation of the psycho-social phenomenon of work motivation for the employees of a public organization and for those of a private one may include a psycho-sociologic research. In the process of the empirical investigation of gathering information, the main research method used will be a quasi-experimental one-the questioning method, whereas in the operational process of the research phenomenon we could use the survey questionnaire technique (the omnibus survey) and the procedure of administering it. It is recommendable to select these research instruments starting from the idea that they can offer enough information and an objective possibility to correlate the indicators, facilitating thus the knowledge of the interviewees' motivation, attitudes, mentalities and interests.

2. OBJECTIVES

While designing the methodology for the work motivation assessment we must take into account the fact that "methodology studies the analysis of the research methods and techniques, the respect of the regulations of designing surveys, scale, sampling, etc, in order to reduce the survey distortions and ensure the conclusion relevance. The

methodological analysis regards the relationship among the methods, techniques, procedures and investigating instruments and also adjusting them to the object they study (Chelcea, 2001, p. 51).

Starting from the theories and the measurements of motivation we have noticed the following methods and their limitations:

- Maslow was criticized for not using a scientific instrument which could objectively measure the concept of “self-actualization” and his model has not confirmed the hierarchy in activating the needs;

- Herzberg measured the factors determining the job satisfaction and dissatisfaction using the critical incidents method, the story-telling and the content analysis and the critics referred to the fact that no generalizations of the research results could be made and the results Herzberg obtained could be reproduced only by applying the exact investigation methods he used;

- McClelland developed a critical theory regarding the subjectivity of the methods of diagnosing the needs, by using a projective test, namely, the Thematic Apperception Test;

- Alderfer’s theory was criticized due to the fact that a set of needs is predefined and it is not in accordance with the principle of individual differences, some studies denying the regression hypothesis he introduced;

- Adams, who created the equity theory, was criticized for his lack of precision in defining “the Other” (his reference group), for the unclear description of the behaviour of re-establishing equity and the limited predictive capacity of the theory, generated by the perception and valorisation differences imposed by the cultural differences, regarding the fundamental parts of the theory: inputs and outcomes, the Person and the Other;

Buzea (2010, pp. 119-121) revises the history of measuring motivation and presents the following conclusions:

- starting from the Need Hierarchy Theory (Maslow, 1954) until the High Performance Cycle (Locke and Latham, 1990), the empirical validity of the theoretical models is subject of most controversies;

- Vroom identified three main types of methods for measuring motivation: statistical studies, to analyze the correlations among variables, laboratory experiments and field experiments; each of them being presented together with its drawbacks.

Thus, the statistical analysis of the correlation between two variables allows minor causal interference. On the other hand, although the lab experiments are used to determine the causal relationships, they have a series of limitations generated by the artificially created environment and the reduced period of time a subject may be observed. The field experiments allow less control of the variables and are usually expensive;

- The survey questionnaire is a technique considered by Vroom to be far from being the perfect predictor, due to the inconsistency between attitude and behaviour. The psychology literature review showed a negligible relationship between the attitudes of a person while self-expressing and his behaviour regarding the objects of this attitude. Consequently, the interview or questionnaire survey done to measure job motivation cannot overpass the legal limitations regarding the validity and accuracy of any measure based on verbal statements;

- the mathematical-statistical procedures of analyzing and interpreting data are also applied for job motivation measurement. They include studies on small sampling groups/reference groups which test the intensity of associating two or more variables and the measuring instruments are compound or dominant scales;

- the experiment as method of measuring the intrinsic motivation was very frequent, therefore in order to highlight the role the financial reward on motivation it is considered to be the result of incorrectly using the variables;
- meta-analysis is a more recent method, presenting however deficiencies in the criteria validity;

Taking everything into consideration, a new model of assessing job motivation, based on specific techniques and hypotheses and on the motivational policy of evaluating the employees' satisfaction regarding the work environment, is required to be done in a different manner, for different types of organization which should validate their relevance.

3. METHODOLOGY

In designing the research methodology we have taken into account the fact that, since a *series of elements* are of abstract and personal nature" (Rickards, 2007, p. 228) "*motivation is a very difficult factor to be measured*, as well as the idea that "a favourable working environment increases the employees' motivation and enhances motivation at work" (Chung, 2007, p. 124). Therefore, in order to study the attitudes, the motivation, the dispositions and the inclinations, what we generally call the psychology of the person, the subjective experiences, the data that cannot be observed directly, we have decided to use the "opinion survey" as investigating technique.

We took into considerations the limitations of measuring motivation based on **an integrative theoretical model**¹⁷, "measuring motivation by a very vast and complex operational scheme might become so expensive and intricate that there should be doubts regarding the pragmatic value of the results" (Buzea, 2010, pp. 119 – 120) and **we have decided to limit our research to some aspects of motivation**. In order to identify them we revised the researchers' explanation about understanding and interpreting the motivational causes which influence people's actions and behaviour within the organization.

Thus, Vlăsceanu (2003, p. 235) presents the approach of the analysts on the determining behavioural factors from **a situational perspective**¹⁸ (the behavioural causes derive from the person's social or organizational context), **a dispositional perspective** (the personal characteristics or individual dispositions are the factors which determine and explain the behaviour) and **the interactionist theory** (it considers that the interaction between the personal characteristics and the situation is the real cause or the generating factor of the people within the organization) as a compromise solution.

¹⁷ Due to the great variety of the motivational theories it is not possible to classify them as a single theoretical model and researchers such as Latham and Northcraft believe that the theoretical models are rather complementary than competing. However, an integrative model was designed by Locke and Latham (2004), but it presents a series of limitations generated by the high number of indicators which are the base of 16 dimensions.

¹⁸ According to the situational perspective, behaviour is shaped or changed by the requirements, the pressure or the situational conditions, so that the attention should be focused on understanding the stimuli that influence it and the way they produce unexpected consequences. The analysts who adopted this point of view were interested mainly in studying satisfaction as effect of the environmental working conditions or contents, of the incentive and rewarding systems, of the control mechanisms, etc. Similarly, motivation was analysed from the perspective of the modalities or the strategies that should be applied by the organization in order to determine a higher degree of investing effort, energy, talent or the people's capacity in increasing the organisational performance.

From our point of view, the interactionist theory offers the best framework for analysis in the motivational domain, as it facilitates the diagnosis of both the personal characteristics or individual dispositions and the employees' satisfaction regarding the work environment and the motivation policy of the organization.

4. ANALYSES

Consequently, in order to diagnose the personal characteristics (the individual dispositions) as prediction factors of the behaviour within the organization, we considered useful to measure **the employees' professional values**¹⁹, starting from the premises that "Values are similar to needs in their capacity to arouse, direct, and sustain behaviour Whereas needs are inborn, values are acquired through cognition and experience" (Latham, 2007, p. 149).

We have also studied the point of view of the researcher, Chombart de Lauwe, who presents the chain and non-dissociating relationship among, needs, aspirations, wishes and values, showing that "the need has an incidence upon the behaviour of the groups and of the individuals, but it is always related to the aspirations, images, representations, values" (Chombart de Lauwe, 1975/1982, p. 153); "if, on one hand, the impossibility of satisfying the needs generates aspirations, on the other hand, the genesis of these aspirations leads to reflecting them in the needs later" (Chombart de Lauwe, 1975/1982, p. 264); "the human individual will appear now dominated by Desire and value-oriented. But Desire and Value are non-dissociating, as the value characterizes the wanted thing and any aspiration is related to both of them (Chombart de Lauwe, 1975/1982, p. 174); "the value notion...is articulated with the aspiration notion" (Chombart de Lauwe, 1975/1982, p. 208).

Further researching the motivation theories which offer a conceptual framework to assess the employees' motivation, we have selected Hackman and Oldham's theory (Job Characteristics Model) for **implementing the measurement of the employees' motivation and job satisfaction regarding the job contents** in order to establish to what extent, during the process of job designing, the organizations had taken into account the fact that the five essential job characteristics should become determiners of the intrinsic motivation. Also, we considered necessary to study the employees' **satisfaction regarding the work environment and the motivation policy of the organization**.

All of the above mentioned ideas have contributed to shaping the object to be studied by the omnibus survey²⁰ which will be presented further together with the envisaged hypotheses.

4.1 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT REGARDING THE ASSESSMENT OF WORK MOTIVATION

¹⁹ According to C. Zamfir și L. Vlăsceanu in *Dicționarul de sociologie* (1993, pg. 662)/The Sociology Dictionary the values are presented as states or course of action considered to be desirable, having an essential role in guiding the human actions, in setting the aims and goals, the strategies, the methods and the course of action to be followed.

²⁰ The omnibus survey, according to Chelcea (2001) contains several topics and allows the implementation of the subsequent analysis, gathering large amounts of information regarding each event or social phenomenon and the possibility of grasping their interaction and interdependence. In addition, once the reference group/sampling group was decided upon, it is reasonable to research several topics in one survey rather than find new sampling groups and do several special surveys on the same topic.

In order to design a valid and reliable investigating instrument which should emphasize aspects regarding the aspirations-values, the motivation and job satisfaction, we have designed our own model of assessing job motivation by using the omnibus survey, called: “**Opinion survey regarding the professional values, the job satisfaction and motivation**”, based on the surveys presented in the literature review and on the constraints determined by the acceptable length of the survey (the number of questions), attractive for the subjects from the point of view of the topics included and limited to ¾h (not to encroach and impose upon their kindness).

The survey includes the topic of **professional values** based on Super’s **Work Values Inventory** (D.E. Super, 1970), widely used in psychological and sociological research. The Work Values Inventory manual presents the instrument of measuring the professional values, grouped in 15 dimensions²¹: Altruism, Aesthetics, Intellectual stimulation, Achievement, Independence, Prestige, Management, Economic returns, Security, Surroundings, Supervisory relations, Associates, Way of life, Variety and Creativity (Chelcea, 1994, pp. 221-224). Since some of the dimensions were of no interest to us, or the items used were not relevant to the subject, we replaced the items corresponding to “Aesthetics, Intellectual stimulation and Way of life” with a series of 9 items corresponding to the newly introduced dimensions ” knowledge and experience, autonomy and life style”.

The professional values inventory (PVI) with 45 items, is designed to offer a picture of those values appreciated by the employees, values which are grouped in 15 dimensions, each dimension being shaped by the answers given to a number of 3 items. It is worth mentioning the fact that these dimensions allowed their further grouping in a smaller number, corresponding to the categories of personal needs (presented in C.P. Alderfer’s theory: Existence-E; Relatedness-R; Growth -G) which are the basis of the aspirations and desires related to professional life.

In order to identify the intrinsic motivation we used the instrumentation of measuring motivation and job satisfaction regarding the job contents with the help of the Motivational Potential Score (MPS) developed by J.R. Hackman și G.R. Oldham in 1975 for the Job Diagnostic Survey. MPS contains a number of 15 items, which measure the employees’ perception on the five job key-dimensions (Skill variety, Task identity, Task significance, Autonomy, Feedback) which may enhance the intrinsic motivation.

To establish the degree of the employees’ satisfaction or dissatisfaction determined by the motivational policies and practices, and certain organizational factors which may influence job motivation, we introduced in our omnibus survey the topic “The global professional satisfaction” which adapts the global professional satisfaction JSS-G. It contains a number of 12 items which are analysed independently or in correlation with other indicators previously identified in the employees’ answers regarding the researched topics.

When dealing with the items, we have tried to respect the so-called content validity, so that all the questions in the questionnaire should reflect as exactly as possible the content of the topic (by implementing the instruments most often used in the domain) and we have taken into consideration the alternation of the question topic in order to avoid the “hallo” effect. The topics have been reflected in closed-ended questions which offered an answer scale (entirely for the Professional Values Inventory and the Motivational Potential Score

²¹ C. Coman (2011) presents the term “dimension” as a referencer of the aspects of the researched domain at a certain point, aspects which are subordinate to a concept, being less general.

and partially for the Global Professional Satisfaction) as well as open-ended questions(for the last topic) in order to identify the employees' preferences and opinions as accurately as possible.

As a way of implementing the survey, we have chosen the self-administering method in order to encourage sincere answers, as a result of the anonymity and confidentiality and of removing any factor which may lead to filtering or influencing the answer, namely the presence of the investigator.

4.2 THE DIFFERENTIATED RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS REGARDING THE JOB MOTIVATION ASSESSMENT

Starting from the studies and theories in work psychology and the management of the organization referring to job motivation and satisfaction this research aims, in a differentiated manner, at analyzing the professional value system (including the aspirations and needs system) and the employees' job satisfaction in both public and private organizations, in order to identify the necessary elements for the development of an efficient management strategy to increase job motivation, having the final goal of enhancing the operational performance, the organizational environment and job satisfaction.

This research universe formed of only two types of organizations was clearly defined due to two reasons:

- the research aim represented by the analysis of the professional value system and job satisfaction of the employees, based on their own model of assessing the job motivation, respectively identifying the necessary elements for the development of an efficient management strategy to increase job motivation, having the final goal of enhancing the operational performance;

- the research instrument is an omnibus survey having three specific topics, of which only the first one measuring the professional values is able to identify the characteristics of a population (in our case- average variables/clues calculated for each value dimension); these variables not being influenced by the type of organization, and the other two topics which measure the employees' motivation and satisfaction regarding the job content (MPS), or determined by certain specific internal organizational factors and by the motivational policies and practices (SPG), determine variables which depend on the specific and on the type of organization;

- to make inferences on alkalizing the results, the investigating reference groups must be representative²² for the studied population, in this case, this being done by the investigated reference groups of the two types of organization included in our case study.

Taking into consideration these first three reasons, we realised that during this applied reserch we cannot have inferences for all the employees in the public and private organizations , this (for our city only) including high costs and being time-consuming , as for ensuring the relevance of the reference group it should be extremely large in order to reflect the population's characteristics.

²² In his book „Statistică aplicată în științele sociale”, the researcher c C. Coman presents the sampling as a methodological statistic technique, used in social research in order to select from a population of entities (people, organizations, etc) a part of it (sampling) which will be analyzed to facilitate inferences about the whole population. In order to ensure the representativeness of the sampling group and to obtain indicators with a high degree of reliability, the sample should be large enough to show the main characteristics of the population it was taken from.

As previously mentioned, the instrument of the research allows the setting of certain variables which depend on the specific and on the type of organization, therefore, for the reference group to be relevant, it is necessary to have stratified reference groups, where the population should be divided and stratified in homogenous groups, this implies that in the first stage a sample group for all the types of existing organizations should be selected(the variety being astonishing: for the public organizations we have: public organizations belonging to the central administration and local administration with attributes in the central administration, monitoring and control, providing services, etc; art and culture, health and social assistance, defence-army, gendarmerie, firemen, police, education, etc; the private organisation have: domestic , foreign or mixed capital, large, small and medium; from the industry, constructions, transport, agriculture, forestry and fishing, services, etc) and, later on, the organisations being part of the sampling group should be also divided at random in order to select the groups to be investigated.

The research conducted up to now show the necessity of approaching performance as a motivational process and development of the members of the organization, as well as increasing their professional satisfaction. What is more, we thought we should not haste to declare the existence of a certain hierarchy of values (aspirations and needs) but shaping a picture of values²³of the employees within the two types of organization.

On this base, there are the following hypotheses, guiding the present research:

I.1. For both organisations-the public and the private- the employees' system of values is very similar, being shaped by the society;

I.2. In the present socio-economic context , the economic motivation is primary to the professional and psycho-social one in both organizations the score of the dimensions specific to the existential needs being superior to the score of the dimensions developed by the development and relationship needs.

I.3. In a public organization with activities in the educational services, the intrinsic motivation is superior to that in a private organization which produces goods, where the extrinsic motivation is dominant;

I.4. In both organizations, the different categories of personnel have a different job design according to the specific of their activity, and the essential characteristics of the job influencing a strong intrinsic motivation are present for the highly qualified personnel and less for the lower-educated personnel ;

I.5. For both organizations- the public and the private- the way work is organized and the interpersonal relationship among employees definitely influence the subjects' job satisfaction;

I.6. I suppose that both motivation and job satisfaction are influenced mainly by payment, work environment and the procedures of the organization.

5. CONCLUSIONS

²³ The "picture of values" notion, unlike the "values scale" of "the hierarchy of values" permits taking into account Chombart de Lauwe's recommendations, in order not to mistake the priority(the necessity of survival" and being the first(the idea of superiority in a hierarchy of values), needs and aspirations, two expressions of the same tendency, which could easily be in contradiction. Thus, a man or a group can sacrifice his most evident needs, including his own life, to protect his liberty aspirations or, his food or protection needs have priority compared with the cultural aspirations, the latter having greater value.

This paper aims at offering a formula which should reduce the discrepancy between the theory and the practice regarding the operational measurement of motivation. The motivational theories created mainly by psychologists proved to be devalued by their predictive capacity when dealing with the organizations' specificity, not being able to remedy the deficiencies in the range of methods and techniques used for the measurement of the motivational phenomenon.

The present model of assessing motivation, despite all its legal limitations which state that the survey is a technique which is far from being the perfect predictor (due to its inconsistency between attitude and behaviour), applied in the organizational environment systematically and in a differentiated manner, will allow its self-perfection and, in time, it will become a genuine managerial instrument.

The validity and the utility of such a model will finally determine a superior commitment of the employees, as it will shape the motivational phenomenon and the motivational factors in a differentiated and accurate manner, factors which will definitely be better administered by the management of the organisation.

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