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The Influence of Motivation and Flexibility on Job Performance

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Abstract

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In the research conducted, motivation and flexibility play a key role in getting job performance and as a result in the financial success of the organization. But how strong should be motivation and how should you use flexibility in order to get higher productivity/performance at work? In the absence of flexible working procedures, the company can reach a critical situation. Therefore, the aim of the research is to show that flexibility helps increase job performance. Moreover, flexibility can become a consistent "non-financial motivation" for the employees of an organization. Analysing the relationship between the two concepts, motivation and flexibility, our study shows we can achieve the desired performance, according to objectives.

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Keywords: Flexibility; motivation; productivity and work performance; strategic management; human resources management.



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1. Introduction to the Study

A less flexible company can meet critical issues with motivation and retention of employees who, although well-paid decide to leave in mass. It is known that the granting of material and financial incentives without more flexible internal procedures is not enough to motivate the employees of a company. Therefore, the study has proposed and demonstrates that organizational procedures and flexibility play a key role in eliminating routine and stress, resulting in increased productivity and, of course, performance of the organization, all this without changing the set of (negotiated) financial motivations for employees. Well designed and crafted, flexibility can become indirectly a non-financial motivation with real benefits for both employees and the organization.

1.1 Literature on Flexibility

Different authors have paid particular interest to the study of dimension of organizational flexibility (Nandakumar, Jharkharia & Abhilash, 2014; Sanchez, 2004; Volberda, Rutges, 1999), others have studied the links between company size and flexibility (Kraatz & Zajac, 2001; Ebben & Johnson, 2005). The literature is still looking for patterns that show us undoubtedly the effect of applying flexibility on organizations. Successful companies apply more or less consciously flexible procedures and usually benefit from a suitable economic success and to achieve the desired performance. Flexibility is a major dimension of business excellence and deals with a paradoxical view point such as stability and dynamism, continuity and change, centralization and decentralization and so on. It needs to be managed at the levels of people, process, technology and various business functions and it is important to create people flexibility to initiate and manage flexibility in processes and technologies in order to support flexible business requirements (Sushil, Kanika & Singh, 2016). Other authors focus on the challenges of capacity building for flexible work organizations and demonstrates how business enterprises practice reactive flexible capacity (in the form of adaptation and responsiveness) to cope with changing and uncertain business environments (Bran, Militaru & Ionescu, 2015; Sushil, Connel & Burgess, 2016). Flexibility can be thought of as an ability of the enterprise to quickly and efficiently respond to market changes and to bring new products and services quickly to the market place using a flexible information systems (Bran, 2015). Beyond this definition, a truly flexible enterprise should proactively change the market through its ability to create new and innovative products and services (Sushil, Stohr & Edward, 2014). A company's competitiveness will depend, in order to grow performance, using training of employees (Bran, Udrea & Ionescu, 2015) on their innovative ability (radical change) which represents a balance between exploration and exploitation that is being efficient in organizational routines (incremental change). Under these conditions, the organizations should develop new dynamic processes that enable a fast reconfiguration of the resources base (Helfat et. al., 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Flexibility is not a static condition, but it is a dynamic process. Time is a very essential factor of organizational flexibility (Volberda, 1998).

1.2 Literature on Motivation

To try building a list of reasons why people engage in various actions is impossible, but we can try to name a few: the desire to get something, comparison and social pressure, personal aspirations, desire for

success, routine, increase self-esteem, and so on. According to Goleman D., "If people's emotions are channelled to enthusiasm, performance is born; if people feel constrained and anxious, they will lose their efficiency". As long as they not satisfied, they create an internal tension that stimulates the individual, leading him to a conduct which seeks satisfaction of needs and the relieving of pressure (Zlate, 2004).



Fig. 1. Process of motivation (source: adaptation from Robbins and Decenzo, 2004)

We can make a distinction between work programs that are based on organizational needs and those that are based on employees' needs (Goudswaard, Oeji, Brugman & Jong, 2009). While company oriented flexibility can be associated basically with economic growth through increased company performance, employees oriented flexibility may be associated with social cohesion by improving the balance between work and personal life in different stages of life. Without flexibility, keeping the same set of motivations for employees, a company can get to lose its success. The causes are multiple. Flexibility measures will take employees out of their routine and they will feel useful professionally and gain the mental fulfillment they need. The rule is that motivations negotiated with employees be attractive to them. Amplification of motivations will be offered by means of measures to increase flexibility across the organization.

1.3 Continuous improvement

A successful company will continuously adapt and improve its working processes and procedures to market demands. Creativity helps solve and identify problems by using the most appropriate methods (Ionescu, 2013). Failure to adapt to market demands denotes stiffness and this "disease" can lead to company failure - insolvency or bankruptcy. It often happens in a company for employees, although they are well paid and enjoy a set of satisfactory financial motivations (bonuses, subscription to fitness clubs, medical clinics, car service etc.) to leave the company. The reasons are linked to the working environment and procedures. If the company procedures are incorrectly designed, unsuitable and outdated, they generate stress and routine. That is why employees feel dissatisfied, have internal conflicts sabotaging each other and prefer to work individually. When they cannot bear the working atmosphere anymore, they leave the company. The organization has significant losses, especially in staff turnover, overqualified and difficult to replace. All because of obsolete, unnecessary and stressful working procedures (fig no.2).

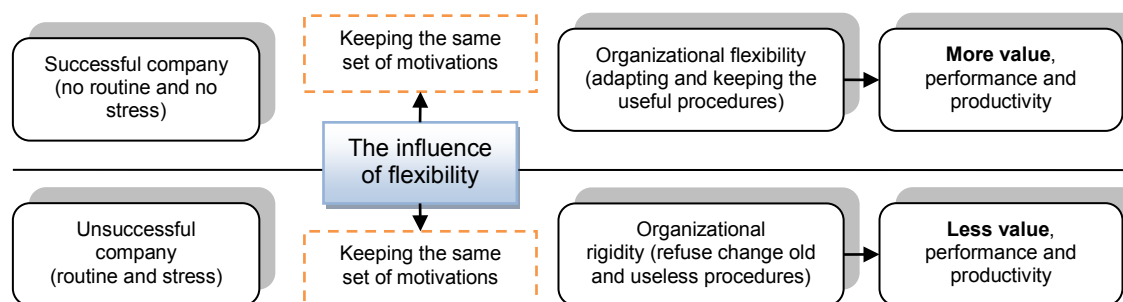


Fig. 2. The influence of flexibility in a organization (Source: The author's contributions)

There are common areas of health worker motivation that should be considered by managers and policy makers, particularly the importance of non-financial motivators such as working environment and skill development opportunities. But managers also need to focus on the importance of locally assessing conditions and managing incentives to ensure health workers are motivated in their work (Peters et. al., 2010).

1.4 "Change" versus "Flexibility"

The concept of flexibility is a term appearing in literature in the 70s. It's a relatively new term that arouses enough controversy, as it is often equated with the notion of "change".

- *What is the difference? Is "change" the forerunner of "flexibility"!*

We say that an organization has become more flexible because it has made in time some significant changes in its structure. In this case, flexibility is the effect of changes made in time. Usually, the concept of flexibility is designed as having a positive effect on the organization. The specification is important because in a negative way we can identify only the rigidity of the organization. Also, we can add that change is a cause and flexibility an effect.

2. The Scope of Research

The scope of research is to show that, in terms of management, flexibility plays an important role in the organization, eliminating rigidity, in order for it to develop harmoniously in economic terms.

3. The Objective of Research

The objective of the research is to prove that by implementing flexibility, we achieve superior results in productivity and company performance compared to the period prior to the study. Implementation of flexibility in the procedures of an organization department becomes an excellent form of non-financial motivation.

4. Methodology and Hypothesis of Research

The steps of research were structured as follows:

- a) Choosing an organization and identifying the need for flexibility in a department;

- b) Analysis and identification of the rigid procedures of the department which block increasing of work productivity and hence the overall performance;
- c) Identify the set of motivations offered to employees, deciding to preserve or change them;
- d) Application of appropriate statistical methods for identifying and establishing the pressing needs that could help streamline outdated procedures of the studied department;
- e) Employee involvement in flexibility process by choosing the best measures that could improve procedures at work;
- f) Implementation of flexibility by putting into practice the proposals of employees and improving working procedure so that the resulting new procedure should lead to better results;
- g) Measurement of productivity of the reference sample before and after implementation of flexibility at the level of procedures;
- h) Comparison of results and issuing conclusions.

4.1 Adding Flexibility to the Motivation for improving the Productivity and Performance

A company from the automotive industry whose major problem was the migration of staff was chosen. Although employees were well paid, they left the organization after a period of time. High staff turnover generated significant losses for the company. For the research, we selected a particular department with major issues (low productivity and performance), which had 30 employees. To identify the need for flexibility, the 30 employees were involved in the decision making. They were questioned about what would help them to improve their performances and productivity in the workplace. The company has held several brainstorming sessions, during which they collected several proposals from among employees. Among them were selected a no. of 8 proposals deemed most relevant and aimed an acute need for flexibility. However, the budget allowed the implementation of only 4 of them, but they knew which ones are the best measures to be put into practice (according to the annual budget planning).

The research was conducted over a period of 6 months, between September 1, 2015 - 01 March 2016.

The method of collecting information was through direct observation. Also, in researching the phenomenon Likert Scale was used for questionnaires and non-parametric Wilcoxon test for data analysis, suitable for testing ranks on dependent samples (two measurements on the same subjects).

4.2 Hypotheses of Research

Research hypotheses were structured in relation to the research objectives, as follows:

H_0 – Flexibility and motivation do not influence the growth of work performances and productivity;

H_1 – Flexibility and motivation do influence the growth of work performances and productivity.

4.3 Implementation of Flexibility

4.3.1. Step I. Find the most representative proposals to resolve a problem

In solving the identified problems creativity plays an important role (Ionescu, 2013). To analyse the preferences of 30 employees on flexibility measures of a department at the company, *the brainstorming method* and *Likert scale* were used, the company deciding to implement the most representative proposals. Thus, it proposed a ranking with most important measures to be finally implemented (table. 1).

Table. 1. The Likert Scale for flexibility factors

LIKERT SCALE						
Crt. No.	Flexibility factors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Working from home	1	2	2	9	16
2	Flexible schedule	3	1	2	9	15
3	Improved procedures and processes	1	2	3	11	13
4	Improving work environment	2	3	2	12	11
5	Delegation of management tasks	3	2	4	11	10
6	Friendly and open minded boss	1	1	2	14	12
7	Conflict resolution	1	3	1	10	15
8	Career promotion	1	1	1	10	17

In **A** position there are the results in ascending order of the numbers, and in **B** position there are the results in descending order, the top four positions being highlighted in the text (table. 2)

Table. 2. The calculation of data from Likert Scale

A	B
1. $(-2)*1 + (-1)*2 + (0)*2 + (+1)*9 + (+2)*16 = 37/30 = 1.23$	8. $(-2)*1 + (-1)*1 + (0)*1 + (+1)*10 + (+2)*17 = 41/30 = 1.36$
2. $(-2)*3 + (-1)*1 + (0)*2 + (+1)*9 + (+2)*15 = 32/30 = 1.06$	1. $(-2)*1 + (-1)*2 + (0)*2 + (+1)*9 + (+2)*16 = 37/30 = 1.23$
3. $(-2)*1 + (-1)*2 + (0)*3 + (+1)*11 + (+2)*13 = 33/30 = 1.10$	7. $(-2)*1 + (-1)*3 + (0)*1 + (+1)*10 + (+2)*15 = 35/30 = 1.16$
4. $(-2)*2 + (-1)*3 + (0)*2 + (+1)*12 + (+2)*11 = 27/30 = 0.90$	3. $(-2)*1 + (-1)*2 + (0)*3 + (+1)*11 + (+2)*13 = 33/30 = 1.10$
5. $(-2)*3 + (-1)*2 + (0)*4 + (+1)*11 + (+2)*10 = 23/30 = 0.76$	2. $(-2)*3 + (-1)*1 + (0)*2 + (+1)*9 + (+2)*15 = 32/30 = 1.06$
6. $(-2)*1 + (-1)*1 + (0)*2 + (+1)*14 + (+2)*12 = 31/30 = 1.03$	6. $(-2)*1 + (-1)*1 + (0)*2 + (+1)*14 + (+2)*12 = 31/30 = 1.03$
7. $(-2)*1 + (-1)*3 + (0)*1 + (+1)*10 + (+2)*15 = 35/30 = 1.16$	4. $(-2)*2 + (-1)*3 + (0)*2 + (+1)*12 + (+2)*11 = 27/30 = 0.90$
8. $(-2)*1 + (-1)*1 + (0)*1 + (+1)*10 + (+2)*17 = 41/30 = 1.36$	5. $(-2)*3 + (-1)*2 + (0)*4 + (+1)*11 + (+2)*10 = 23/30 = 0.76$

So, we have two situations:

1. The overall level of flexibility expected in the company to increase productivity:

$$1.36 + 1.23 + 1.16 + 1.10 + 1.06 + 1.03 + 0.90 + 0.76 = 8.6/8 = 1.08 \quad (1)$$

2. The desirable level of flexibility (first 4 positions outlined in red in table 2):

$$1.36 + 1.23 + 1.16 + 1.10 + 1.06 = 4.85/4 = 1.21 \quad (2)$$

4.3.2. Step II. Use Wilcoxon signed-rank test

The company has implemented the flexibility measures (mentioned in Table 3), and the 30 employees of the department were subsequently evaluated on productivity.

Evaluation was performed in two stages: before or after implementation of the package of measures aimed at increasing flexibility in the activity of the department.

Thus, the quarterly employee productivity was scored from 0 to 10 for each employee. In the experiment, the same level of motivation offered to employees was kept (table. 3):

Table. 3. Productivity before/after implementing the measures while keeping motivation of employees

EMPLOYEES (1-15)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Productivity before implementing the measures	4	3	3	5	3	3	4	2	5	3	6	4	3	5	4
Productivity after implementing the measures	10	2	5	6	4	4	7	3	4	7	6	6	5	8	4
(continuation)															
EMPLOYEES (15-30)	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Productivity before implementing the measures	3	2	4	4	3	5	4	6	3	4	5	5	3	4	4
Productivity after implementing the measures	7	4	5	6	3	4	8	7	5	5	6	7	7	9	5

The next step was to calculate the difference between the two measurements (table. 4):

Table. 4. The difference between the two measurements

EMPLOYEES (1-15)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Difference (D)	6	-1	2	1	1	1	3	1	-1	4	0	2	2	3	0
EMPLOYEES (15-30)	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Difference (D)	4	2	1	2	0	-1	4	1	2	1	1	2	4	5	1

Differences are classified in the absolute value increasing ranks after eliminating null differences and each is assigned a rank based on actual number. The rank is calculated as the average rank values that would be obtained if they were equal (ex. $1+2+\dots+12/12=6,5$).

We thus have table. 5:

Table. 5. The rank calculation

Absolute values	1	2	3	4	5	6
Total number	12	7	2	4	1	1
Rank	6,5	16	20,5	23,5	26	27

We then calculate *the sum of ranks of positive differences [T+]*, (formula 3) and *the sum of ranks for negative differences [T-]*, (formula 4):

$$T+ = 6,5*9 + 16*7 + 2*20,5 + 4*23,5 + 1*26 + 1*27 = 358,5 \quad (3)$$

$$T- = 6,5 + 6,5 + 6,5 = 22,5 \quad (4)$$

As we have $N = 27$ (rank > 15) we have a distribution of probabilities that follows a normal law, T turns into Z variable (formula 5):

$$Z = \frac{T - \frac{N(N+1)}{4}}{\sqrt{\frac{N(N+1)(2N+1)}{24}}} \quad (5)$$

5. Results

The results recorded on the representative sample of 30 employees before and after the implementation of flexibility are shown in Tables 3 and 4. The number of observed differences is $N=27$ (the sum of the numbers in Table 6), $T+$ (which is the biggest between the two differences of rankings), turns into variable z , according to no. 5 formula:

$$Z = \frac{358,5 - \frac{27(27+1)}{4}}{\sqrt{\frac{27(27+1)(2*27+1)}{24}}} = \frac{169,5}{41,62} = 4.07 \quad (6)$$

For the Z value (formula 6) in the *table of reduced centred normal law* we find a frequency of 0,00005 which is lower than 0.5, which means that the null hypothesis is rejected and we conclude that the implementation of flexibility measures had a positive impact on work productivity, and $T+$ being significantly higher than $T-$ we can say that the effect was impressive. The solution analysed and presented in this article is practical and can be used in organizations.

6. Limitations

By "set of motivations" (fig. no. 2) we understand keeping financial and material incentives provided to the employees by the company: high salary, car and phone, performance bonuses and health cards. In the present study we considered that these incentives are sufficient and it was not necessary to change their amount. The research was focused on creating non-financial motivations that result from improving department procedures. The 30 employees were involved in the decision making on new procedures that would satisfy them (brainstorming and Likert Scale). Through job performance in this research we understand work productivity and indirectly the performance of the observed department and the organization as a whole. The statistical methods used were considered sufficient for research, noting that other statistical tools can be useful to capture more accurately the variety of situations in which flexibility can be used.

7. Conclusion

In our research we tested if flexibility, added to a current set of motivations, plays a key role in achieving job productivity and performance and as a result the success of the organization. The presented model is inspired from practices of the market and it can be adapted and implemented in the departments of a company by specialized personnel, as a practical method in managerial activities.

In the research we tested H_0 and H_1 (see Hypotheses of Research) to see which of them is to be rejected and which to be preserved. As a result, the **Null hypothesis H_0** is rejected and we conclude that the package for increasing flexibility of the activity of the department significantly improved work performance of the 30 employees. Also, *the flexibility itself can become a strong non-financial motivation*. Our research shows that a good motivation helps to achieve performance in general, but in conjunction with flexibility - performances are superior. The flexibility helps generating a positive attitude, the employees concentrating better and achieving their goals. In this way, personal goals and those of the organization have a common ground to be achieved best and in time. In scientific terms, the concept of flexibility has been well captured in the carried out research, demonstrating once again

its economic role and usefulness within the organization. Also the studied phenomenon brings a plus of information literature through its originality.

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