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PhD THESIS SUMMARY

A STUDY UPON MANAGERS' BEHAVIOUR IN THE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

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CONTENTS

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Key words: *performance appraisal; performance management; human resources systems; manager behaviour; employee;appreciative inquiry; organisational change; leadership; competence; organisational change; appraisal interview; dialogue*

Introduction

In the introductory part are presented the content of this thesis and the global context of the research.

As organisations are facing much more ambiguous, more dynamic and more difficult to diagnose problems, individual competencies must also be adapted. Responsible organizations make efforts to guide and support the employees' efforts to adjust and learn in order to achieve results, and managers are asked to be flexible and innovative when defining objectives and actions through which individual performance is defined and supported.

The first chapter reviews relevant concepts from specialized literature: interventions for organizational development, performance measurement and management systems at organizational level, different processes regarding the management of individual performance.

Also, it presents reasons for rethinking the systems for individual appraisal and a framework for an appreciative investigation regarding performance.

Chapter 2 focuses on the research methodology, presenting the paradigms on which this is based on, the research hypotheses and also the qualitative and quantitative methods used in the empirical study.

The third chapter presents the analysis of data obtained by the use of qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews and direct observation).

Within chapter 4, using quantitative methods, a study model for the appraisal of individual performance through questionnaire was statistically assessed and validated.

Chapter 5 contains conclusions, recommendations, personal contributions, limits of the research and future research directions.

Chapter 1. KEY CONCEPTS – BIBLIOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the following useful concepts are presented:

a. Organizational development – presenting the key aspects from the perspective of a managerial intervention methodology

b. Performance measuring systems at organizational level used in Romania

c. Interests and processes for individual performance management (IPM) and for individual performance appraisal (IPA).

1.1. THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The process of organizational development (OD) is a continuous, cyclical process through which the organization goes, each intervention generating a launch on another spiral of performance. The separation of the 3 organizational sub-systems – social system, techno system and the processes systems - is only done to highlight certain specific aspects to follow in the OD effort.

Sociosystem

The sociosystem of an organization refers to the organizational social system: attitudes, values and perceptions of the employees regarding changes the organization wishes to make and which are defined at the strategy and organizational objectives level. Interventions at the level of this organizational sub-system are:

1a. Implementing a **methodology for transmitting** values in the organization, with the final purpose of facilitating the reach of strategical and financial objectives, in order to:

   i. Promote certain humanist values, such as: trust, openness etc.

   ii. Become aware of the necessity for continuous and active personal development;

   iii. Clarify the decision makers about the change methods and interventions.

1b. **A unitary work methodology** for the management, based on a common understanding of the organization's interests, of the assumptions, but also of the actions wanted.

1c. Creating a **work structure** which is supported by top and middle management for accepting the changes proposed at an organizational level.

1d. Ensuring **productive and sustainable interventions**

Techno systems

Techno systems refer to technical, technological and structural aspects and represent a set of useful techniques and instruments, which are necessary in order to transform economic `inputs` into `outputs` (products or services).

Productive IPA processes are those that sustain these systems – a contribution can be to collect information in order to answer the following key questions:

i. What useful rules are worth adopting for an effective functioning in the future?

ii. What are the useful rules and models in our current way of functioning?

iii. If a problem or a difficult situation occurs, how and where is it treated now, and how and where should it be treated?

iv. On what kind of support systems should we rely on?

v. What type of values does our organization declare? What should we improve in our systems in order to sustain and affirm them at a practical level?

Processes systems

Through the interventions upon the processes system a series of changes regarding the way employees work are targeted, so that the desired strategical change is obtained.

IPA systems and the information they generate may contribute to the optimization or even the redefining of some key processes within an organization, with the purpose of changing the way problems are resolved, decisions are made, communication between departments happens etc. in an organization.

Traditional interventions in organizational processes are based on correction, on `regulating` what does not work, and often follows the logic below:

i. Finding blockages in existing organizational processes

ii. Defining expected outcomes of the elimination of existing blockages

iii. Determining critical facilitating factors for the success of the intervention

iv. Selecting an intervention and a plan for action

Processes systems within organizations entail interactions both within and between work groups/teams and between representatives of these entities. Most interventions upon processes are focused on these groups and interactions.

IPA systems can contribute to the change of processes systems by:

i. Increasing the frequency of some appraisal discussions on a vertical direction: manager, employee, direct reports;

ii. Extending dialogue between supplier - customer;

iii. Extending dialogue between departments (cross-functional);

iv. Extending dialogue with the support functions (administrative etc.);

v. Clarifying roles and mutual expectations (functional relations) between the above mentioned persons;

1.2. ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The dynamic evolution in the past years has led to the need for redefining the philosophy of management and for generating knowledge in the area of performance management.

Performance measuring systems at an organizational level

Organizational strategies, in order to transform efforts into the results everyone desires, need to be coupled with management systems and with highly effective performance measurement systems. The notion of performance management is a broad and comprehensive one, because all managerial behaviours are aiming to produce results. Mehrabad (2011:57) shows that studies regarding PMS can be placed into three categories:

1. Formulas for performance / defining of some indexes / measurement

2. Using of some individual units for measuring performance

3. Predictive systems for performance – fuzzy systems (Unahabhokha et al., 2007:82) or systems that assist managers in generating action plans (Tan and Platts, 2004:382)

The main role of strategic systems is to convey to some important stakeholders the main strategic information regarding the major evolutions of the business and they are used as a mechanism for collecting feedback about the organization's evolution, communicating the strategical intentions of the organization, focusing the effort for implementing the strategy and have a decisive influence on the evolution of the organizational culture.

The most frequently strategical systems encountered by the author in Romania, within the studied organizations, are based on the Balanced Scorecard - BSC, for which

Robert Kaplan and David Norton laid the groundwork in 1992. Kaplan and Norton (2001:29) show that the success of BSC is based on five common characteristics:

1. The operational translations of the strategy, using BSC indicators which describe processes for creating value which lead to results.
2. Aligning the organization with the strategy by defining some action priorities which can be easily communicated, carried out and measured by defining some visible indicators.
3. Transforming the strategy into organizational routines through three key alignment processes: (a) communication and education, (b) defining objectives at a team and an individual level and (c) compensation.
4. The strategy is a continuous process
5. Top managers are energetic agents of change and transformation

An efficient BSC system must have (Kaplan and Norton, 1996:112) integrated:

1. Double (or even triple) loop learning mechanisms
2. A link with the compensation systems (rewards and motivation)

Najmi (2012:1) shows that the *performance prism* proposed by Adams and Neely follows five interconnected dimensions of performance:

1. Stakeholders' satisfaction – the organization's response to their needs
2. Stakeholders' contribution – expectations from stakeholders
3. Strategies – thought out and applied in order to satisfy the stakeholders' needs
4. Processes – engaging the organization in the implementation and improvement of these strategies
5. Capabilities - necessary for using and improving processes

The EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) **excellence model** assumes that the organizational results are produced by facilitators that must be continuously improved. The model is based on 9 criteria, grouped in 2 categories, Enablers and Results.

The present paper presents an IPA system developed by the author based on the EFQM model. The model's dimensions were adapted to the characteristics of consultancy work and the criteria were prioritized by allocation of a different

maximum score. The results of the appraisal were used as a decision base for compensations, so that it allows:

- Directing staff towards the future by supporting desired behaviours;
- Identifying specific behaviours in the desired directions;
- Appreciating positive behaviours and increasing their frequency for the next period of appraisal (evaluation).

The above described dimensions represented the base for an individual interview – type appraisal discussion which, in some cases, was coupled with evaluations offered by other parties – clients, internal collaborators etc. The instrument provided a good orientation regarding the desired behaviours, focusing the staff's efforts through the appraisal discussions which take place every trimester. However, the link with the compensations system led to a predominant orientation towards aspects of the system which allowed obtaining a high score (and higher benefits).

Shaik et al (2012:24) propose the CRLESC (Comprehensive Reverse Logistics Enterprise Scorecard) system, following six dimensions:

1. Financial – financial success and value for investors
2. Stakeholders – focuses towards the expectations of those interested in the business' success
3. Processes (internal and external) - increasing the efficiency of the productive flows in order to obtain the desired results
4. Innovation and growth – orientation towards improvement and organizational learning
5. Environment – raising awareness regarding the environment and public policies
6. Social – ethical conduct in order to respond to the community's and society's expectations.

The paper briefly presents an IPA system based on CRLESC dimensions, elaborated and used by the author in his current activity at the Centre for Management Development (CDM). The system is based on a diary-type instrument, which is self-administered and in which different activities, the amount of time allocated to those and the main results are noted.

The advantage of the system is that the link with the compensations system is clear, the result of the discussion representing a solid base for compensations.

The disadvantage of the system is given by the need to complete the journal in a disciplined manner, thus existing the risk of introducing data which lack accuracy.

1.3. INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Armstrong and Baron (1998) define performance management as *"a process that contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams to achieve high levels of organizational performance"*.

This definition given by Armstrong and Baron is a generous one but, unfortunately, the organizational practice is often contaminated by instrumental interests which, although are practical and offer simple solutions by enforcing some clear procedures, are often seen by managers as inefficient and superficially applied instruments.

A few of the uses and interests of IPM processes are to:

1. *Improve the activity at a personal and organizational level.*
2. *Plan human resources* – offering information for ensuring the right number of people with the right combination of talents.
3. *Facilitate personnel-related decisions* – offering data regarding the compatibility with a certain position, selection criteria for other positions (including promotions), for transfer or new activities or, in the case of non-performance, for redundancy.
4. *Plan individual development* in order to maximize the existing human talent - a certain system is needed for identifying who and what type of development they need.
5. *Support decisions regarding compensations and salary adjustments*– in order to ensure internal and labour market equity.

Political actors in many developed countries are preoccupied with introducing performance systems in the public administration sector in order to contribute to a performance increase – unfortunately, with a limited impact, as Gerrish (2016:49) shows in a meta-analysis on the impact of performance management.

The traditional perspective of the individual performance appraisal is one that implies obtaining results through a systematic approach, using objectives, standards, competencies, measuring of those and offering feedback.

The most frequent current managerial perspective is an instrumental one, which considers that the appraisal process has two main functions:

i.   A function of control, for ***measuring*** (the evaluation function) or/and

ii.   A function of employee ***development*** (the development function).

Individual performance appraisal systems (often called evaluation systems) are standardized procedures adopted by organizations with the purpose of adjusting the behaviours of the appraised employees, but also those of the evaluators. Managers who implement these schemes are asked to comply with and to use the evaluation procedure as a standard at the time it must be done. Through the evaluation procedures and the standards attached to them, the organization defines, asks for and communicates performance criteria, expectations and desirable behaviours. The appraisee and the appraiser must be capable of finding tangible, meaningful results, as a consequence of the appraisal discussions and to think of practical ways for follow-up.

As a system for correction, IPA facilitates treating the sub-standard performance by:

- o Notifying the person with a poor performance regarding the situation;
- o Implicating the person in a correction process;
- o Following a structured process of performance management;
- o Improving the manager's performance;
- o Accepting the shared responsibility: person, direct manager and organizational;

Using a successful example of a company, this paper describes the recommended steps to be followed in these types of processes:

1. Preparation of the direct manager by:
   a. Clarifying key areas of performance (not only the most obvious aspects).
   b. Highlighting the positive results – those tasks for which the employee reaches the standard level of performance.
   c. Information gathered during the time of poor performance.

2. Interaction with the poor performer through a clarification discussion, with the following objectives:
   a. Reviewing tasks/job responsibilities
   b. Clarifying the standard evaluation criteria for those activities
   c. Analysing the results achieved and of the associated behaviours
   d. Using some global appraisal of the results against the requirements

3. Defining an `**Action plan for improving results**`

For each area that needs improvement, an action plan is negotiated and agreed upon with the poor performer, the plan having associated indicators and means of verification, and is to be carried out for an improvement period of 1 to 3 months.

This plan has an integrative role in the improvement process, representing an instrument that allows for monitoring and evaluating the poor results of the activity, but also the productive behaviours of the employee in the effort to improve his/her professional performance.

In order to define the steps it is useful to:

1. *Identify the problem:*
   i. Does the employee have the necessary professional skills? *or*
   ii. is it a problem of unproductive behaviours

2. *Establishing the performance aspects that need improvement:*
   i. What skills need to be improved?
   ii. What changes are necessary in the processes of using skills?
   iii. What types of behaviours need changing?

3. *Establishing priorities:*
   i. What are the possible consequences of the associated errors?
   ii. How often do errors occur?
   iii. What is the link between those problems and the job responsibilities?

4. *Identifying the standard level of performance*
   i. Is this level an accessible one?
   ii. Is this level understood by the employee?
   iii. Is this level accepted by the employee?

5. *Establishing objectives and a long and short action timetable to improve results/behaviours*

6. *Drawing up an action plan.*
   i. Identifying employee support actions
   ii. Discussing and agreeing upon the employee's responsibilities

7. *Determining some moments for a periodical analysis.*

8. *Evaluating the performance achieved against the standard level* – there is a discussion whether the requirements have been unfulfilled/ fulfilled/ surpassed.

9. *Documenting the employee's `Plan for Performance Improvement`* with information that demonstrates improvement / continuation of the deficiencies.

4. **Analysing the plan's results** at the end of the previously agreed period, during another performance appraisal discussion.

Understanding dialogue in IPA interviews

The considerations of this subchapter are based on the problems and aspects identified by the author (Petean, 2015:28).

A critical social interaction in organizations are the DIPA interviews (discussions for individual performance appraisal). Stevanovic and Perakyla (2014:185) proposed three dimensions (epistemic, deontic and emotional), which were used in the AA (appraisee– appraiser) dyad.

1. The epistemic dimension - refers to the `facts` and data about performance gathered by the two participants in the DAPI and their potential to act as causes or predictors.

During the dialogue, these are formalized as performance related sentences, where both participants, the appraiser and the appraisee, focus on what they know and what they think others know or don't know. As Heritage (2012, 2:30) explains it, this dimension is correlated with the creation of common knowledge through dialogue, in a two-dimensional `open series of connections between people`.

i.1. Epistemic status – In an evaluation context, the epistemic status is based on past experiences of the participants. These are influenced by the organization, the one who spells out (formally or informally) who and what should be known and kept as data regarding the appraisee' s performance.

i.2. Epistemic positions – The evaluation dialogue should consider what is declared to be `facts` in the AA dyad, because participants use judgement acquired through interaction as entry data for future plans.

2. The deontic dimension of the IPA discussion describes and attests people's orientation towards power and control, and these are linked with expectations about rights and obligations to decide and regarding future actions, answering questions such as: `What am I entitled to do?` and also `What should I be doing`?.

3. The emotional dimension

Emotions (both negative and positive) extend their influence on results – Restubog et al. (2011:713) claim that behaviours perceived as abusive increase the probability of occurring and manifesting unproductive behaviours in the workplace.

Also, the positive emotions have a beneficial impact on performance – there are positive relations between workplace satisfaction and life satisfaction, happiness and optimism, as Bowling et al (2010:915) state.

1.4. TRADITIONAL INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL (IPA) SYSTEMS

Negative reactions of employees as a result of IPA processes have been reported both by many academic studies (Culbertson et al, 2013:75) and by decisions certain companies take.

Research confirms managers' reservations and Kuvaas (2011:126) argues that `despite the rhetoric of developmental PA and its impact on motivation, commitment, withdrawal behaviour and work performance, such relationships are mostly assumed rather than tested`. Among the factors that cause tension in IPA processes are:

1. The conflict between the speed of adjustment and the rhythm of the changes

> The organizational priorities and goals are sometimes unclear, changing and uncertain, often derived from external conditions, such as shorter market cycles. As most evaluation systems have a one-year-cycle it becomes more and more difficult to base individual performance discussions on facts and clear data regarding the appraiser's efforts.

2. The conflict between the measurement and the development functions

> Employees have the tendency to present their activity and performance in a favourable light, because the results of this appraisal will have a substantial influence on the extrinsic compensations (salaries, bonuses, promotions, transfers) which will be offered.

> On the other hand, employees want to receive a fair and constructive feedback about their own performance. They acknowledge the benefits of an open and constructive discussion regarding the problems encountered in their activity, ways of improving it and the establishing of a personal development plan with the goal of meeting performance standards set for the job they have within the organization.

3. The conflict between the employee's and the direct manager's perceptions

> The chances for a worsened discussion are high, even in the case of a good relationship between appraisee and appraiser, characterized by an open and constructive dialogue, because of the interests often perceived as different.

4. The conflict between the employee's and the direct manager's interests

The manager, as a representative of the organization, has rights and responsibilities which come into conflict with those of the employee's, who sees his/her transactional interests (to obtain higher compensations and personal benefits) limited by:

a. The manager's limited resources, administratively restricted
b. The company's interest to propose very ambitious objectives and that of the employee, who wishes for (at least apparently) easy to achieve objectives

5. Decisions of certain top companies regarding the giving up on IPA

Although most successful companies have implemented IPA systems, in the past years, some renowned companies (including Accenture, Adobe, General Electric, and Google) have relinquished the annual performance systems, thinking of them as being too bureaucratic. Laszlo Bock, Vice President of People Operations at Google, recently wrote: ` Performance management as practiced by most organizations has become a rule-based, bureaucratic process, existing as an end in itself rather than actually shaping performance. Employees hate it. Managers hate it. Even HR departments hate it. ` (FastCompany, 2016)

1.4.2. The need for reforming performance systems

Instrumental individual performance appraisal systems, although producing notable results in the first years of use within companies, have a limited impact on the increase of individual productivity, through the limited effects they generate, mostly because of the transactional management they are based on and of the conflicts arisen within the system.

There is a need for new approaches, with changes about:

- Perspective and paradigms, which would produce the desired results.
- Frameworks, which take into account the current employees' needs
- Adaptive practices

An adaptive IPA system should be supported by a learning process where participants plan for the future after reflection upon past experience. Therefore, this paper proposes the 5 D appreciative inquiry approach as a future oriented structure.

In the work of Cooperrider, Walling, C. (2013:8) AI is described as a five-step process developed around the choosing of an affirmative topic, also known under the acronym 5 D: Define, Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver. An appraisal interview guide based on 5 D has been adapted by the author and is presented in Appendix 6.

1.4.4. Guiding IPA processes toward context and learning

In IPA processes there will always be different contextual aspects.

  i.   The goal of the appraisal – in terms of goals and objectives of the process, in relation with the strategy and the organizational environment (both external and internal).

  ii. The appraisal environment – orientated towards creating a positive climate.

  iii. The organization and its need for information and knowledge – management, support departments (IT, HR etc.)

  iv. Internal policies – they pursue the use of IPA results to demonstrate, when convenient, certain points of view.

In the design of IPA processes and systems, the methods and instruments used need to be chosen by involving managers on different hierarchical levels as *process owners*, who will commit to this role only if different levels of the context will be openly and transparently discussed, understood and accepted.

Similar to innovation processes that take place in many companies, IPA systems can generate organizational knowledge when they are based on an appreciative approach. In order to contribute to the organizational development it is worth to define the double loop (if not triple loop) learning mechanisms, and the appraisal discussions can support those mechanisms.

Loop learning is a cyclical process built around a question (Argyris, 2000:39):

  o Simple loop (HOW?) – around the question: *Are we doing things right (how they are supposed to be done)?*

  o Double loop (WHICH? / WHAT?) – around the question: *Are we doing the right things (which we need to do)?*

  o Triple loop (WHY?) - around the question: *How do we decide what is right?*

A performant IPA system sustains managers to synthetize tacit knowledge of employees, to give it an explicit form and to incorporate it in new managerial practices.

CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research had a double objective, both theoretical and practical, aiming to:

- Highlight the productive connections between managerial behaviours used in IPA and obtaining result both at individual and organizational level;
- Work out an analysis and evaluation model for the managers' behaviours in IPA processes.

2.1. The conceptual approach of the research

The applied production of knowledge has been adopted within this paper. It has three characteristics:

i. The framework and the concepts defined come from and are validated in the context of applied practice;
ii. The generating and the spreading of knowledge are done in a dynamic environment;
iii. The systems' users are also participants in the processes of defining knowledge

The paper aims to:

1. To promote academic rigor in a practical domain, where often ideas are put into practice only by using common sense and experience, often surpassed by the modern evolutions in knowledge and the way of thinking.
2. Bring transdisciplinary preoccupations of IPA into the academic community, which can be seen from an economical, psychological, sociological and even linguistically or philosophical perspective.

The ontological position assumed (based on Blaikie, 2009:86) is the *depth realism,* where reality has multiple levels:

i. *empirical*
ii. *factual*, that exists whether it is observed or not *and*
iii. *real*, referring to the underlying processes and mechanisms.

The profoundly personal and context –sensitive (personal and organizational) feature of the individual performance appraisal led to a **subjective approach, along the lines**

of the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm proposed by Holloway (2009:392); Lincoln and Guba (1985:73).

Research methods

The general hypothesis of the paper was the following: *The managers' behaviours in IPA processes have a decisive contribution on achieving results.*
Within this general hypothesis 12 work hypotheses were elaborated and then verified by the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, which are described below.

1. Qualitative methods

i. Semi-structured interviews
 a) Interviews with HR managers
 b) Interviews with managers at different levels

ii. Direct observation and using the author's experience by:
 a) analysing reports generated;
 b) analysing notes and learning points;
 c) analysing good practices and case studies;
 d) direct interactions of the author with renowned specialists and managers
 These observations have allowed the identification of some assumptions further studied by the use of:

2. Quantitative methods

The paper uses an empirical study by survey that aimed to verify, using statistical methods, the existence of a correlation between important dimensions of the performance appraisal system and to validate an instrument for the study of useful managerial behaviours in the individual performance management.

Chapter 3. Qualitative methods regarding the managers' behaviour in performance appraisal. Empirical study.

The data gathering and analysis were made by consecutive iterations, in a cyclical process close to the grounded theory. Data gathered led to incipient forms of some principles and theories, to a return to literature study and then to a final validation, done after discussions with managers working in the human resource field.

3.1. Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview method was chosen because the major interest of this paper was to understand opinions, experiences and behaviours of managers involved in the design, the administration and / or the use of the IPA systems.

The general objective of the interviews was to identify the productive processes encountered by the participants in IPA. The instruments were built based on the 5 D framework in appreciative inquiry (previously described). Two target groups were defined as follows:

    a. 12 HR managers with experience in companies operating in Romania

    b. 17 managers (non-HR) who have other managers as direct reports;

3.2. Direct observation

The author's experience in the field of human resources has been materialized by:

  a) analysing reports generated

    1. in the over 20 years of the author's experience and

    2. through the experience of coordinating certain projects carried out by The Centre for Management Development (CDM), organization led by the author since 1997 and which works with different companies operating in Romania and also in other European countries

  b) analysing notes and learning points from the discussions had with managers

    1. at the top levels- from Romanian and multinational companies

    2. at different levels, during programs for management development

  c) analysing good practices and case studies:

    1. Elaborated by the author as part of certain consultancy contracts in the field of human resources, such as:

- Individual performance appraisal;
- Assessment and development centres

2. Within the client-companies, during the carrying out of contracts for:
   - Assistance in the implementation of systems;
   - Organizational development

3. Tested in own management activity

Two instruments are described in the paper and they are based on:
- The EFQM model– the form is described in Appendix 1,
- The CRESLC model – two forms are presented, one for management and one for people who don't have management responsibilities, included in Appendix 2 and 3.

d) The author's direct interactions with

1. specialists and managers, in the form of interviews, have aimed to:
   - generate inductively of certain working hypothesis
   - test some hypotheses

2. renowned specialists, globally recognized: Michael Armstrong, Dave Ulrich, Marshall Goldsmith, David Maister

3. participants at management conferences, as speaker or moderator.

In the analysis of the data gathered through qualitative methods the author sought key topics and essential observations, as well as influencers (experiences, processes, personal and organizational context), which could have affected the quality of the reported experiences.

Human resource managers think that the accelerated rhythm of change, experienced by companies in the past year due to the market conditions, determine IPA processes to be treated as a requirement imposed by the organization and not as productive and necessary organizational instruments. In order to adapt to the conditions, organizations continuously redefine their operational objectives, which determines the departmental objectives to change as well.

General conclusions derived from the use of qualitative methods

Although formalized API processes are described as `basically necessary` and `useful`, in practice they are, in fact, used sporadically, occasionally and irregularly, and often the impulse towards them is an administrative one – the requirement that some reports be completed by a certain deadline - and not a managerial one (managers who feel and believe these processes are useful for achieving performance).

It is expected from certain efficient IPA systems to be:

- Simple – with easy to apply procedures;
- Systematic;
- Non-bureaucratic;
- Connected with the rewards system.

Aspects regarding IPA need to be studied in the connection with:

      a. Individual performance management;

      b. Strategic systems for organizational performance;

      c. The capability for organizational development;

Using the integrative framework offered by Iqbal et al. (2015:516) we can conclude that an efficient IPA system contributes to the managerial efficacy if it:

      a. offers an answer to the strategical, developmental, learning, administrative and contractual organizational goals– clarifying functional goals

      b. provides a framework of personal, procedural, compensation, informational and decisional fairness

      c. is easily adapted in order to be accurate and to eliminate errors

Central for the IPA systems in this model is the reaction of the appraisee, who, by the means of future behaviours will produce the desired results.

CHAPTER 4. STUDY ON THE MANAGERS' BEHAVIORS IN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL USING THE SURVEY METHOD

The survey research had the following objectives:

- Validating the instrument for analysis of the IPA processes;
- Collecting descriptive information about the IPA processes;
- Identifying certain correlations between managerial behaviours used in IPA and aspects of management efficacy;
- Highlighting the connections between managerial behaviours used in IPA and the achieving of results at an organizational level
- Defining certain dimensions (and an associated score) which would allow for a comparative appraisal of the quality of the IPA processes for managers

732 persons were invited to answer the questionnaire, from 137 organizations in Romania, out of which 109 companies (with Romanian or foreign capital) and another 28 organizations (governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, other institutions), from different departments.

4.1. Survey research methodology

Studied population – target group

The questionnaire was electronically administered, using the Survey Gizmo web platform, between 1st of May and May 30th 2016.

I have distributed a number of 732 questionnaires, out of which 302 were collected and validated, indicating a 41,2% response rate.

The following dimensions were used for the testing of the 10 specific hypotheses:

A. *Defining the objectives in relation to the company's strategy*

Example of item used: *CM1: My manager verifies the coherence between the objectives set for his/her employees and the strategical objectives of our organization.*

B. *Future orientation*

Example of item used: *CM7: My manager explains to his/her employees the factors (indicators, methods, sources of information) which will be used in the evaluation of their results.*

C. *Involving the team in the defining the success in practical terms:*

Example of item used: *CM13. My manager sets clear indicators and measurement methods for the evaluation of the achieving of results.*

D. *Negotiating individual objectives and performance indicators*

Example of item used: *CM17. My manager invites his/her employees to participate in the decisions regarding the team's most important objectives.*

E. *Observing and documenting the employees' performance*

Example of item used: *CM23. My manager takes into consideration different relevant information when evaluating the employees' individual performance.*

F. *Offering adequate support   11 items*

Example of item used: *CM25. My manager helps his/her employees to develop specific plans for the improvement of their performance.*

G. *Relations with subordinates based on appreciation   9 items*

Example of item used: *CM27. My manager builds warm, friendly relationships with the people he/she leads and avoids remaining cold and impersonal.*

H. *Sustains a productive climate within the team   7 items*

Example of item used: *CM11. My manager sustains a productive environment for the increase of the level of trust and mutual respect between his/her employees.*

The second set, made up of 7 affirmations referred to the own *organizational situation (OS)* and sought out the respondents' general perceptions about its capacity to handle different changes, its financial result and the general perceptions regarding management).

The third set, made up of 7 affirmations has offered *information* about *the respondents* (IR) and about the organization they work in.

4.2. Interpretation of the survey results

The paper validates an instrument (a questionnaire) for the analysis of managers' behaviour, using a method which optimizes the following interests:

  i. To define certain items which answer to the practical managerial interest;
  ii. To use items with a significant inter-correlation (Popa, 2011:86);
  iii. To find sufficient items in order to have a solid and representative variable;
  iv. To use the smallest possible number of items in order to simplify the data gathering process.

The steps this method entails are described below:

Step1. Defining composite (sum) variables

Both managerial behaviours (MB) and the calculated composite variables (named dimensions, ranging from A to H) can be easier understood in the form of scores from -10 to 0 (for negative aspects) or from 0 to +10 (for positive aspects). Therefore, the evaluation of the 34 item was made using a scale that evaluated the frequency of positive managerial behaviours, as shown below:

- Very rarely: score of -10,
- Rarely: score of   -5
- Often   score of + 5
- Very often: score of +10

Step 2. Initial verification of internal consistency

George and Mallery (2003:231) provide the following rule for the interpretation of the Alpha Cronbach coefficient:

Table 4.5. Interpretation of the Alpha Cronbach coefficient

The value of the Alpha Cronbach coefficient	*Internal consistency*
Higher than 0,9	Excellent
Between 0,8 and 0,9	Good
Between 0,7 and 0,8	Acceptable
Between 0,6 and 0,7	Debatable
Between 0,5 and 0,6	Poor
Lower than 0,5	Unacceptable

Source: Based on George and Mallery (2003:231)

Streiner (2003:101) shows that a coefficient that is too high, over 0.9, may indicate the redundancy of certain items (they test similar aspects which are differently formulated).

Step 3. Verifying correlations between the composite variable items

This verification is useful for determining the most significant items that contribute to the generating of relevant information for the creation of a solid dimension (composite variable) and to the optimization of the number of items.

A major interest of this verification is to eliminate certain items that have a negative contribution to the Alfa Cronbach coefficient.

Step 4. Optimizing Alpha Cronbach coefficient

Through an iterative process it was intended to:
    a. Increase the Alfa Cronbach coefficient
    b. Reduce the number of items for the dimensions, considering simplicity reasons when administering the newly resulted model

Thus, certain variables susceptible to elimination were identified through the analysis of the Alpha Cronbach coefficient in the absence of an item. The number of items were successively reduced until no more optimizations could be acquired.

Step 5. Repeating steps 1 – 4 for the other composite variables

A similar process to the one descried above took place for the other composite variables. The process has validated certain dimensions, but it also suggested the rethinking of several dimensions.

Step 6. Rethinking some of the dimensions

When carrying out the 4th step, there were identified possibilities to propose new optimized dimensions in terms of internal consistency.

Step 7. A new model for analysis was proposed.

Step 8. Validating the new model to be used for an IPA appreciative system

After going through the previous steps, a new model was proposed for validation, entailing the dimensions below:

D1. Defining objectives closely related to the organization's strategy, No. of items: 5

D2. The orientation of IPA towards the future,   No. of items retained: 4

D3. Collaborative definition of the expected individual performance, No. of items: 6

D4. Observing and documenting IPA,   No. of items retained: 5

D5. Offering adequate support,   No. of items retained: 6

D6. IPA in a climate of appreciation,   No. of items retained: 5

Chapter 5 – CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

Conclusions and limits of the research

Through corroborating the information generated by the quantitative and qualitative methods, the general hypothesis is confirmed, thus: *The managers' behaviours in IPA processes have a decisive contribution on achieving results.*

The systematic contribution of the IPA processes to the organizational development is a critical one, and that was also demonstrated by the correlation between the composite variables studied through the survey. There are significant correlations between the way managers conduct the IPA processes and the organizations' capacity to adapt to change. These need further investigation, the paper opening new research directions:

- What are the aspects of IPA processes that influence the ability to change?
- What are the moderator factors and what are their influences?

Among the contributions of this paper we mention:

Contribution 1 – Testing a research framework

The empirical study allowed for the testing within Romanian organizations of some novel investigative methods, specifically the adaptation of the appreciative inquiry methods during the semi-structured interviews. The paper reconciles the `traditional` way of producing knowledge on performance management, fuelled by the academic disciplines, oriented towards the founding of a valid theory in a wider context, and the `applied` way, which generates context dependent knowledge. This was made by:

  i.   Defining the framework and the initial concepts in the context of practical application;

  ii. Using academic rigor to test the managerial `common sense` and to validate the models in a practical domain, that of IPA

  iii. Knowledge creation took place in a dynamic framework, with successive iterations practical – academic – practical and the testing of pragmatic managerial knowledge with credible sociological methods;

  3. Bringing transdisciplinary preoccupations of IPA into the academic community, which can be seen from an economical, psychological, sociological and even linguistic or philosophical perspective.

Other practical contributions are:

- The validation of a 6 dimension instrument for IPA analysis
- adapting a guide for managers with ideas for the IPA dialogue

Contribution 2 – Identifying positive aspects of the current practice of IPA

1. The fundamental benefit of IPA, as perceived by managers, is having the possibility to support employees in understanding the team's and the personal objectives.

2. Systemic aspects of IPA

The research highlights useful aspects deriving from a productive use of IPA:

1. Personal or organizational learning, through clarifying certain *concepts, developing abilities* or analysing and clarifying certain *managerial processes.*
2. Changes in actions or behaviours, both by *personal reflection* on the course of action and by decisions to act differently.
3. Changes in affect or attitudes
4. Contribution to the organizational transformation

Contribution 3 – Identifying opportunities for improvement, by proposing:

- A productive approach for IPA systems and interactions
- Productive IPA processes, both rational and *affective*.
- Becoming aware of and stimulating certain productive behaviours

Contribution 4 – Clarifying new paradigms

The paper proposes working principles and methods based on new intervention models, and demonstrates the efficacy of the novel paradigms and approaches that are entering organizational life, such as appreciative inquiry, positive psychology, and also philosophical perspectives based on the social constructivism, useful for managers for the better understanding of leadership processes.

Contribution 5 – An analytical framework for IPA, which proposes to determine:

i. The connection between performance management at organizational level and IPA

ii. The current practices of IPA processes,

iii. A comparative analysis regarding the managers' activity in the IPA processes

iv. A methodology which can be replicated for the creation of instruments adapted to the IPA systems in organizations

v. The results desired by the initiators of the IPA systems and by top management

vi. Real results and the costs generated by using IPA

vii. Certain processes for the study of an integrated framework of the efficacy of IPA and of certain verification criteria

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