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INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AS A DETERMINANT OF PROINNOVATIVE BEHAVIOUR

The subject of this article is intrinsic motivation and those factors of the organizational environment that are capable of stimulating it. This article presents the results of research carried out by interviewing people who independently made the decision to initiate the implementation of an organizational solution. It is assumed that such behavior is an expression of a high level of intrinsic motivation. Many factors contributing to the intensification of intrinsic motivation are known, but the interviews allowed us to “get to know” their subjective image, making it possible to understand how individual elements of the organizational environment are perceived by employees. They also enable a deeper understanding of the way in which intrinsic motivation is perceived as a subjective experience of the respondents. The results of this research enable a better understanding of the influence of external conditions on the level of this type of motivation, constituting a starting point for further research, as well as useful knowledge for practitioners of management.

Keywords: intrinsic motivation, self-management, innovations, organizational behaviour.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of employee creativity promotes the organisation's ability to be innovative and effective, and also increases its ability to survive (Baer, Oldham, Cummings, 2003). Therefore, the development of employees' creativity should be one of the functions of the management system. However, the ability to act, to which creativity can be attributed, remains the domain of people and teams (Amabile, 1988; Cohen, Levinthal, 1990; Ford, 1996; Mumford, Gustafson, 1988; Pery-Smith, Shalley, 2003), with the best researched and well-established approach being the perception of creative ability as the property of the individual. Therefore, a relatively new theory of organisational creativity develops around individual and team creativity, looking for an answer to the question about the possibility of deliberate, systemic influence on employees in order to inspire them to undertake creative activity and strengthen its favourable attitudes (Sundgren, Dimenas, Gustafsson, Selart, 2005).

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The aim of this article is to identify the subjective perception of organisational conditions conducive to the development of an important component of individual creativity, which is intrinsic motivation (Deci, Ryan, 1985). According to Theresa M. Amabile (1988), in the area of employee creativity motivation is the most important issue, and at the same time the least considered by researchers, theorists and practitioners of creativity. Intrinsic motivation, like learning, enables flexible, creative responses. It also enables concentration on the task, which leads to greater efficiency in their execution (Utman, 1997). Of course, employee creativity may also be fostered by extrinsic motivation, but then in the decisions made by the employee, the employee takes into account the calculation of the expected benefits, the achievement of which depends on meeting the evaluation criteria included in the control procedure.

This mechanism limits the employee's spontaneity and freedom of action. On the other hand, involvement in the implementation of activities, the taking of which is not clearly determined by external factors, brings about a number of specific results:

1. It strengthens the sense of subjectivity (Deci, Ryan, 1980).
2. It has a positive effect on the employee's level of creativity (Zhang, Bartol, 2010). In the model of creativity (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, Herron, 1996), it is considered the most important factor for creative behaviour (Byron, Khazanchi, 2015).
3. It inspires people to search for knowledge, to learn and to improve their skills (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein, Jarvis, 1996; Utman, 1997), which also supports creative processes, as it allows the employee to find many new ways to solve problems, come up with new approaches, as well as also maintaining their commitment (Shin, Zhou, 2003).
4. For some types of tasks, it also provides higher work efficiency than extrinsic motivation (Utman, 1997).
5. It gives rise to a range of positive emotional states (Nakamura, Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Utman, 1997).

Activity with the above characteristics is a desirable phenomenon not only because of the benefits in the form of work efficiency and the creation of creative solutions. Repeating internally motivated activities in the long run will certainly have a positive impact on the level of knowledge and skills of the employee, as well as their commitment and job satisfaction.

This article attempts to identify the organisational factors that stimulate intrinsic motivation in the workplace. The conducted research is qualitative in nature. It was carried out as a series of structured interviews with people who took innovative initiatives on their own initiative. Interview questions were developed on the basis of known intrinsic motivation models (Deci, Ryan, 1980, 1985), empowerment (Gagné, Senécal, Koestner, 1997) or employee creativity (Amabile, 1988). The idea of the research presented was to focus on the subjective representation of the work situation in order to define the ways of perception of the work situation that activates intrinsic motivation. Interviews were conducted with people who, on their own decision, initiated an innovative activity and led to its implementation. It was assumed that the implementation of a creative act, which is undertaking development activities on the basis of one's own decision, is a sufficient indicator of a high level of intrinsic motivation (Prabhu, Sutton, Sauser, 2008; Tierney, Farmer, Graen, 1999).

2. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE LEVEL OF INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Intrinsic motivation is based on an innate, organic need for competence and self-determination. It stimulates a wide range of behaviours and mental processes, for which the main reward is the experience of effectiveness and autonomy (Deci, Ryan, 1985). In addition to the firmly entrenched operant theory, works on motivation began to appear in the early 1970s, which kept the individual interested in acting despite the lack of noticeable consequences in carrying it out. Edward L. Deci relied on earlier views (White, 1959) suggesting that people engage in activities in order to experience their agency, effectiveness and competence. He assumed that intrinsically motivated behaviours are based on the inner human needs to be competent and self-determined (Deci, Koestner, Ryan, 1999). It turned out that this type of motivation is an important component of organisational creativity models, constituting the core process of innovative undertakings (Amabile et al., 1996). It is also a good predictor of employee creativity (Muñoz-Doyague, González-Álvarez, Nieto, 2008). Intrinsic motivation is the performance of a task for itself, due to the interest in it and excitement at the thought of the challenges related to its implementation, and not the benefit of its implementation. Those who are motivated in this way see that their involvement is free from strong external control; they feel that they are playing rather than working (Hennessey, 2019). This type of motivation is therefore a particularly valuable resource for the organisation, because it makes employees take action on their own initiative, put all their knowledge and ingenuity into its implementation, and continue with this effort until they are fully satisfied with the result. Moreover, the work performed inspires learning and development and allows the individual to intensely experience positive emotional states.

Intrinsic motivation, as well as the other mental states of an employee, is largely influenced by their immediate supervisor. Motivation is an intermediary between the leadership and creativity of employees (Amabile, 1988; Oldham, Cummings, 1996). Greg R. Oldham and Anne Cummings attribute a positive impact on the level of intrinsic motivation to leadership of a supportive nature towards the employee. As they write:

When supervisors (...) show concern for employees' feelings and needs, encourage them to voice their own concerns, provide positive, chiefly informational feedback, and facilitate employee skill development. These actions on the part of a supervisor are expected to promote employees' feelings of self-determination and personal initiative at work, which should then boost levels of interest in work activities and enhance creative achievement (1996, p. 611).

More precise analyses of this subject have drawn attention to the impact of transformational leadership on the level of intrinsic motivation (Gong, Huang, Farh, 2009). The translation of its four dimensions: intellectual stimulation, individualised approach, charisma and inspiration to the condition of employees is explained as follows (Shin, Zhou, 2003):

1. Intellectual stimulation is accomplished by questioning universally divisible assumptions, questioning the status quo, encouraging the reformulation of problems, the use of imagination, cognitive curiosity and innovative approaches.
2. The individualised approach relates to employee development. It is about paying attention to their needs, showing empathy, and recognising and supporting individual initiatives and points of view.

3. Charisma, that is, a role model for believers. It can provide patterns of both behaviour and traits.
4. Inspirational motivation, that is, mobilising employees thanks to a convincing vision.

Empowering leadership also has a significant impact on intrinsic motivation. This type of leadership is aimed at increasing the commitment and motivation of subordinates by sharing power with them (Zhang, Bartol, 2010). This allows employees to experience autonomy as well as encourage and support them in managing their own activities. The trust expressed in this way in employees strengthens their awareness of the competences they possess (Guo, Peng, Zhu, 2023). Empowering leadership induces a psychological empowerment state that is characterised by four features (Zhang, Bartol, 2010):

- meaning – the feeling of the individual that the work performed by them is important,
- competence, self-efficacy or belief in the ability to perform tasks effectively,
- self-determination – the perception of freedom of choice in terms of how to initiate and perform tasks,
- influence – seeing your behaviour as having an impact on the result of your work.

However, the degree to which employees feel psychologically empowered in the context of empowering leader behaviour varies. These differences can be explained by the role played by identity theory, according to which individuals develop expectations regarding the behaviour corresponding to specific roles and then internalise them either as components of their own identity or else as that of the role played. Role identity is therefore a form of self-esteem or meaning assigned to oneself in relation to a specific role (Zhang, Bartol, 2010).

The intensification of the state of intrinsic motivation is also favoured by positive feedback. It inspires the employee to genuinely commit to the task, arouses interest and enthusiasm, and thus generates the “self-motivation” of employees (Deci et al., 1999). Changes in employees' attitudes are also reflected in their changed views and beliefs. The conviction of self-agency is related to intrinsic motivation. It is connected to convincing the individual that they have the knowledge and skills that allow them to carry out a creative undertaking (Gong et al., 2009). The structure of employees' views and beliefs can therefore be identified as an intermediary stage between leadership and intrinsic motivation.

In addition to the model of leadership conducive to intrinsic motivation, the literature also shows a pattern of leadership that has a destructive effect on this resource. This is the situation which emphasises external motivators, that is, remuneration, recognition and other gratuities, and not the work itself. Employees then react primarily to limitations and the goals imposed (Amabile, 1988). Work control has a similar effect. It is not an element of the task, but rather an external factor that imposes certain limitations on the employee's behaviour. The literature on the subject describes a number of mechanisms of the sabotage of intrinsic motivation as a result of the implementation of external motivators (Byron, Khazanchi, 2015). A decrease in intrinsic motivation and creativity occurs when the employee defines a given task as being performed for the purpose of obtaining remuneration. Moreover, the positive content of verbal feedback, when part of the control process, lowers the level of intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1999).

The characteristics of work also affect the level of intrinsic motivation (Hackman, Oldham, 1974). Workplaces characterised by a complexity of tasks will create a higher level of intrinsic motivation and creativity than those professions that are relatively simple

and routine. This is due to certain features inherent in complex work, which in this way affect the mental states of the employee. These are: (a) skill variety, defined as the opportunity to use many skills and talents at work; (b) task identity, defined as the opportunity to identify a whole piece of work; (c) task significance, defined as the recognition that a job has impact on others; (d) autonomy support, defined as the opportunity for freedom, independence, and discretion; (e) job feedback, defined as the information about one's performance obtained from job activities (Gagné et al., 1997).

3. CONCEPT AND METHOD OF RESEARCH

Many assumptions about the influence of certain organisational factors on intrinsic motivation have been confirmed by questionnaire studies (Gagné et al., 1997; Guo et al., 2023; Muñoz-Doyague et al., 2008; Oldham, Cummings, 1996; Shin, Zhou, 2003; Zhang, Bartol, 2010). Therefore, the author's intention was to investigate the subjective representations of factors that co-create the environment in which intrinsic motivation developed.

The research was conducted between September 2018 and February 2020 among employees of Polish enterprises. The condition for participation in the study was the personal authorship of an innovative solution that was approved and implemented in practice, or an implementation which is being carried out or planned for implementation. This solution was to be the result of their own idea, of which they were personally so convinced that they decided to try to implement it in practice, despite the fact that it did not come with any promise of gratification. Thanks to the criterion laid down, it can be assumed that people who experienced a high level of intrinsic motivation participated in the research.

The research was conducted using the interview method. The participants were asked to present their implementation history in the most complete and detailed way (Mueller, 2019). In order to make a comprehensive diagnosis of the inventive process, 19 open questions were formulated. N=16 participants took part in the research, who were the authors of projects meeting all of the abovementioned criteria. The interview was conducted in two different forms. In N=11 cases, a personal interview was conducted. The interviews were recorded (audio only) with the consent of the respondents and then professionally transcribed. The interviews lasted from 55 to 100 minutes. In N=5 cases, the respondents asked to submit a written answer, motivating it with the desire to have time to think about the answer. In the opinion of the researcher, such a modification of the procedure did not pose a risk of distorting the results, so it was accepted. Interview scripts and texts prepared directly by the respondents were developed using the NVivo programme.

4. THE RESULTS

N=16 respondents participated in the study: 11 women and 5 men, aged 25 to 41 years old. The average age of the respondents was $\bar{x}=32.75$ years, the average total length of service $\bar{x}=10.31$ years, and the average length of service in the company where the ideas of innovation were created $\bar{x}=7$ years. N=6 people are middle-level managers (3 men and 3 women), N=4 are independent specialists (2 men and 2 women), N=6 are administrative employees (6 women). The respondents represent the following industries: consulting, pharmaceutical, commercial, manufacturing, logistics and IT. Each of the respondents was

the author of an innovative solution. In all cases, the developed solutions were put into practice.

4.1. Responsibilities and origin of ideas

In the case of N=6 people – the administrative employees – the scopes of their duties were strictly described and left no freedom to define goals and tasks. The tasks of the remaining N=10 respondents can be described as complex work. A clear relationship was noticed between the sources of ideas and the positions in which the initiators of the implementations were employed. N=2 respondents in managerial positions realised their previously created personal vision. The other respondents, thanks to the implementation, wanted to: N=2 - get rid of frustrating limiting tasks, N=10 - test themselves and experience personal development, of which N=7 - test their own skills in the face of implementation difficulties, N=4 - prove themselves in relation to the conviction that the project is useful for the organisation. To generalise somewhat: in the case of the managerial staff, the idea resulted from their own vision for the development of the managed organisation, in the case of specialists it was the result of active participation in information- and knowledge-exchange networks, while in the case of administrative employees the idea of implementation was a result of multiple exposures to a specific situation, interpreted as being an imperfection of the organisation.

4.2. Leadership

In each case, the process of forming a decision about the respondent's personal involvement in the implementation project was reported as an internal, intimate process. In no case did this internal process involve the calculation of financial gains or of a better relationship with the supervisor or the improvement of their informal position in the team, nor was there any fear of criticism or objection from the superior. Only in N=3 cases did the authors of the ideas take into account the possibility of a refusal to implement them coming from higher levels of the organisation, but they had no doubts that such a refusal would only be caused by the actual merits of the idea. In any case, non-substantive reasons for a possible refusal, such as interpersonal problems or a struggle for power, were taken into account.

4.3. Emotions and learning

One of the respondents (female, 31 years old, 7 years of full work experience at her current place of employment, logistics industry, non-managerial position) stated her motivation as follows:

(...) I was motivated by my curiosity about the difficulties encountered. Checking whether I will be able to cope in a given situation. The new challenge was primarily due to the will to develop. I imagined how the company could function after implementing what we had planned.

While working on the project, N=14 respondents experienced positive emotional states described as contentment, euphoria, excitement and enthusiasm. These emotions were associated with both the process of making the project a reality and its completion. However, the truly positive reactions were triggered by the discovery of previously unforeseen positive results from the implementation. One of the respondents (female, 25 years old, total work experience 6 years, work experience in the current company 4 years,

training and consulting industry, non-managerial position) described her reactions as follows:

During the work on the project I mostly felt only positive emotions. It was a challenge that I like. If I am convinced that what I do and what I am trying to do will bring positive results, it motivates me to act. Besides, it's a chance for my own development. I treat each new task as a challenge and a lesson for the future.

If the originators are people who do not perform managerial functions, their emotional involvement plays a significant role. This involvement depends on internal factors that allow the originator to see opportunities for personal development and verification in the implementation of the project, as well as organisational factors: a positive opinion from their superior about the idea and support in its implementation by colleagues. A motivator of particular importance for the originators is discovering new, previously unnoticed benefits for the organisations resulting from the implementation.

In the case of N=4 managerial positions, emotions were presented as much more subdued. A middle-level manager in a trading company, a man aged 38, 16 years of total work experience, 13 years in the current place of employment, his motivation to implement the idea was "the will to save time and money and focus on the main task, i.e. sales". At the same time, he described his emotions related to the implementation of the project as follows:

I like it when I can introduce changes that help the company gain an advantage over the competition. I liked the negotiations and convincing of [the board – in the original statement, the name of the company is mentioned here, L.P.] to implement the project. I have a sense of satisfaction when the competition introduces changes previously implemented at my place of work as innovative.

The project was only one component of the main task defined by this respondent, which is the feeling of personal authorship of the sources of the company's competitive advantage. At the same time, this respondent was the only one to mention an unpleasant emotional state – anger – which appeared when the implementation of the project was halted as a result of various forms of misconduct (delays, communication problems, etc.) by external bodies engaged in various stages of the implementation.

In the respondents' narratives, learning and development processes are presented as strongly related to emotional responses. The expected possibility of developing competences and checking oneself in solving problems were indicated as a source of excitement and these emotions were indicated as being a significant motivator in the decision to start implementing the imagined solution. The emotional toning down of managers' statements was accompanied by a different perception of the development and learning situation than for non-managerial positions. A good example of this is the abovementioned quote of the sales manager's statement – the thread of development as a result of the project's implementation concerns the organisation and not the respondent.

5. DISCUSSION

The research conducted fully confirmed the picture of intrinsic motivation presented in the literature on the subject. In each case, only the internal process was the inspiration for taking action – none of the respondents received an external promise of a reward for the

implementation, and none of them would be punished for not taking the action in question. The characteristic features of this process were the accompanying positive emotional state and positive attitude (joy, excitement, faith in success) to the tasks and problems, which were interpreted as opportunities for the development of knowledge and skills.

The literature on the subject highlights the role of leadership in creating intrinsic motivation. The interviews conducted revealed what this conducive leadership looks like in practice. Its most noticeable feature is the small number of references to the influence of leadership in the respondents' narratives, but the specific atmosphere of the company's operation, clearly visible in their statements, was certainly not created "by itself", but is the result of a specific manner of performing the functions of leadership. The features of leadership that allowed the intrinsic motivation of the respondents to develop can be presented on the basis of their statements as follows:

1. The presence of a clear vision in the employee team – in the process of generating ideas, the respondents were guided by an understanding of the goals of the organisations they co-created. Only thanks to a proper understanding of the sense and direction of the organisation's operation were the developed ideas accepted by their superiors.
2. The culture of development and learning. The necessity to obtain new knowledge and verify one's skills, which in the imagination of the respondents appeared as tasks to be carried out in the process of implementing the solution, were treated as interesting, encouraging and completely natural components of the work. Certainly, all other activities undertaken by employees aimed at their development are interpreted in a similar way: learning is a matter of course, no one knows and does not have to know everything.
3. Rationality. Some respondents were prepared to modify or even have their ideas rejected by their superiors. Such contingencies were approached with no emotion or fear. The respondents were sure that the change of the project or the refusal to implement it would result only from its merits, the knowledge of which would complement their knowledge of the company's operating model.
4. A good atmosphere of interpersonal relations. Only in N=1 cases did the research participant report negative interpersonal relations. In the remaining N=15 cases, relations between employees were defined as positive or very positive, based on trust, cooperation and mutual support.
5. Security and participation. None of the respondents had any doubts that it was worth submitting their idea. Nobody, even those considering the possibility of their ideas being rejected by their superiors, had the slightest concern about the presentation of their project. Collaboration, discussions, the sharing of knowledge, the exchange of views and ideas that constitute the actual participation of the employee in the life of the organisation. The employee sees himself as an active entity contributing to the situation, and not a passive performer of prescribed tasks, defined by an unknown "someone".

6. SUMMARY

The characteristics of the leadership promoting self-motivation found in this research are very similar to those attributed to leadership which is supportive, transformative and offers empowerment. In practice - in the everyday life of employees - leadership processes seem to be barely present, or not very noticeable. However, their impact is realised through

created work situations in which the employee feels safe and at ease, perfectly understanding their role as an active co-creator of the organisation, and not as a passive executor of orders. This deep and unwavering identification of employees with their role understood in this way is proof of leadership mastery and an important source of intrinsic motivation. Employees are aware of both their potential and the value of using it for the interests of the company, the good of colleagues and their further development as a human person and as a competent and creative member of the organisation. The research fully confirmed Amabile's reflection that "In organizational innovation, as in many things, putting some positive new thing into place might often be more burdensome and less effective than simply removing something that's been standing in the way" (Amabile, 1988, p. 163). The factors that could not significantly affect the level of intrinsic motivation in the presented research were diversity of work and feedback from the supervisor (Gagné et al., 1997; Deci et al., 1999). The low diversity of work, typical for administrative positions (N=6 respondents), resulted in a longer degree of "maturation" to make the decision to start the implementation than in the case of specialist and managerial positions (N=10 respondents). The feedback from the supervisor was important only as a green light for the implementation of the idea.

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