

The Influence of Motivation on the Quality of the Leader – Follower Relationship

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Abstract

The subject of this research is the connection of the motivational structure with the quality of the leader – follower relationship. The aim is to determine the ways to improve the quality of the leader – follower relationship which will consequently enhance the productivity and the satisfaction of employees. The research results have shown that the motivational factors, such as reward systems, good interpersonal relationships, career development possibilities and good team spirit, are significantly statistically associated with the leader – follower relationship. The sample includes 300 respondents with different educational and professional profiles, employed in various public and private sectors in Serbia. An interdisciplinary approach has been used in this paper, and the data have been processed by SPSS statistical analysis. Based on this research, we may conclude that the strategy of motivation throughout an organization is necessary. It should integrate motivational actions into several segments: the development of the importance of work, the awareness of employees' personal values, good interpersonal relationships and the atmosphere of team work.

Keywords: employees' motivation, leadership, interpersonal relationships, team spirit

Introduction

The issue of motivation is a core issue of the whole human activity, the value system of a personality, work activities, as well as the society in which this process occurs. Motivation is a key concept for understanding the reasons of human behavior in a certain way. Knowledge of human motivation is the key to understanding the principles of human functioning at all, even within the organization. (Čukić, 2004). Human need cannot always be expressed, unless it is unsatisfied, and only to the extent that it is not satisfied. The logic of such a simple change in the strength of individual motifs can be seen in the appearance of the peculiar turns in prevalence of one kind of motive over another one. In order to be successful the employee must, above all, be satisfied with his or her work. As soon as a need is satisfied, it loses its drawing power. If the need is partially satisfied, an appropriate motive is partially weakened (Spector, 1996).

Leader-follower relations, based on expanded roles, are attributed to the group of leader's close associates, and they are based on a formal job description group of other contributors. It is believed that subordinates become followers of the inner group of associates, based on how well they function with the leader and whether they are willing to take on additional tasks. Subordinated employees that keep only formal, hierarchical relationships with their leader become followers of an external group. (Kesić, 1999).

Motives and Motivation

In order to successfully operate, each company must find an optimal combination of material and non-material incentives for their employees, but that will depend on many factors: the sector in which it operates, competition in the labor market, the nature of work, the employment structure (Schabracq et al, 2002).

It is of the utmost importance for company's management to know the profile of the motivation of its employees. In order to achieve the maximum degree of motivation of employees, the needs and motives of the people led must be recognized by their leaders, as well as knowing how to ensure their satisfaction. The satisfaction of employees is the only way to ensure stable, high levels of productivity and creativity of employees in long terms (Cooper, 1998).

There are three dimensions of motivation that are essential for understanding its impact on the operational performance of employees: direction, intensity and persistence. People in an organization may be motivated, but in the wrong direction (Franceško, 2003). The intensity of motivation is determined by the amount of effort someone invests per time unit, in order to satisfy their needs (Perrewé, Ganster, 2007). If intensity of motivation is higher, the employees in the company will invest more effort to carry out their tasks, and their performance will be better. Finally, the persistence of motivation shows the time spent in investment of certain level of effort in a certain direction. Some may be motivated extremely for very short period of time, while others may be motivated at low level of intensity for a longer period. (Ghuari & Gronhous, 2005).

The motivation tools of non-economic character have special significance in the modern economic environment. In order to satisfy these motives of employees, monetary funds are not generally needed, as much as personal affirmation of employees, respect for their personality, adequate arrangement of employees, in accordance with the level of their expertise; the opportunity for advancement in their profession and set of numerous other subjective aspirations of employees, which are immaterial. (Mandić, V. 2014)

The Theory of Vertical Integration Relations

The theory of vertical integration relations sees leadership as a process in which the focus is set on the interaction between leaders and followers. The relationship of the leader-follower is a basic concept in the leadership process (Kesić, 1999). Relations between leader-follower are based on expanded roles, attributed to the group of leader's close associates, and these are based on a formal job description to the group of other contributors (Northouse, 2008).

It is believed that subordinates become followers of the inner group of associates, based on how well they interact with the leader, and whether they are willing to take on additional tasks. Subordinated employees that keep only formal, hierarchical relationships with their leader become followers of an external group. While close associates receive an additional empowerment, opportunities and rewards, other followers receive customary fees for work (Brown, 2006).

Positive features of the theory of LMX (Franceško & Mirković, 2003) lie within the fact that leaders use some of his subordinates (followers of the inner group) more than others (followers of outside groups) to effectively reach the organization's goals. Secondly, the theory LMX is unique in terms that, unlike other approaches, it puts leader-follower relationship into the center of leadership process. In those terms, this theory is important because it focuses on the importance of effective communication in leader-follower relationship. In addition, it treats its subordinates equally. Finally, there are large number of studies behind this theory that confirm the connection of high-quality leader-follower exchange with the positive results of the organization (Vujić, 2003).

Research Methods

The objectives of this research are the following:

-to examine the importance and presence of work motivation, as well as its relationship with the quality of the leader-follower relationship;

-to determine, based on the results, how can the quality of the leader-follower relationship be improved, and therefore, productivity of employees and their satisfaction in the workplace as well.

Hypothesis: There is a correlation between the elements of work motivation and quality of leader-follower relations of employees.

Variables and instruments:

The dependent variable: the quality of the leader-follower relationship is measured by LMX 7 questionnaire (Graen and Uhl-Bien), containing 7 items. The variable: The quality of the leader-follower relationship is operationalized as the "level of trust and respect that subordinates show to their leader" through the following statements: "Do you know where you stand with your leader (follower), and do you usually know to what extent is your leader (subordinate) satisfied with what you're doing?", "How well does your leader (subordinate) understand your problems and needs at work?", "To what extent does your leader (subordinate) recognize your potential?" and so on. For each statement participants rounded up one number, out of five, which expressed the level of their agreement with the statement.

Independent variables: the 10 forms of work motivation measured by a questionnaire which was created by modifying Kahn's research by Professor Čukić, PhD. (Kahn,R.L according to Likert, R. 1961, Cukic, 2003)

Specifically, respondents were asked to judge what, in their opinion, was the importance of each of the 10 motivators, as well as how these motivators were represented in their working organization. Respondents expressed their agreement on the seven-point Likert scale, circling one of the answers, ranging from 1= not important to me, through: 4= moderately important, to 7= extremely important to me. The motivators are as follows: Salary according to work amount, The amount of the salary itself, Pensions and security for old age, Not putting too much effort, Getting along with people at work, Getting along with managers, Team work ability, Possibility of having an interesting work, Opportunities for promotion at work, Good physical working conditions.

Sample

This study has included 300 respondents, 130 males and 170 females. The respondents are individuals who are engaged in the framework of teams, dedicated to different levels of complexity of employment engagement. The sample consisted of respondents of different educational and professional backgrounds, working in different - both public and private sectors, from Serbia. Respondents age range was between 18 and 65 years. The average age was 37 year-olds.

Data processing:

Data obtained in this study were processed within statistical package SPSS. Statistical analyzes that were used are: descriptive statistical methods (frequency, arithmetic mean and standard deviation) (Descriptive Statistics: Frequency, Mean, Std. Deviation) and Pearson coefficient of linear correlation (Pearson Correlation).

Research Results

Descriptive Statistics survey on motivation of personal importance for the motivator in the workplace

The table below shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations of answers on all ten questions, about the importance of each motivator for respondents, and related to the job activities they perform.

Table: Arithmetic mean and standard deviation of responses

Motivators	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Salary according to work amount	6.34	,54
The amount of the salary itself	5.98	,71
Pensions and security for old age	5.37	,66
Not putting too much effort	4.25	,92
Getting along with people at work	6.32	,82
Getting along with managers	6.20	,80
Possibility of having a quality work	5.49	,68
Team work possibility	5.63	,64
Opportunities for promotion at work	5.81	,73
Good physical working conditions	5.84	,60

Based on the obtained values of arithmetic means of response, we can conclude that respondents, on average, estimate that their most important motivator is when salary received is set in accordance to the amount of work they have provided ($M = 6.34$). It is more important to them than the salary ($M = 5.98$). Also, they find that relationships with both colleagues ($M = 6.32$) and with the managers are of significant importance ($M = 6.20$). The least important motivator for them is to not be in a position to put too much effort at work ($M = 4.25$).

Descriptive statistics questionnaire about motivation for representation motivator in the workplace

The table below shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations of answers on all ten questions, regarding the presence of certain elements of the work motivation in their work organization.

Table: Arithmetic mean and standard deviation of responses

Motivators	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Salary according to work amount	4.42	,74
The amount of the salary itself	4.98	,71
Pensions and security for old age	4.37	,56
Not putting too much effort	3.75	,82
Getting along with people at work	6.20	,80
Getting along with managers	5.12	,79
Possibility of having a quality work	5.01	,66
Team work possibility	4.72	,54
Opportunities for promotion at work	5.22	,71
Good physical working conditions	5.41	,45

Based on the values of arithmetic mean, we can conclude that the respondents, on average, estimated that getting along with their colleagues is the most common motivator (M = 6.20), followed by getting along with their managers (M = 5.12), as well as the possibility for a quality work (AS = 5.01). The least represented motivator is not putting too much effort in the work itself (M = 3.75).

The correlation of work motivators and quality of leader-follower relationship

With the aim of testing the hypotheses on the existence of correlation factors of work motivation and quality leader-follower relations, we correlated the variables: Quality of the leader-follower relationship (which is expressed through summation score on the questionnaire LMX 7) and 10 motivators. The Pearson coefficients of linear correlation were created - for the importance of those motivators, as well as for the presence of these motivators within an organization.

Table: Pearson Correlation on presence of working motivators and quality of the leader-follower relationship

Variable	quality of the leader-follower relationship
Salary according to work amount	r=.53; p=.00
The amount of the salary itself	r=.17; p=.19
Pensions and security for old age	r=.13; p=.11
Not putting too much effort	r=.05; p=.31
Getting along with people at work	r=.47; p=.00
Getting along with managers	r=.28; p=.02
Team work possibility	r=.45; p=.00
Possibility of having an interesting work	r=.13; p=.11
Opportunities for promotion at work	r=.32; p=.01
Good physical working conditions	r=.21; p=.03

r= Pearson Correlation

p= Significance

According to the results obtained, it can be concluded that the quality of the leader-follower relationship statistically significantly correlates with the following motivators: "Salary according to the work amount" (r = .53, p = .00), "Getting along with the people at work" (r = .47; p = .00), "The possibility of team work" (r = .45, p = .00), "The possibility of promotion at work" (r = .32, p = .01) and "Getting along with managers" (r = .28; p = .02). This result indicates that the ratio of the leader-follower relationship, according to the self-assessment of the respondents, is of more quality, when there is fair remuneration present in their working organization, i.e. when salary is received in accordance with the amount of work provided, and also when there are better relationships with colleagues and managers, as well as stronger team spirit. An increase of the possibilities for career development also leads to better leader-follower relationship.

Table: Pearson Coefficient of Correlation between importance of work motivators and quality of the leader-follower relationship

Variable	quality of the leader-follower relationship
Salary according to work amount	r=.21; p=.06
The amount of the salary itself	r=.33; p=.01
Pensions and security for old age	r=.74; p=.00

Not putting too much effort	r=.14; p=.16
Getting along with people at work	r=.51; p=.01
Getting along with managers	r=.25 ; p=.05
Team work possibility	r=.19 ;p=.10
Possibility of having an interesting work	r=.11; p=.13
Opportunities for promotion at work	r=.35 ; p=.01
Good physical working conditions	r=.13; p=.12

According to the data it can be seen that there is a statistically significant correlation with the variable "Quality of the leader-follower relationship" and following motivators: "The amount of salary itself" ($r = .33, p = .01$), "Pensions and security for old age" ($r = .74, p = .00$), "Getting along with people at work" ($r = .51, p = .01$), "Getting along with managers" ($r = .25, p = .05$) and "Opportunity for promotion at work" ($r = .35, p = .01$). Based on these results it can be concluded that the more important the salary, pension security, as well as good interpersonal relationships and opportunities for promotion at work are to the respondents, the quality of the leader-follower relationship is ranked higher among them.

Discussion

This research has also confirmed the importance of work motivation in the work process, as well as its relationship with the quality of the leader-follower relations. Employees in Serbia have estimated that their most important motivator for them is when salary in an organization is received according to the amount of work they have provided, and to them, it is even more important than the salary itself. Also, they find organizational relationships very important, both with their colleagues and leaders. This can be connected with the mentality of the Serbs that foster close friendships and good relationships, so it is not surprising that these are very important for them on organizational level, where they spend a lot of time on daily basis. The least important motivator for them is not to have to put too much effort at work. This result is a little surprising because one would expect that employees prefer to work less and be better paid, so it is possible that some respondents gave socially desirable answers, or that the working awareness of the respondents is at a high level, so that they do not mind working too much if they will be paid accordingly.

When it comes to the presence of motivators in the organization, there is a similar situation, i.e. the respondents, on average, have estimated that getting along with their colleagues is the most common motivator, followed by getting along with their managers, and the possibility of quality work. The least represented motivator is not putting too much effort in work. It should be noted that the ability of teamwork is also less frequent motivator, and that many organizations should work on it.

The results have shown that the elements of work motivation such as a fair reward, good interpersonal relations, career prospects and cultivating team spirit, statistically significantly correlated with the quality of the leader-follower relations, so that the basic hypothesis from which we have started in this work is confirmed. This result is very important, particularly if viewed in the spirit of the development of teamwork, which is missing in our companies, but also in terms of showing the leaders that it is their responsibility to motivate their employees, which should lead to increased productivity.

In the end, it can be concluded that the development of an atmosphere of teamwork is based on the satisfaction of social needs, through favoring teamwork as an effective way of achieving goals. The manager indirectly encourages team building through cooperation development, group cohesion and working aspirations of the group, as well as encourages group followers to think as a team and to work as a team. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy of an organizational motivation is what would most likely lead to increased working capacity in the Serbian working organizations, as well as higher production, greater motivation of employees at work, and therefore greater life satisfaction of a person in the workplace, which is one of the greatest values that should be nourished by a man of today.

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