

## The Leadership's Role in Motivating Employees

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### Abstract

*In an enterprise, the leader's role changed decisively in comparison to the traditional leadership approach, encouraging teamwork, openness, equality, creativity, interconnection between people, creation and innovation, and a flexible and changing organizational culture.*

*It is impossible to neglect motivation, since it represents the source of team productivity. The individual's availability and willingness to perform tasks represents one of the key factors in the company's efficient operation. The leader understands the need to motivate employees and to see them as resources within the company; thus, the increased focus on motivating and promoting the staff is required*

**Key words:** leadership, motivation, employees, equity, job satisfaction

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### 1. Introduction

The definition of "leadership" – the process whereby the leader influences his/her subordinates and redirects their efforts in order to achieve organizational goals – reveals that the adherent is a person, a subordinate who is influenced by the leader, who takes into account the leader's directions and teachings. In other words, the relationship with the adherent lies in the leader's ability to influence him/her through his/her personal power, inspiration, motivation and accountability within the organization, which is essential. Leadership is the process of targeting a group people through non-coercive means by motivation. (Kotter, 2009, pg.25)

Motivation is represented by "those psychological processes that cause incitement, direction, and persistence in the voluntary actions performed in order to attain certain goals". (Vagu, Stegaroiu, 2007, pg.32). It is impossible to neglect motivation, since it is represents the source of team productivity (Vagu, Stegaroiu, 2007, pg.45). The individual's availability and willingness to perform tasks represents one of the key factors in the company's efficient operation.

The engagement and involvement function incorporates all the work processes whereby the leader determines the staff of the organization to contribute to the setting and achievement of the established objectives, based on the factors that motivate him/her (Nicolescu, Verboncu, 2007). Engagement is underlain by motivation, which consists in correlating the satisfaction of the personnel's needs and interests with the achievement of the assigned objectives and tasks (Nicolescu, Verboncu, 2007).

The leader understands the need to motivate employees and to see them as resources within the company; thus, the increased focus on motivating and promoting the staff is required.

### 2. Research methodology

After having questioned the members of economic organizations, I investigated whether the Romanian leaders succeed or not to inspire their employees in order to voluntarily fulfill their objectives, whether the Romanian leaders motivate their adherents, whether they have a high morality and whether they are satisfied at the workplace and are loyal to the organization.

Practically, this research aims at measuring the leader's impact on employee motivation by two components, i.e. equity and employee satisfaction the workplace. Thus, it assesses the extent to which the leader influences, inspires and motivates his/her adherents towards the achievement of goals and has an impact on the organization's performance and efficiency.

The research methodology was represented by the quantitative investigation and it was carried out based on an assessment questionnaire, addressed to the employees of Romanian companies. The total number of subjects investigated in this research is 185. The number of organizations surveyed is over 50.

**What have I measured?**

**Employee Motivation** - Determining a behavior oriented towards, and dedicated to, the achievement of organizational objectives, by two categories of motivational factors: **equity and employee satisfaction within the organization** (Sirota, Mischkind, Meltzer, 2010, pg. 15).

An important aspect of employee motivation is represented by **equity**, which involves fair treatment, based on respect, providing safe physical work conditions, job security and a performance-based pay level.

*Table no. 1 – Assessing the leadership manifestation forms in terms of equity within the organization*

	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Usable Average Score</b>
A8 regarding the leader	Within the organization, you deal with frequent layoffs.	2.164	3.836
A9 regarding the leader	Dismissal is often used as a punitive measure.	2.005	3.995
A10 regarding the leader	Employees are fired as soon as they are not needed anymore, without trying to avoid dismissal, by retraining them for other activities within the company.	2.093	3.907
A11 regarding the leader	The company uses part-time or temporary employees.	2.464	3.536
A12 regarding the leader	The selection of new employees is based on professional criteria.	4.180	4.180
A13 regarding the leader	The organization ensures the best safety conditions at work.	4.180	4.180
A14 regarding the leader	The salary and the other material benefits for the work performed are above the market level.	3.219	3.219
A15 regarding the leader	You would not leave the company for a job better paid elsewhere.	3.262	3.262
A16 regarding the leader	Leaders treat employees with consideration and respect.	4.115	4.115
A17 regarding the leader	Company leaders know you, invite you to discussions and communicate with each employee.	3.852	3.852
A18 regarding the leader	The management pays importance to the employees' individual wishes and needs.	3.710	3.710
	<b>Equity</b>		<b>3.800</b>

Source: own processing

The statements from the above table contributed to the calculation of the variable "equity.

**The variable regarding job satisfaction** studies the extent to which employees are professionally satisfied in terms of their task performance autonomy, reward system, labor challenge, the guidance they receive from their leader.

Table no. 2 – Assessing the leadership manifestation forms in terms of the employees' job satisfaction

	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Usable Average Score</b>
A36 regarding the leader	You have the freedom to implement your ideas.	3,809	3,809
A37 regarding the leader	You can decide how to perform your tasks.	3,913	3,913
A38 regarding the leader	You are not afraid to express your disagreement with the leader.	3,825	3,825
A39 regarding the leader	You are accused and criticized if things go wrong.	3,350	2,650
A40 regarding the leader	The leader gives clear instructions and supervises carefully the employees when delegating tasks.	4,191	1,809
A42 regarding the leader	The reward system in the organization is correct and it is known by all employees.	3,071	3,071
A43 regarding the leader	There are organized dialogue sessions for activity assessments after the performance of tasks.	3,355	3,355
A44 regarding the leader	Your merits within the team are acknowledged.	3,705	3,705
A45 regarding the leader	Everything that matters to your superiors is represented by material results.	3,322	2,678
A46 regarding the leader	The company focuses on work quality, and the standards are ambitious and challenging.	4,005	4,005
A47 regarding the leader	Reward criteria are based on both qualitative and quantitative results.	3,574	3,574
A48 regarding the leader	Your boss praises you when you successfully accomplish your goals.	3,814	3,814
A49 regarding the leader	You feel rewarded for your effort and for the well-performed work.	3,443	3,443
A50 regarding the leader	You involve in task performance because you feel that your work matters.	4,339	4,339
A51 regarding the leader	You involve in task performance because it is mandatory.	3,399	2,601
A52 regarding the leader	The leader prefers promoting the people inside the organization rather than hiring people outside the organization on higher positions.	3,803	3,803
A53 regarding the leader	Your family is happy with your professional achievements within the organization.	3,995	3,995
<b>Satisfaction</b>			<b>3,435</b>

Source: own processing

The summative score for the studied variable, i.e. **the employee's job satisfaction**, is calculated by applying the methodology for the calculation of the answers given by the 183 respondents to the statements from table no. 2.

### 3. Research results

#### **Assessing the employees' motivation by the leader through fair and equitable treatment**

The equity score is above the neutral level (i.e. 3.800); however, it requires the leaders' intervention because equity refers to the employee's core job needs and, in the absence of fair and equitable treatment, his/her morale is deeply affected. People want to be paid fairly for their efforts and they also want job stability. In this regard, neither learning nor teamwork or satisfaction matter if these needs are not met. When analyzing the variable "equity", several leadership manifestation forms in terms of equity are dealt with. Equity refers primarily to the compliance with the basic employment conditions, i.e. those elements that employees expect mandatorily from the person who leads them: remuneration, job security, job conditions and being treated respectfully by their superiors.

According to the data from table no. 1, between statements A8, A9, A10, we observe very strong dependencies, explained by the fact that it refers to the analysis of the same aspect, i.e. job security.

The score for A13, i.e. 3.536, indicates the Romanian leaders' trend to use temporary or part-time employees. Temporary employment contracts or partial (part-time) work rules do not offer career security and become equity constraints that Romanian leaders should eliminate.

Statement A12 refers to the correctness of recruitment policies. The score of this statement, i.e. 4.180, shows that many surveyed employees believe that their employment is based on professional criteria within the organizations they are part of.

Statement A13 assesses the physical working conditions in which employees perform their activities. The high score achieved by this statement (i.e. 4.180) shows that a large part of Romanian employers provide safe working conditions for their employees without endangering their lives. Smaller scores in terms of this statement were noticed in industrial or construction sectors. Employees expect decent physical work conditions, which also show the management's respect towards people, as indicated by the correlations between the statements, of high intensity between statement A13 and statements A16, A17, A18, with  $r > 0.45$ .

If job security is a major component in equity analysis, remuneration is equally important, being one of the employees' major goals and decisively influencing productivity, as shown by the correlative analyses. Statements A14 and A15 assess the remuneration issue among the 183 respondents surveyed. The employees rarely feel that they are too well paid, thus explaining the rather low score (slightly above the neutral level) obtained for the two statements, i.e. 3.219 and 3.262 respectively. The low score obtained by statement A14, i.e. 3.219, highlights the employees' perception of the salary offered by the organization they work for, in relation to what salaries they think that other organizations offer for the same position.

The score obtained for A15, i.e. 3.262 out of a maximum of 5, shows that many of the surveyed employees would be willing to leave their current job for a higher salary, indicating that remuneration is an important motivation aspect, but also that Romanian employees are dissatisfied with their current remuneration level in relation to the work performed.

Statements A16, A17, A18 assess various ways whereby the leader shows his/her respect towards employees. Statement A16 analyzes the extent to which Romanian employees consider that they are treated with dignity, consideration and respect, with a high score of 4.115. According to our research, a minimum score for this statement, which denotes humiliation and contempt towards subordinates, is rarely met.

What we encounter more often is the management's indifference towards employees and their needs. Therefore, through statements A17 and A18, we have analyzed the extent to which Romanian leaders know their subordinates, pay attention to them and take their requirements into account. Mostly, the scores obtained by the above-mentioned statements, i.e. 3.852 and 3.710 of a desired maximum of 5, reveal that Romanian employees receive the respect they expect at the workplace, but that there is room for improvement in terms of the respect that the leader should manifest towards his/her adherents.

The indifference towards employees and their demands is seen as lack of respect, as they assume that they do not deserve the leaders' time and attention. There is nothing more disappointing for employees than a leader who does not know their name and who has never talked

to them. Therefore, it is very important for Romanian leaders to treat their people as individuals, with opinions, problems and personal requirements, because their need for attention is fundamental.

The members of the organization think that their leader must treat their requirements and their work challenges and problems with commitment and consideration. Employees appreciate open-door policy leaders who listen to them and who discuss with them. This aspect is illustrated by the strong correlation between equity and statement A18 regarding the importance that leadership pays to the employees' demands.

### **Assessing the employees' motivation by the leader, in terms of job satisfaction**

Statements A36, A37, A38 assess the employees' autonomy to implement their ideas, to express their opinions and to decide how they want to perform their tasks. The relatively balanced scores reveal that there is a tendency of the Romanian leadership to empower and raise the personnel's responsibility at work, taking into account their ideas. The empowerment and freedom given to employees in order to carry out their work are absolutely necessary to their job satisfaction, as revealed by the very strong correlations calculated between statements.

The major negative aspect of the Romanian leadership in terms of the employee's autonomy is represented the extremely low score obtained (i.e. only 1.809) in the analysis of statement A40, which assesses the extent to which leaders give clear instructions to employees and carefully control their task performance. Although people are employed for their professionalism and experience, this score indicates that Romanian leaders are monitoring them step by step, closely, ensuring that everything is done according to the instructions received when delegating an activity. The micromanagement, which is strongly present in Romanian organizations, is an unnecessary intervention by leaders at the expense of the employees' autonomy and accountability, a waste of qualified human resources, with a negative effect on the employees' motivation to implement their own ideas.

Another important aspect, with a great impact on employee satisfaction, is the provision of constructive feedback by the leadership, which involves assessing the employees' outcomes, guiding them and correcting their mistakes. Feedback is very important to employees, in terms of their performance. Within Romanian organizations, a score of 3.355 was obtained on the statement analyzing the organization of some activity evaluation sessions. Thus, Romanian leaders must understand the need to provide information to adherents about their work, to interpret performance in relation to expectations. Feedback must stem from the leader's intentions to guide his/her adherent, and his/her purpose should be learning by correcting weaknesses.

Many employees think that they are criticized as soon as they do something wrong or as soon as their initiatives fail and that they are not praised as quickly when they are successful. The score obtained for statement A39 (i.e. only 2.650) is below the neutral level, highlighting the above mentioned issues. Instead of providing constructive critique by discussing mistakes and establishing corrective methods, Romanian leaders blame their employees as soon as things go wrong and have a negative impact on their involvement, initiative, experimentation and creativity.

In order to influence the employees' pride and satisfaction, the leader has to take into account the challenges provided by their work. Ambitious standards, challenging tasks, new work items have a great impact on employee achievement, taking into account the strong correlation between A46 and satisfaction. In most cases, a repetitive, routine activity becomes demotivating and boring for employees. The relatively high score obtained by this statement (i.e. 4.005) points to the fact that Romanian employees believe that the companies surveyed focus on quality and that their work standards are ambitious, and their work is a challenge for them. The obtained score reveals a positive aspect of the organizations studied, for two reasons: firstly, because it reveals that emphasis is placed on work quality, not only on quantitative results, and secondly, because it shows that the employees' skills are exploited through demanding activities. Most employees become frustrated if they do not use their skills at work, being interested in improving themselves and in acquiring new knowledge and skills.

The quality of the work performed, as a pride reason for employees, is analyzed by statements A45 and A47, wherefore we obtained lower scores, compared to statement A46 (i.e. 2.678 compared to 3.574). This reveals that, although high work standards are imposed on Romanian

employees, the quantitative results prevail as far as superiors are concerned, and the reward criteria are largely based on quantitative criteria. Ideally, the reward system should be based on both quantitative and qualitative criteria, because the employees' pride and respect towards the organization comes from offering quality services, and customer satisfaction is also based on the quality of these services.

In order to be motivating, the reward system, analyzed through statements A42, A44, A48 and A49, must be perceived by employees as real; it must result from assessments whose criteria are known by everyone. The score obtained after analyzing the fairness of the rewards system, i.e. 3.771 (obtained for statement A42) is very close to the neutral level and it highlights that the assessment system is not known by all employees and it is not perceived as fair.

A reward system based on individual performance does not encourage teamwork, co-operation, or knowledge sharing among the members of the organization, in order to facilitate learning.

Thus, as far as statement A44 is concerned, a score of 3.705 was obtained, which shows the extent to which Romanian employees' merits are recognized and rewarded at team level.

Statement A50 assesses the extent to which employees consider their work and the performance of their work tasks important to the organization. In order to be satisfied, employees want to feel that their work matters, that they do important things for the organization. Within the organizations surveyed, a high score of 4.339 was obtained, which clearly shows that many of the employees surveyed consider that their work contributes significantly to the organization and to clients' satisfaction.

The score of only 2.601, obtained by statement A51, points out that many surveyed employees perform their tasks because they are mandatory, and not because they are committed to their leaders and organizations. By analyzing the answers to this statement, we deduced that the Romanian leaders' actions fail in terms of their purpose to obtain a high commitment level from their subordinates in accomplishing tasks and objectives.

#### 4. Conclusions

Employees often start working enthusiastically, being devoted to the organization. Their detachment to the organization is due to the leadership style. People cannot feel satisfied in those organizations that treat their employees as costs, as resources needed in order to carry out their work, or as mere executors who should not have opinions, ideas or desires.

Employees often consider that the fundamental equity needs, such as job security or remuneration, are more important, and use them as consolation when their work tasks are not provocative, when they do not have autonomy and are seen as mere executors. However, in the long run, this leads only to frustrations, dissatisfactions, less involvement of the employees towards the achievement of their objectives, and a low commitment level to their leaders and organization. Thus, the employee's satisfaction at the workplace is an essential variable in the study of leadership, because it has a direct impact on employee performance, as demonstrated below.

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