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MOTIVATING AND ORGANIZING FACTORS IN THE PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR OF TOXIC MANAGERS

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Abstract

The modern system of personnel management is aimed at enhancing the efficiency of each employee and therefore much attention is paid to the profiling of toxic managers, who negatively affect the environment and relationships at work. The analysis of the factors related to disorganized professional management have pinpointed weak motivation and disinterested performance as most important reasons for toxic behavior. This survey covered 60 mid- and top-level managers with 8-12 years' work experience. This study found the majority of these managers to be toxic. The following instruments, the 'Diagnostics of Disorganizing Factors in Personal Time Management'; 'Analysis of Personal Impediments'; 'Diagnostics of Self-Organization Features-39' (DSF-39) and motivational self-assessment profiles provided the data for the study. The findings show that the respondents' skills of goal-setting and goal-achievement were poorly developed. The majority struggled to set their goals and to choose optimal strategies for achieving them. Moreover, they faced difficulties in work organization, time management and planning. They found it hard to control their time and assess their own efficiency. The majority of our respondents can be described as toxic managers as they are unable to overcome internal and external difficulties and are reluctant to demonstrate determination or to control their negative emotional states.

Key words: Professional motivation, work organization, toxic manager, toxic working conditions, professional efficiency.

1. Introduction

According to Fedorova, Menshikova, & Vishnevskii, (2015) toxic managers have become a widely spread phenomenon caused by toxic elements in work relationships. Russian and international studies demonstrate a correlation between such internal factors as employees' motivation or strategies of organizing their work and such external factors as working conditions (Gatti & Fedorova, 2014). Other factors include the unstable job market and poor job security, reduction in the average job tenure (especially for men), with employers favouring temporary workers rather than permanent ones. Other trends include low wage levels, lack of incentives for advanced training, and meagre benefits packages. All these factors contribute to the creation of toxic work relationships (Khanaeva & Lysenko, 2016).

It is important to gain a more in-depth understanding of the motivational and organizational components of management in order to establish a better control over toxic employees and minimize their negative impact on their companies' performance.

The motivational and organizational components of management are most clearly visible among sales managers. Personal contact is a factor that can contribute to or impede successful business relationships and the conclusion of business deals. Sales managers serve as liaisons between their companies, clients, trade organizations, and manufacturers, that is, they are actively involved in multiple personal interactions (Tokareva & Tokarev, 2016). The following characteristics have been pinpointed in toxic sales managers: information distortion; unpredictability; loss of loyalty; and inability to bear responsibility.

2. Problem Statement

It has already been established that toxic managers negatively impact the job performance of their subordinates and subsequently affect companies' profitability. In order to ensure a professional organizational culture, it is thus, crucial to identify characteristics of toxic management and find a correlation between professional motivation and disorganizing factors in the professional behavior of sales managers. Once these have been identified, pertinent strategies may be implemented to overcome or eradicate such toxic behaviors.

3. Research Questions

This study sought to describe the correlation between professional motivation and disorganizing factors found in the professional behaviour of sales managers.

4. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to identify toxic elements of work relationships with specific reference to the behaviours of sales managers.

5. Research Methods

The participants were selected according to certain criteria of age and working experience of companies engaged in wholesale sales of products in the food industry in the Sverdlovsk region in Russia. The survey covered 60 mid- and top-level managers aged between 29-43 with work experience between 8 and 12 years. To suit the requirements of this study, a purposive sampling technique was used whereby the managers selected by the staff of the companies and experts displayed toxic characteristics, such as conflict, aggression, violation of discipline, the creation of problem situations in the workplace.

The research methods comprised the following instruments. The 'Diagnostics of Disorganizing Factors in Personal Time Management' (Kuzmina, 2011) is aimed at studying the personal disorganizers of time, preventing a person from working effectively using the following five scales.

The *Axiological Disorganizers Scale* identifies whether a person has or has not developed his personal goals or intentions in life while the *Motivational Disorganizers Scale* describes the way people demonstrate their interest or indifference in life and work and the intent to achieve results. The *Organizational Disorganizers Scale* characterizes the technical aspect of activity and allows assessment of how the subjects manifests their ability to determine the sequence of actions, the ability to concentrate for a long time and work at one problem. The *Scale of Emotional Apathy* is aimed at assessing the indicators of fatigue, the desire to perform any activity and passivity need. The *Emotional Stress Scale* determines the individual's degree of manifestation of emotional stress when at work or when having limitations and lack of time. The *General Indicator of Disorganization scale*, based on summing up the indicators of previously presented scales up, assesses the personal disorganizers of time in general.

Analysis of Life Interference Technique (Lothar and Seiwert, 2003, cited in Allport, 2004) analyzes personality issues of the subjects, using the following scales: *development of skills of accepting and retaining the goal, developing skills of organizing one's own work day and activities, developing skills for effective interaction with others, dependence of the subject on incoming information, the skills of regulation of one's own actions*, and the *development of strong-willed qualities*.

The Diagnostics of Self-Organization Features-39 (DSO-39) (Ishkov, 2004, cited in Allport, 2004)) developed as a questionnaire reveals particular features of individual's self-organization. The questionnaire was developed on the basis of the holographic model of self-organization. The questionnaire contains an integral scale known as *Degree of Self-Organization Scale* and six other scales, which characterize the extent of development of one personal component of self-organization and five functional components: *goal setting, situation analysis, planning, self-control* and *correction*.

The instrument assessing the individual's motivational profile (Richie & Martin, 2004, cited in Allport, 2004) is aimed at researching the needs of the individual at the workplace. Twelve scales, establishing the need for a *clear structuring of work, good working conditions, social contacts, stable long-term relationships, winning other people's respect, high wages, setting challenging goals for themselves, influence and power, diversity and change, creativity, improvement and personal growth,* and *being needed,* can identify the employee type and the substantial aspects (external or internal) of his motivation.

The data obtained with the help of the above mentioned instruments were processed in accordance with the keys proposed by the instrument developers.

6.   Findings and Discussion

All the findings are presented on 3 levels: low, medium and high. To interpret the results of each scale, the results of the majority of the participants are described to identify patterns. To report the findings of each scale, the percentage and frequency of participants are reported as follows: percentage (number)-scale level followed by the discussion pertaining to the findings.

The analysis of the consolidated data has enabled us to generate conclusions about the general levels of self-organization of the participants according to the scales associated with the 'Diagnostics of Disorganizing Factors in Personal Time Management' as follows:

'Value- and Meaning-Related Disorganizing Factors':

38% (23) - low   58% (35) - medium   4% (2) - high

On this scale, about half the sample (58%;35) posted a medium level while close to one-third (38%;23) posted a low level, a few people posted a high level (4%:2). This clearly indicates that the majority of the participants (96%;58) lack clear vision of their professional goals or personal prospects, which negatively affects their time management, personal and professional efficiency.

'Organization-Related Disorganizing Factors':

33% (20) - medium   67% (40) - high

No respondents posted a high level on this scale.

This indicates that all the respondents (100%; 60) found it difficult to organize their working time productively, which is detrimental to their general efficiency, and could contribute to low sales and dissatisfied clients.

'Motivation-Related Disorganizing Factors':

72% (43) - medium level   7% (4), - low   21% (13) – high

Most of the respondents (79%; 47) lack motivation both in their private and professional lives and are unwilling to achieve high results, which means that their professional efficiency is in decline and that their impact on the working process may well be toxic.

'Emotional Apathy', is specifically designed to assess emotional fatigue.

60% (36) - medium   17% (10) - low   23% (14) - high.

Therefore, it appears that the majority of these managers' (83%; 50) suffer from emotional apathy which affects their productivity to be lower than normal or it is highly situation-dependent.

'Emotional Tension':

68% (41*)* - medium   12% (7) – low

None of our respondents demonstrated a high level of tension.

Thus, it can be concluded that this group of managers suffer from a medium to low level of emotional tension at work, perhaps when they are pressed for time to complete a task. This means that all of them can cope with working under pressure.

The *'General Indicators of Disorganization'* scale enabled us to obtain a general picture of individual disorganizing factors.

33% (20) - medium   67% (40) - low

None of our respondents posted a high level of disorganization on this scale

This means that overall, about a third of the managers in this sample exhibit some level of disorganization that could impede efficiency at work, resulting in losses for the companies.

To investigate the factors that influence the above conditions, the questionnaire 'Analysis of Personal Impediments' developed by Lothar and Seiwert, (2003) (cited in Allport, 2004) was used. The following findings were obtained on the associated scales.

'*Goal*':

8% (5) - low   78% (47) – medium   14% (8) - high

Thus, it appears that the majority of our respondents (92%; 55) have the necessary skills of goal-setting corresponding to personal self-organization.

'*Organization*':

93% (56) - medium   7% (4) – high

None of our respondents demonstrated a low level of organization.

Therefore, it appears that all the respondents are characterized by a medium to high level of organization, which might negatively affect their productivity at work. It may be assumed that they perceive themselves to be organized, not because they personally are, but because the work flow and processes are already in place and they just have to follow the procedures.

'*Interaction'*:

13% (8) - low   83% (50) - medium   4% (2) - high

These findings reveal that the majority of these managers' (96%; 58) display a lack of interest in interacting with other people at work. This can definitely lead to a toxic relationship at the workplace.

'*Awareness'*:

13% (8) - low   87% (52) - medium

No respondents scored high on this scale.

This shows that means all these managers suffer from lack of awareness which again would result in a toxic working atmosphere.

'*Personal Qualities'*:

 98% (59) - medium   2% (1) - high

No respondents scored low on this scale.

Thus, it appears that all the respondents lack the necessary personal qualities to function efficiently at work. This would include the determination necessary for efficient organization of their work, time management and goal-setting.

On most of the above scales, the respondents' scores corresponded to the medium level. The highest scores were found on the scale '*Personal Qualities'* and '*Organization'.* Although on the surface, this indicates positive qualities, when looking at the overall analysis especially the results of the 'Diagnostics of Self-Organization Features-39' (DSF-39), these results are surprising. This can mean that the managers rate themselves highly on their own qualities, including their organizational abilities which is a common outcome of personal ratings. Bias is responses occurs when "People tend to want to portray themselves in the best light, and this can affect survey responses. According to psychology professor Delroy Paulhus, response bias is a common occurrence in the field of psychology, especially when it comes to self-reporting on personal traits" among other. (http://www.statisticshowto.com/response-bias/)

In order to identify personal characteristics of self-organization, the questionnaire 'Diagnostics of Self-Organization Features-39' (DSF-39) developed by Ishkov (2004) (cited in Allport, 2004) was used. All the results were processed in accordance with the following scales: *goal-setting, situation analysis, planning, self-control, adjustment,* and *volitional effort.* For each of these characteristics, we identified high, medium, and low levels. The indicators for each scale were calculated according to the formulae proposed by the author of the methodology (Table 01).

Table 01. Self-organization of managers

Scales	Levels					
	High		**Medium**		**Low**	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Goal-setting	33	20	17	10	50	30
Situation analysis	20	12	50	30	30	18
Planning	33	20	50	30	17	10
Self-control	22	13	55	33	23	14
Adjustment	13	8	62	37	25	15
Volitional effort	20	12	30	18	50	30
Level of self-organization	24	14	44	26	32	19

These data show that the majority of the respondents' skills of goal-setting and goal-achievement were poorly developed. They struggled to set their goals and to choose optimal strategies for achieving them. Moreover, they faced difficulties in work organization, time management and planning; they found it hard to control their time and assess their own efficiency. Hence, the majority of the respondents can be described as toxic managers as they are unable to overcome internal and external difficulties and are reluctant to demonstrate determination or to control their negative emotional states.

The motivation of the respondents was assessed by analyzing their self-assessment profiles (Ritchie and Martin, 2004 cited in Allport, 2004) on the following scales.

'Rewards':

60% (36) - medium   40%, (24) - low

None posted a high level of satisfaction.

Reward is an essential motivation factor necessary to maintain employees' interest in the work they do but, as our results have shown, our respondents' need for reward is not fully satisfied.

'Physical Conditions':

60% (36) - medium   40% (24) – low

None posted a high level of satisfaction.

 According to the respondents, their need for a comfortable work environment is not satisfied and the respondents find their work conditions toxic.

'Structure':

 30% (18) - medium   70% (42) - low

 None posted a high level.

Respondents do not agree that their work is structured, with the necessary feedback and information to assess the results of their work which they need to reduce uncertainty and establish rules and guidelines for the performance of their work.

'Recognition':

85% (51) - medium   15% (9) - low

Again it appears that the respondents' need for recognition is not satisfied.

'Achievement':

3.3% (2) - high   60% (36) – medium   36.7% (22) - low

The findings show that the respondents do not manifest a high achievement drive as well as motivation for achieving significant professional results.

'Power and Influence':

70% (42) - medium   30% (18) – low

None posted a high level.

This means that their need for power and influence was not satisfied.

'Variety and Change':

52% (31) - medium   48% (29) - low

Their need for external stimulation was not satisfied.

'Creativity':

60% (36) - medium   40% (24) - low

This means that they lack creative drive in their work and this need is not satisfied.

'Self-Development':

20% (12) - high   47% (28) - medium   33% (20) - low.

Thus, the majority of our respondents do not have high self-development needs.

'Interest and Usefulness':

23% (14) – high   52% (31) – medium   25% (15) - low

Most of the respondents do not find their jobs interesting and, therefore, can be said to lack motivation and commitment.

'Social Contact':

20% (12) – high   55% (33) – medium   25% (15) - low

This scale which is a crucial parameter for sales managers shows the majority of our respondents are not interested in establishing effective business contacts and that their need for social relationships corresponds to the medium to low levels.

The analysis of our sample using this scale shows that the need for structure, reward, comfortable work conditions, and creativity is the least satisfied. The need that is the most satisfied is the need for recognition, achievement, power and influence.

Our study of the correlations between the sales managers' motivation and their professional efficiency has demonstrated the following:

- toxic managers with high general disorganization levels tend to have pronounced motivation for power and influence;

 - toxic managers who lack awareness of the importance of efficient goal-setting also tend to have a low level of motivation for interesting work and recognition;

 - toxic managers with interpersonal communication problems also have a high level of motivation for recognition and a low level of motivation for change and variety of work;

 - toxic managers with more pronounced dysfunctional or destructive personal characteristics also tended to have lower motivation for structuring their work;

 - toxic managers who do not feel personally responsible for the efficiency of their work and are reluctant to change their style and strategies of work also have a low level of motivation for creativity.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Toxic managers lack motivation for achievement and suffer from various internal and external disorganizing factors, which can negatively affect the working atmosphere and the companies' profitability in the long run.

In order to prevent the negative impact of toxic employees on the company's performance it is recommended that a socio-psychological analysis of the staff's professional and personal strengths and weaknesses be conducted. This should be undertaken to provide these managers with opportunities for regular advanced training and personal development using team-building activities to enhance managers' interest in their work and in other colleagues and to increase their corporate loyalty. Events can be organized targeted at raising the staff's psychological awareness and improving self-reflection skills, which in the long run, will eradicate toxicity at the workplace.

Acknowledgments

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