

THE IMPLICATIONS OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN STAFF PERFORMANCE AND RETENTION IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Vasile ROMAN¹

¹Assoc. Prof. PhD, „Apollonia” University of Iași, Romania
Corresponding author: Vasile Roman; e-mail:v_roman2005@yahoo.com

Abstract

The performance of each organisation represents the intrinsic result of the relationship between personal factors, on the one side, and the individual's potential and his motivation degree for an aware employment, on the other side, as well as the organisation's internal process/framework, respectively the relationship process and system together with the external one, meaning the complex context in which the organisation operates and which exerts an influence. It has been proven that the organisation cannot control all factors, especially those related to context and relationships and this is why there is a tendency for some employees to go in one of the two directions, one of capping and reduced efficiency or one of leaving the organization in order to develop a career in another institution. Taking into account the tendency of the new generation to look for job satisfaction by defining some goals which are more related to personal development than to material satisfactions, it is necessary to identify some ways of measuring expectations and the institutional development programmes.

Keywords: *public administration, performance, potential, personal development, retention.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The modernity of the world we live in, characterised by technological efficiency, makes us become more and more anxious and pretentious when it comes to the services we are being provided with.

The fact that we can order and receive different products through orders at home makes us think that anyone who is paid from our contributions should be extremely efficient.

Criticised and without any doubt criticisable, the public institution is provoked by an authentic efficiency process in relationship with the citizen, also for the simple reason that it is financed from his taxes and duties.

Being created as a bureaucratic and hierarchical system, usually underfinanced, not very tempting

from a career point of view, but especially conservative and afraid of transparency, the public institution needs specialised help in order to become performant.

It is important for the public institution to perceive the fact that although it is not a production unit, in which performance equals profit, it can be performant if it is willing to achieve a balance between short-term results and the creation of long-term capabilities, if it offers a balanced answer to the expectations of the citizens and of the different institutions it relates with, and especially if it achieves the necessary climate for the balanced development of its staff.

In order to achieve performance, it is necessary to fulfil some essential requirements such as: measuring the audit of the current level, identifying performance factors, prioritizing their approach and most importantly, hiring them using specific management tools. Measuring the performance of public institutions is necessary in order to improve the management process, as an answer to new challenges triggered by development and digitalisation processes, in order for the required services to diversify themselves permanently and last, but not least, because the employees' jobs do not offer career development opportunities.

Once measured, performance does not offer any guarantee that it can be enhanced simply through the help of those working in the public institution and this occurs not because they wouldn't want to do that, but because the organisation is complicated, both in terms of human heterogeneity and exposure to the community and national context, being subjected to pressures from people, processes and context, which are difficult to control.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND CLIMATE

When we speak of public institutions as service suppliers, both at the level of theoretical analysis, and especially during debates regarding public policies, performance is described as being the area of maximum demands.

A more careful look at the Romanian reality might offer us some essential elements regarding the employees' responsibility to the result of their work, but especially an awareness of the fact that this has to be, first and foremost, efficient. In this framework, it is necessary for the institution, through its employees, to prove that it represents a stable and trustworthy partner, both for the citizen and for any other institution it comes into contact with, and this stability should be offered not only through the answers offered to particular requests, but through superior service quality, the experience that citizens perceive in their relationship with the institution and the way in which they wish the employees to be. This wish can also be determined by the way in which the public institution, aware of the service and labour market in which it operates, acts in order to develop and promote the brand image of the organisation.

If the institution limits itself, because it is financially supported by taxes and duties, at the development of a task-centred organisational climate and on efficiency in relationship with the client, it risks both a lack of attractiveness for the new employees and a decrease in the retention degree of the staff. In order not to get to such a situation in which the performance of the institution is negatively influenced by poor individual performance, it is necessary to develop some policies with support continuous learning and professional development, offer a clear and necessary framework on the role and contribution of each individual in the organisational development and last, but not least, the identification, cultivation, development and reward of personal performances.

The specialists from the field of the psychosocial sciences claim that an essential principle which triggers individual performance consists in the relationship between the ability/potential

levels and the person's motivation and can be expressed through the formula:

$$\text{performance} = f(\text{ability/potential} \times \text{motivation})$$

(STĂNOIU & MILITARU, 1998),

knowing that ability/potential reflects the intellectual and physical skills of a person who has to fulfil the tasks related to targeted goal.

Sir John Withmore, a specialist in organisational performance assessment and the creator of an international school of organisational coaching summarizes the concept of performance, going from person to organisation and the intra and inter-organisation environment, using the formula:

$$\text{performance} = \text{potential} - \text{interferences}$$

(WITHMORE, 2019)

meaning maximizing performance, translated as an individual and collective intervention process and it consists in amplifying potential and diminishing interferences.

This new paradigm makes us reflect on the fact that the individual and, possible also, the organisation, may enhance performance not just because it possesses knowledge and skills, and the intrinsic motivation to develop this process, but because he is determined to identify the best options to limit the interior and exterior interferences and especially through a constructive attitude, that it develops out of self-knowledge, personal development and training and therefore it limits the negative action of these interferences.

Starting from the supposition that the staff from the public institution presents the professional and personal predisposition of self-development, it is necessary to look inside it and to notice the degree in which culture and the organisational climate can be built and modelled in order to ensure the methods and means to develop individual potential.

Organisational culture refers to the thinking manner, the attitudes towards job requirements and the purpose of the organisation, the believes that individuals and the organisation have regarding responsibility, progress, the services and norms which exist within a organisation and which should also be known by other market actors.

The foundations of organizational cultures in the public institution were laid with the formation of the differentiating environment, the specific

climate, elements which define the institution put at the service of the citizen and through which the citizens distinguish it in the services market.

According to human rights specialists, in time, various types of cultures have been identified: clan-type cultures (they refer to the organisational culture based on the team, the collaboration and cohesion between its members) or start-up cultures (they refer to the companies in which each employee is responsible for his work and he can value his creativity), but basically, they all refer to relatively common norms and behavioural unity (PASCARI, 2019).

Analysing the public institution one can notice that this type of team, given the fact that it is hierarchical, operates on structures such as compartment, office, directions, and between them there are management-control and cooperation relations on projects

A characteristic of the public institutions is that their management is influenced by the fact that resources are ensured by budgets built on safe entrance sources and fund-usage process is centred more on efficiency, due to the pressures exerted by the citizen, and less on the efficiency required by perspective projects.

At the same time, the leadership of public institutions is a political one, taking into account the fact that most managers are appointed, every four years, by the political class, the representative of the will of the citizen to change the administration of the community.

Starting from these two ideas, it is necessary to develop a short analysis regarding the way in which the financial comfort, offered by the fixed salaries, the stable jobs, the central level, the reduced promotion possibilities, as well as the influences that the periodicity of the leadership changes, turn into factors which influence both the paradigm shift regarding performance, as well as the individuals' predisposition to make the effort of becoming better professionals and of being satisfied with the organisation climate in which they operate.

The organisational climate refers to set of social and human characteristics of the society as a complex system, respectively to the main decision-making practices along the hierarchy, the functioning of the management organs, the

realignment of the social functions of the unit, the general strategy for stimulating performance in the activity and participation in management, the cooperation relations between departments, services, offices, hierarchical relations etc (ADMINISTRARE.INFO, 2019).

A study at the level of the public institution presents the organisational climate elements which influence performance, as following: the increase in the involvement of teammates in work activities (23.9%), followed closely by the work atmosphere (22.5%), the appreciation of the direct superior (17.2%) and later the investment of employees by bosses with more authority and trust (16.3%), and contrary to expectations, salary increases are considered the most important motivating factor by only 9% of public employees (CRISTESCU et al., 2013).

All these elements offer us a clear perspective of the fact that the performance of public institutions represents a matter of individual perception and that a comprehensive development process of its potential is a viable and necessary alternative. Process involvement, together with teammates, involves taking responsibility, productive work atmosphere involves building a fair task distribution and assignment system, clear priorities and empowering the employee with responsibility and decision.

These requirements, present both in the field of leadership and of management, require a complex training process when it comes to responsibility and the delegation of authority.

Without going into insignificant details about the reluctance of managers to delegate authority, for more or less objective reasons, the public institution has several directions for effective delegation, namely to determine exactly what each member of the structure can do, to give up details that may influence the delegate, to provide logistical support with the act of delegation and the participation of the one who delegates the power together with the delegate in order to support the effort to begin (IONESCU et al., 2001).

Liability (PASCARI, 2019) represents the legal and ethical obligation that a person assumes for the actions, achievements or failures of an organisation and through this assumed act it is responsible for the health, welfare, moral and

discipline of the staff, as well as the equipment he has at his disposal.

Liability is the requirement imposed on a person to account, before a superior or the law, for the effective and efficient use of the responsibility, authority, human and material resources made available to achieve the purpose (s) of the organization.

In order to achieve a performance framework it is necessary to change the approach of the managers, because although they possess the authority, responsibility and liability, they can and have to delegate authority so that the other people involved in the process to decide and act according to their field of responsibility.

3. INDIVIDUAL POTENTIAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

When we propose the development of individual performance, the process has to be approached from the conviction that the inner motivation or the external motivation structures have to be corroborated with a clear awareness process of the degree in which positive or negative beliefs, life experiences, as well as the environment in which performance is achieved represent elements which strengthen or block the self-realisation will.

Some of the most important features, having a role in the manifestation of responsibility, increasing the degree of involvement and especially in the predisposition to delegate authority, are character, knowledge and temperament.

Character, the main-valuable side of personality decisively influences the behaviour of the employee and it is given by the way in which an individual perceives his peer, either employee or service beneficiary, as being good, with good qualities, hard-working, integer, loyal, trustworthy or the other way around, as well as the relationship style, meaning the way in which the subordinates or the citizens are treated, stimulated and controlled. Motivation is also connected to character, offered by the understanding degree of the signification and the value of the position held and of the art to motivate the subordinates and attitudes as a

group of motives, interests, convictions, feelings and purposes, altruistically manifested.

Knowledge is materialised in the professional capacity expressed through the knowledge level and work experience, mastery of the field in charge, organizational availability, represented by the knowledge and skills related to good organization, planning, coordination and control of activities

Temperament brings particularities in the exercise of tasks and the same do the two personality dimensions, extroversion and introversion, and it makes a mark through openness to communication and collaboration or by restraint from dialogue and maintaining an area of isolation in projects and tasks.

A psycho-moral analysis proves that the individual grows through integrity, meaning through the beneficial materialization of his own thoughts and words, in facts he grows through honesty towards truth and not towards personal justice and, maybe more, he develops himself through the way in which he manifests empathy and compassion in relationship with those around him.

We must not forget that the individual makes a fully-aware decision and that this represents an attitude with a determinant character, adopted following a series of rational deliberations and his rationality represents the trait of thinking, knowing, understanding the essence of things and of the processes from the nature and society and to discover their causes and laws. The main analysis principles have to be centred both on crystallised cognition/intelligence and on the emotional motivation/intelligence. The learning capacity (learning from your own mistakes), strategic thinking (long-term thinking, systemic thinking, the search for opportunities, visualising tendencies, causal relationships, the capacity to manage ambiguous situations) are only two of the characteristics of crystallised intelligence.

Resilience (the rapid recovery following unpleasant situations, resistance to pressures and high demands, the identification of the ways of crossing obstacles, perseverance in front of diversity), flexibility (adapting communication, influencing, managing change, changing the approach as an answer to the new priorities),

empathy (the capacity to acknowledge and manage your own personal emotional states, recognition and the understanding of emotional responses, as well as the use of understanding in order to increase interpersonal efficiency) are only some of the elements of emotional potential (TALABA, n.d.).

The analysis of the indicators with a development potential is not complete, without referring to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which suggests the fact that people manifest a complete set of values which can be hierarchically organised, a hierarchy achieved in accordance with the following set of hypothesis (ROMAN, 2013):

A fulfilled need does no longer represent a motivational factor and yet, when a need is met, another one substitutes it, and therefore the individual is permanently subjected to the pressure of fulfilling certain needs. The set of needs is quite complex for most individuals and certain needs affect the behaviour of each person at every moment. Lower-level needs have to be generally fulfilled before the higher-level needs become pressing, orienting the behaviour of a particular person.

There are more ways of satisfying the higher-level needs than the lower-level ones. In such situations, it is necessary to identify a motivational process/scheme, which describes the way in which personal factors interact and influence behaviour.

In my opinion, Vroom's expectancy theory (ROMAN, 2013) is the most accessible and explicit one, since it is based on four hypothesis regarding the causes which trigger the behaviour of an individual within an organisation. The first refers to the fact that a person's behaviour is determined by a series of individual factors (needs, training, skill), and also by some organisational factors (control, regulations, reward system). The second claims that the members of an organisation decide their own behavioural manner within an organisation. The following hypothesis claims that different people have different needs and goals. The last hypothesis starts from the idea that the members of an organisation choose from various possible options, based on their perception, whether or not certain behaviours lead to the desired results.

Starting from the hypothesis that individual factors are highly significant in the individual's performance within a company (in our case the public institution), it is necessary to observe which those factors are, and moreover which is the enhancement formula for their value.

4. STAFF RETENTION APPROACHES

Although we live in a world of search, in which emotional influences easily appear in our lives, we notice that we cannot give up on the two classical manifestations, the one related to wage and career, but a new one appeared, that of independent personal development, meaning coaching.

From the point of view of the motivation for competitiveness, an ideal wage system refers to the simultaneous fulfilment of three goals: the use of a sufficiently high wage level in order to be attractive, the wage system has to be fair, a preferential reward of the performances which go beyond average. In order to speak about attractive wages, they have to be higher than the result between the equilibrium point between the demand and supply from the labour market. This wage system is used by the companies which want to attract a large number of potential employees, so that they can afterwards recruit the best. On the other side, such an institution becomes well-known to the labour market and its employees are proud that they are part of that particular company.

Employees' perception regarding the relationship between wage and effort, skill, responsibility and experience should not lead to extra tensions or resentment. If employees consider that their wage is too low and no measures are being taken, their performance will decrease and they will no longer be willing to put in any extra effort to try and attain

Regardless of the standard wage level, the implementation of some wage policies based on the performances that go beyond average, stimulates motivation. It is obvious, for the employees with a poorer material status that this motivational means presents a significantly higher importance in comparison with that on the people with no fundamental existence problems.

The method of the career plans can be defined as a succession of function occupied by a certain person throughout his or her life. Career management involves the assessment of the professional potential of the members of the organisation, the promotion of some staff rotation policies, the prevention of undesirable behaviours through coercive means, the prevention of failure due to frustration, boredom or the lack of motivation, solving the problem of promoting women.

If education centres its effort on the development of skill, the assimilation of theoretic knowledge and the forming of practical skill, coaching, together with mentorship, represents the formula through which the individual and/or the organisation, with the support of specialists, acts for the development of the necessary attitudes in achieving performance.

All these personal development aspects cannot ensure change all by themselves, if they are not assimilated by the individual, through a clear process of knowledge, awareness and reflection in his conscience of his development goals, on the background of a reality in which he or she lives.

It is hard to imagine that the individual might assume a personal development process without assuming the clear task of a cognitive effort. The awareness process of professional value is centred on the development of self-esteem, but most importantly on the idea of self-sacrifice, meaning on conscience. Individual conscience represents the reflection of one's own existence, of the specific individual life-conditions, activity and education.

The coaching process represents an emphatic, transparent and confidential dialogue in which the client's desire comes first. His role is well-defined because the objective belongs to the client, the engagement is his, the coach being present only to train the mind and will, for options and work plans.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Performance does not represent an abstract term that science uses, but a desirable goal for a person or organisation. The potential does not

belong to the organisation, but to the individuals and it develops in relationship with their awareness degree and employment potential. The potential is not completely visible, but has to be discovered and cultivated through education and experience, for knowledge and skills and through family training and coaching for attitude.

The individual proceeds to the development of his potential if he finds the proper intrinsic motivation or if the organisation challenges him. Public institutions are not the best suitable environment for the development of the potential, but the pressures to which they are subjected by the technologicalisation of the society and the expectations of the individuals will become higher and higher.

Educational institutions, especially those of communication, can become the vector for what it means to challenge the efficiency of the relationship between the citizen and the public institutions.

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