

MOTIVATION TO WORK FOR EMPLOYEES IN REGIONAL EDUCATION AND POSSIBILITIES TO INFLUENCE IT

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Abstract:

The study deals with the possibilities of influencing the motivation to work by managers in the segment of regional education. Respondents of a research survey presented in the Introduction of the study were managers and employees who currently work in regional education or who are very familiar with the practice of school management. Theoretically conceived chapter 1 of the study then introduces concepts of motivation as an internal process and as one of the basic activities of managers. The overview also includes the most well-known theories of motivation / job satisfaction. Intention of the survey, the results of which are presented in chapter 2, was to find out which of the selected theories of motivation and job satisfaction respondents know and use in the practice of management and leadership of employees. The aim of the survey was to define specific possibilities how to positively influence the motivation to work and thus the work performance of employees in regional education. Qualitative research was used for the investigation (methods of questioning in oral and written form – recording the results of group discussions).

Introduction (aim and research methods)

The paper deals with definition of a basic approach to motivation as an internal process, which influences both, conscious and unconscious behavior of individuals in different phases and contexts of their lives. However, the relationship between the internal process of motivation and the possibilities to influence it from the outside is particularly important for the issues examined here. Special attention is paid to the application of the best-known theories of motivation in the practice of school managers and managers of school facilities. Research problem is thus the area of motivation for work activities, or effective influence of this process from outside, by the influence of managers.

The aim of the research was firstly to find out which of the best known theories of (work) motivation / job satisfaction as sources of motivation are applied in the practice of regional education. Furthermore, the survey focused on the definition of basic, "golden rules", how in practice effectively and with the desired results use the process-oriented theories of motivation. Motivation theories from this group is generally less well-known, but important for practice (Mikuláščík, 2015). A partial objective of the research was to confirm the above assumption. The basic goal is to determine, through discussion of selected managers of regional education, the determining possibilities of how to positively influence the motivation to work of employees in the segment of regional education.

Qualitative research was used for the research. The basic research questions (RQ) to be answered were the following three:

RQ1: Which of the selected theories of motivation / job satisfaction do the respondents know?

RQ2: In what way do they use known motivation / job satisfaction theories in practice?

RQ3: What are the possibilities of positively influencing the work motivation of employees in regional education, using knowledge of process-oriented motivation theories?

We consider the answer to the third research question to be crucial for the research. The identified possibilities were labelled in the research as "golden rules of work motivation" and their number was limited to a maximum of ten most important for each used theory of work motivation.

Respondents of the survey, which took place in autumn 2019, were mainly managers and employees of schools and school facilities. The group was also complemented by other experts in the area of people management and in school management, who are not currently active in regional education. However, they are prepared for performance of managerial positions within the framework of formal education at university. Thus the choice of respondents in this case was intentional locally and temporally (deliberate selection of a research sample), precisely because of their own experience with leading people in regional education and of their knowledge in the issue of work motivation. The research sample consisted of 41 respondents. Given the methodology used, the results of the survey will not be statistically evaluated and generalized.

1. Motivation of human behavior and possibilities of its influence in the working process¹

Concepts of motives and motivation are of utmost importance for analyzing the behavior of people in work organizations. Indeed, when we consider why people behave in the way as they do in certain situations, we must necessarily address the motives of their actions (Nakonečný, 2005; Bedrnová, Jarošová, Nový et al., 2012).

This internal process manifests itself outwardly in behavior, which we then refer to as instrumental (motivation-based) action. For completeness it is necessary to add that the very existence of need is not enough to start action. In addition to awareness of need, other "triggers" are subjectively perceived likelihood of fulfillment and the value of the goal to be achieved, and consideration of the consequences that behavior will have for individuals (ibid and following text of this paper).

All the best known and also in practice of management of educational organization probably used theories of motivation can basically be divided into two groups:

- a) motivation theories defining types and structure (usually hierarchized) of needs - such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor theory, Alderfer's ERG theory or McClelland's need theory,
- b) motivation theories aimed at analyzing and describing the motivation process - for example, Vroom's expectancy theory, Adams's equity theory, Locke's and Latham's goal setting theory.

¹ A text of this chapter is based also on previously published texts by the author.

Some authors (eg Armstrong and Taylor, 2015) cite "instrumental theory" as a separate category of work motivation based on financial / material motivation. Traditionally, it belongs to theories derived from classical theories of organization (scientific management). Its application in the practice of regional education is certainly possible, but financial motivation is generally considered less effective and in terms of remuneration of employees in educational institutions in the segment of regional education also less applicable.

Therefore, if we continue to work with the above two groups of motivation (focus on structure and motivation process) as a starting point to explore the possibilities for influencing the motivation and behavior of employees in regional education, we can further state that the above given theories of motivation can also explain motivation to work. Knowledge of the so-called performance motivation, which is determined as a ratio between the need to achieve success and the need to avoid failure (Heckhausen, in Bedrnová, Jarošová, Nový et al., 2012), is also used to improve overall work performance.

The concept of motivation can also explain the different results (performance) of employees with comparable abilities and the same external conditions created for their performance by organizations (organizational and working conditions). In this context, the question of possible influencing of internal (intrapsychic) needs (and other motives) and the process of external motivation comes to the fore. These external processes are also known as motivating and stimulating and form the essence of people management and leadership. This is also confirmed by Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (1996). According to them, motivating is a basic managerial function (role). In their publication, they cite research conducted by W. James of Harvard University, which showed that highly motivated individuals use their skills to 80-90%, while others are only using 20-30% of their skills to maintain their work (the possibility of comparison with the known Pareto principle is obvious here - note MT).

It can be stated that the essence of motivating is an effective influence on the motives of the members of the organization (stimulation of motives). For such an externally acting stimulus, the term motivator has come to be known. In theory, the incentives sometimes differ (Nakonečný, 2005). These act on motives indirectly, for example money as a means of satisfying other needs at the physiological and social level. In this case we are also talking about external (extrinsic) motivation. This is considered less effective than intrinsic motivation. However, it also has a place in effective motivation to work and managers must learn to use such incentives in their management activities (Bedrnová, Jarošová, Nový et al., 2012).

Each executive / manager and other decision-makers can thus influence the motives and motivation of other members of an organization, either "intuitively" ("the art of leading people") or with an extension of knowledge and understanding of theories that further lead to the development of psycho-social leadership skills of managers. In the process of motivating others it is possible to use various management tools based on the application of motivation theories. The purpose is to achieve changes in the behavior of individuals, which will also lead to the development of their competences and improve quantity and quality of the expected performance.

Theories of Organizational behavior and/or Managerial psychology offer some of its own concepts derived from motivation theories (see Table 1). The transformation of theoretical knowledge of motives, motivation and motivating into management practice is then the basis

of successful management and leadership of people at the level of individuals, teams and whole educational organizations.

Table 1: *Application of mativation and job satisfaction theories in practice - motivating tools*

MOTIVATION / JOB SATISFACTION THEORY	APPLICATION IN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT
Locke's and Latham's goal setting theory Herzberg's two-factor theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management by Objectivs (MbO) • Performance Management System and cycle (PMC)
Herzberg's two-factor theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs of Quality of Working Life (QWL) • Work-Life Balance/Integration (WLB/I) programs
Maslow's hierarchy of needs Alderfer's ERG theory McClelland's need theory Adams's equity theory Vroom's expectancy theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition and remuneration programs (People Acknowledgement Programs - PAP) • Performance Management System and cycle (PMC) • Competence-based Management (CBM) • Organization development programs • Benefits and motivation programs
Herzberg's two-factor theory Locke's and Latham's goal setting theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participative management and leadership • Quality cycles (QC) • Quality management (TGM / EFQM) • ESOP program

Source: Tureckiová (2009) - edited

The phenomenon of job satisfaction is also closely related to the topic of (work) motivation, as can be seen also from the previous table. Job satisfaction is seen as an important indicator of work motivation and work and social climate of each organization. As such, job satisfaction is also an expression of a working attitude. It has been and is being studied by various authors (for example Štikar, Rymeš, Riegel, and Hoskovec, 2003). Internationally, F. Herzberg is one of the most well-known authors, whose two-factor theory, also included here as a motivational theory, is essentially a theory examining factors of job satisfaction (satisfactors / motivators) and factors that serve to prevent work dissatisfaction (dissatisfactors / hygiene factors).

2. Data collection and research results

The most well-known and already mentioned theories of motivation / job satisfaction have been included in the list (see Table 2). In the first phase of the research, the informants were asked, which of the selected (listed) theories of motivation / job satisfaction they know (RQ1), and to further comment on how to use these theories in practice (RQ2).

Table 2: *List of motivation / job satisfaction theories*

THEORIES FOCUSING TO THE STRUCTURE OF NEEDS	PROCES FOCUSED THEORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maslow's hierarchy of needs • Herzberg's two-factor theory • Alderfer's ERG theory • McClelland's need theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adams's equity theory • Vroom's expectancy theory • Locke's and Latham's goal setting theory

Source: own professing

Outputs from this phase of the survey confirmed the generally shared assumption that the Maslow's theory (hierarchy of needs) is the most well-known theory of motivation also among managers of regional education (survey respondents). In response to RQ1 (*Which of the selected theories of motivation / job satisfaction do the respondents know?*) respondents also mentioned Herzberg's two-factor theory and general knowledge of the need to set "SMART goals". Respondents have combined this managerial technique with the goal setting theory, which, however, they do not know, and just assume that it is "SMART related". Research at this rather indicative phase of survey later revealed that respondents also had a general idea of Alderfer's theory as a "simplified pyramid of needs".

In the next part of the survey, which was conducted in a combination of moderated discussion and group work with outputs to a broader discussion, the answer to RQ2 (*In what way do they /respondents/ use known motivation / job satisfaction theories in practice?*) was also found. In terms of practical application, respondents referred exclusively to the "Maslow's pyramid". In their opinion, this only theory is consciously used to positively influence the work motivation of employees in regional education; "to improve the work performance" of pedagogical and non-pedagogical staff in schools. Respondents also commented on the need for internal motivation of employees in regional education, where "it is not possible to rely on financial motivation". They positively evaluated the possibility of arguing "job security that is relatively high in educational organizations", "there is a good working environment" that the manager can appropriately support.

Individual respondents also stated that "from the grant projects it is possible to obtain interesting aids and other resources that support modern teaching". The most important thing, however, is "anyway internal motivation ... and the need for self-realization" through pedagogical work and work for and with children. At the same time, the participants of the research are aware that internal motivation should be supported by "good climate, joint activities of staff - pedagogical and non-pedagogical", support of extraordinary achievements by rewards, "depending on what one sees as praise".

In the next phase of the research, attention was focused on the possible use of motivation theories, which are focused on the process of motivation to work. According to the respondents' answers, their currently conscious use of these theories can be considered very low. Therefore, respondents in this section of the survey were first provided information on individual selected theories of work motivation (for an overview - see Table 2 above).

Respondents were further divided into three groups with the following assignments:

a) to add knowledge to the determined theory of work motivation,

- b) to recall what procedures they use / know from the practice of school management to positively influence the motivation to work,
- c) to choose from such procedures those that can be connected with the given theory of work motivation,
- d) to create an overview of basic "golden rules" of the use of the theory of work motivation in practice of regional education.

Through group work, respondents were able to obtain partial answers to RQ3 (*What are the possibilities of positively influencing the work motivation of employees in regional education, using knowledge of process-oriented motivation theories?*). Each group of respondents worked with one of a given process-oriented work motivation theory. The process of fulfilling the assigned task at all points was recorded by each group and subsequently presented (partly with the possibility of direct or mediated feedback also from other groups).

The outputs of this part of the research are then sets of three groups of "golden rules" for the use of selected theories of work motivation focused on the motivation process. Therefore, in this part of the research were added suggestions how to positively influence the work motivation of employees in regional education. The results of the group work are presented in the following text without any significant modifications and/or comments:

The list of "golden rules" for the effective use of Adams's equity theory consisted of the following seven points:

- *"Transparent and simple workload*
- *Clearly defined competences of employees*
- *Clear placement of employee / group of employees in the organization chart*
- *Pre-defined and unambiguous remuneration criteria*
- *Clearly defined career path options*
- *Precise internal rules on information flow within the organization*
- *Equal workplace conditions".*

The list of "golden rules" for effective use of Vroom's expectancy theory consists of the following five points:

- *"Set a reasonable / achievable task for each employee*
- *To convince him/her that the task is attainable / achievable*
- *Gain employee confidence*
- *Assure him/her that the task will be rewarded*
- *Thoroughly identify employee's preferences and needs".*

The list of "golden rules" for effective use of Locke's and Latham's goal setting theory was made up of the following nine points:

- *"Learn how to SMART goals*
- *Prepare SMART aims as needed by the school*
- *Prepare SMART goals according to the employees' interest*
- *Prepare SMART goals according to the competence of each employee*
- *Set goals together in an interview (manager and each employee)*
- *Set a maximum of three goals per person and agreed time*
- *Focus on non-financial remuneration in meeting the aims/goals*
- *Establish remuneration criteria*
- *Do not forget to evaluate the fulfillment of the goals and give the feedback to employees"*

Conclusion

The aim of the survey, the methodology and results of which are presented in the paper, was to define specific possibilities of how to positively influence the motivation to work and thus the work performance of employees in regional education. The survey confirmed that Maslow's hierarchy of needs is - at least among the respondents of the survey - the most well-known and used theory of motivation. Respondents also know other theories of motivation focused on the structure of needs, but their use does not differ from the application of Maslow's theory. The survey has also confirmed the assumption that theories of work motivation focused on the process of motivation are generally less well-known, but important for practice.

In the course of the survey respondents learned more about three selected theories of motivation, which are focused on the motivation process. Respondents then created three lists of "golden rules" for the use of those theories of work motivation in the practice of school management / in regional education organizations. Creating of these lists of "golden rules" of motivating of employees in regional education supported not only the learning process of the respondents of the survey (in the steps of evocation - awareness of meaning - reflection) but also their critical thinking. At the same time, their suggestions as to how to reinforce motivation to work can also be used for the development of school management theory and as input data for further research.

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