

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYEE DEDICATION

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Abstract: *The appreciation of human capital generated the broadening of human resource management functions. Human resource management frames attracting, employing, developing, motivating, ensuring the dedication of the employees, retaining the talents and terminating the employment as well. Corporate effectiveness and managing efficiency are ensured by overlapped and consistent HR functions in the long run, which supports both organisational and individual objectives. In this study, we tried to answer the followings: which are the main differences emerging as the interpretation of satisfaction and dedication, and what could be the basis of them and how to connect employee dedication with organisational knowledge management. The research aims to summarise through secondary analysis in a review, the significance of creating organisational knowledge management as a fundamental element in forming dedication. In the study, we synthesised significant literature approaches to the issues. As a result, we hypothesised that satisfaction could be interpreted as the prerequisite of dedication. Indeed unsatisfied employees can not contribute to organisational operation in a dedicated way. Consequently, it could also be established that every dedicated employee is satisfied; however, not every satisfied employee will be automatically dedicated to the employer. Achieve the state of satisfaction; more factors should be present at the same time. These include supporting working conditions and organisational atmosphere, which is the basis for knowledge management. Also, for an organisation to ensure itself with dedicated employees, it has to emphasise job design which contains the content of tasks, complexity, difficulty, factors within the organisation like knowledge and technology. Dedicated employees will be the ones who are considered as a value by the employer, appreciated, given career path and ensured with the appropriate working conditions, including the involved knowledge and available knowledge base in the job, also tools and opportunities for development. If the company lost a talented employee, the cost includes more than finding a new applicant. Invested costs with the lost employee, also the lost knowledge are hardly replaceable in many cases. Dedication and loyalty of an employee have to be maintained, with the application of the correct management tools, employee satisfaction can be achieved, which is worth investing in the long run. The paper discusses the possible connection between organisational knowledge sharing and dedicated employees, focusing on the system of linked HR functions.*

Keywords: *knowledge transfer; employee dedication, satisfaction, organisational knowledge; HR functions.*

JEL Classification: *J24; J53; O15.*

1. The general tendency of dedication to work

From an organisational point of view employee dedication and satisfaction are closely related concepts, of which more and more surveys have been made. But to interpret these surveys duly however, we need to clarify these two concepts and reveal the differences and connections between them. Employee dedication has no generally accepted definition but the approach is the same on the basis of each expert's opinion since they all mention the positive connection to the organisation and the work in this area. Some definitions interpret dedication simply as a positive feeling towards work while others (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014) identify it as an immersed state doing work with passion. Employee satisfaction similarly to dedication can be interpreted as a pleasant, positive feeling though its basis is given by the evaluation of experiences connected to work. The scale of satisfaction, dedication and happiness appear with very different results in each country (Helliwell et al, 2018). Based on the comprehensive survey of Gallup (2017) we can say that only 15% of the employees are dedicated to their current employer and the same ratio is true for Western Europe, as well. The remaining 85% of the employees are either neutral or what is more, even have negative feelings towards their workplace. The significance of the topic is obvious by a conclusion which was defined as a result of the above research that is if the rate of dedicated, enthusiastic and motivated employees can be doubled than it would double the productivity which would clearly show in the increase of the GDP. If we consider employee satisfaction results of the Visegrád4 countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary) we can establish that the lowest satisfaction with the workplace and the highest number of actively dissatisfied with the workplace are in Hungary among the Visegrád4. The results of the Hungarian survey conducted on the rate of employee satisfaction (AON, 2018b) display that workplace dedication has decreased among the employees questioned compared to the previous years (62,000 employees of 87 companies took part in the survey), since 59% of the people who answered the survey said that they felt dedicated to their workplace. This is not a very promising tendency since nowadays one of the biggest challenges for employers is to acquire, retain and motivate talented employees but the decreasing loyalty makes this aim harder to achieve. The conclusion of the research is that one of the possibilities of the long-term retention of employees is to provide the right experiences however, only half of the leaders consider employee experience important nowadays (AON, 2018a). Based on the Ipsos (2019) research results we can see the following characteristics of Hungarian employees between the ages of 18 and 65; their dissatisfaction with their workplace stems from the dissatisfaction with their salaries. But the background of the satisfaction with the workplace does not rank satisfactory salary in the first place but good community and human relations, which means that the push and pull factors of employee satisfaction do not always match. If we continue to ponder about this result we can state that within an efficient action it is necessary to examine all the elements which cause dissatisfaction and separately those factors which lead to satisfaction. The two areas are not necessarily the same which means that just by

handling those factors which cause dissatisfaction will not necessarily lead to satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). The employers are aware of this trend since based on Deloitte's (2019) global survey – which included 119 countries, including Hungary – it turned out that 49% of the close to 10,000 corporate leaders and HR leaders who answered the survey think that the employees of the organisation are satisfied with their job and 42% of the people answered think that employees are satisfied with their daily tasks. According to Deloitte's (2019) experts, organisations need to strive along the concept of employee satisfaction, to provide as complete a “human experience” as possible for their employees. Part of this should be the continuous learning, interpersonal relations and the motivating working tasks. The results of the research consider the change of classic organisational structure as one possible development direction which means that instead of the hierarchic structure we should move in the direction of a team-based structural model.

That is why it is important from the employer's side to put great emphasis on not making too much pressure in the workplace environment but on the other hand we should form the jobs and the expectations connected to them more along the individual skills. It is an essential condition that the difficulty of the work to be done would not surpass the individual skills since with this disproportionate stress is burdened on the employees the consequence of which is anxiety and worry (Csikszentmihályi, 2010).

The continuous, unattended stress which exists for a long time can easily lead to such a mental distress which can couple with physical symptoms. This means such a real danger, because of which the World Health Organisation (2019) officially declared burnout a health disorder which is “a syndrome caused by chronic workplace stress that is not duly attended”. Some of the consequences of burnout for the organization are high absenteeism, high fluctuation, poor performance, increased ill-health, poor motivation and satisfaction in the workplace (Rozman et al, 2017). Nevertheless, we must strive not to make the task to be done much easier than what we are able to do otherwise the individual skills will not be used and the feeling of boredom can be formed in the employee (Csikszentmihályi, 2010).

2. The general factors and conditions of satisfaction with the workplace

An average one third of the time when we are awake we spend with work. From the point of view of our balance it is essential to find satisfaction at our workplace and the sources of happiness that stem from this though it depends on the availability of factors which are different in each individual (Staw-Ross, 1985). Though the question is not novel but the actuality of the field is shown by the fact that, the connection between work and happiness has been brought into the focus of academic interest where researchers attempt to reveal those factors which can contribute to a more complete experience of happiness during work. This ambition has spread in the economic world, too where they are striving to reach balance for the organisational members and to assure employee happiness by different organisation development tools. For people job happiness means on the basis of certain approach the feeling of general satisfaction in connection with the workplace,

the ability to handle failures by accepting it, the cordial relationship with the people in our environment (colleagues, clients, customers etc.) and it also means that the work we do is important for us, for our employers and for the people in general (Simon and Thomas, 2018). There are several techniques available to achieve this such as relying on our strengths (Fisher, 2010) which is not only supported by the individual ambitions but even while we are planning the job we can put an emphasis on realising this aim. Job planning is an activity of the HR units, certain approaches of which emphasise among others that by certain elements such as more interesting, more challenging jobs employee satisfaction can be enhanced. These factors also include the following (Szilágyi and Wallace, 1990):

- the content of the job: the diversity, complexity and difficulty of the tasks, the responsibility, competence and significance of the job, work method, relationships etc.
- the environmental elements of the job: social, economic, political, geographical etc.
- factors within the organisation: technology, compensation etc.
- individual characteristics: needs, values, personality etc.
- output performance elements: task accomplishment, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, absence, fluctuation etc.

The presence of what elements are important to the different people to feel satisfaction at the workplace depends on how one interprets work itself (Figure 1).

| 1. Job-orientation | 2. Career-orientation | 3. Profession-orientation |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the acquisition of material wealth • ensure livelihood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • career building • promotion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enjoyment • social usefulness • self-realization |

Figure 1: The possible aspects of job interpretation

Source: Based on Wrzesniewski et al. (1997), Schwartz (1986); Bellah et al. (1985), own editing

People who belong to the Job-orientation category think of work as a tool of livelihood, they do not search for anything and do not expect anything else from their work so promotion via work is not an aim for them, nor is the self-realization. On the other hand, those people who belong to the second category relate to their work with a deeper and more personal investment. People with a career-orientation approach not only expect a material return from work but also require promotion and advancement in the work, which naturally results in an increasing power connected to the job, maybe a higher social status for the employee. For people belonging to the profession-orientation group work is the aim itself, they enjoy doing it thus for them work is significant and they feel that by this they contribute something to the society. They tend to continue working even if from a material point of view it would not be necessary for them. They do their job neither for material wealth, nor for hierarchical promotion but because of an internal impulse (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997,

Schwartz, 1986; Bellah et al., 1985). In Yen et al. (2019) research, they found that if career adaptability enhances person-job fit, it will result in greater career satisfaction, if the individual wants to follow a career route within the company (Héder et al., 2018). The critical part of useful work, integration into the organisation, is finding the appropriate job for the individual, or redesign it if it needed (Dajnoki 2014). How people interpret work itself massively depends on how and in what quality they do their tasks. Consequently, those employees who do the same job and have the same job description can do their tasks differently in connection with the responsibilities they take up and the relations within the organisation depending on how they personally interpret work, tasks, what sense they make to their job, what their identities and values are and how they see themselves in the given job. The phenomenon of personalising the job through which the job is created and changed is called "Job Crafting" (Berg et al, 2008, Berg et al, 2013). During the process the individual forms his/her own job in a way that it also forms the sense of work for himself/herself. Job planning thus is not only a procedure organised from above but also it takes place and forms actively on a lower, employee level. This phenomenon can carry both positive and negative consequences in itself from the individual and organisational side thus the observation and tracking of this process on the management level is very important. But it is essential to keep in view that such reinterpretation of jobs can have efficient results since this rethinking of jobs are often done in the interest of the employees. Consequently, a less static view and the possibility to reinterpret jobs can be the key to reach employee satisfaction, too (Berg et al, 2008). A job description which includes the content and details of the job is to be created individually in case of every organisation which means that its content and structure is not the same. In every case it has to be deduced from the organisational aims and form the content of these documents along those. There are such ambitions which are trying to make even the job descriptions interesting and lend a spectacular experience to the user – that is the people who fill up these jobs. The 3D creation of job descriptions (Pató, 2014) makes the visualisation, the display and understanding of jobs possible as a result of which the people concerned can receive a visual assurance about all processes connected to the job. With its help we can think over the essence of certain jobs and their connection with other jobs which overall is connected to the whole employee experience.

3. Knowledge sharing and HR functions

Knowledge management is not a novel notion. In every era, valuable knowledge and experiences were created which were required to be handled, systematized, preserved and passed on. Information is the defined data which is the set of facts and measuring data created in the given situation and time and the given circumstances (Eirma, 1999). Knowledge is inconceivable, and it is difficult to define. According to Davenport and Prusak (1999), knowledge is a combination of information, ideas, rules as well as processes which are in possession of those with knowledge. If we look at the business side of it for the organisation knowledge is everything we can know about customers, services, products, processes (O'Dell –

Grayson, 1997). By quoting Polányi (1958) “a human knows more than he/she can tell”. The tacit and explicit cannot be fully separated; they mutually complement each other. The steps start with the decision of making the transfer and the definition of its main factors. In the introductory phase technology and training appear. Then it is followed by reaching the determined performance targets then integration and the further development of the system. In what scale the knowledge to be transferred can be used and how special it is to has a decisive role in choosing the most appropriate and efficient channel for transferring and the tools which should be applied for this (Demeter et al., 2017). Knowledge transfer is mostly a personal decision, the driving force of which are at least two key factors, ability and willingness. To reach a high performance – whichever level we are talking about – the collective existence of both abilities and skills and motivation are necessary (Baldwin, 1959).

According to Vroom (1964), we can expect more from the individual who is motivated and whose skills we develop than from one who is relatively not motivated, but his/her skills are right. After gaining knowledge, the person who transfers it is not always successful in sharing knowledge because it lacks the necessary skills, competencies and language techniques (Cabrera, 2003). Consequently, knowledge often requires resource and depends on the interaction between the people and patience. On the other hand, from the part of those who transfer knowledge – in possession of the right experiences and abilities – we can observe the total lack of willingness. In terms of results, by examining abilities and willingness, we found a connection. The stronger the two factors are the higher value the knowledge transfer will have by the end of the process (Minbaeva – Michailova, 2004).

Human resource management models applied by a company provide guidance to human flow strategy, which helps to use human capital effectively, optimise investing in employees' knowledge and skills aligning them with environmental factors. Individually gained experiences are shared as knowledge to improve company processes (Cegarra Sanchez et al. 2018. There is an increased need for knowledge-based work, creating learning organisations, management practices, emphasising quality is more meaningful as the knowledge level's continuous development is essential if company efficiency gain is the aim. The amount spends at education, training, development is not a cost but an investment in developing, efficiency, performance and increased competitiveness (Csath, 2012). Education and training have an important role in both developed and less developed societies (Pierog et al. 2015), skills, abilities of career-starters become much more appreciated in the accelerating business and globalisation (Dajnoki – Kun, 2016). Transferring and sharing gained knowledge is essential to ensure profitability by innovative and new ideas. The expansion of digitalisation has a significant effect on business performance and the integration of technology in company operation (Obermayer et al. 2019). In organisational efficiency and competitiveness supporting knowledge-based economy, the key players are talented employees. Continuously developing them is a fundamental goal (Armstrong – Taylor, 2017). Research finding of Dajnoki – Kiss (2015) concludes that training, development and lack of career opportunities are often the cases behind staff turnover. Technological development, innovative

procedures and globalisation processes affect human resource management and its functions. Beside traditional functions, new areas of activities occurred or increased in value as knowledge-, retention-, generation-, competence-, talent-, and diversity management. Also, HR/employer branding, employee health, HR controlling and employee journey are involved (Dajnoki – Héder 2017). Human resource management strategies in the business environment (for example resource-ensuring and motivation systems, organisational development, creating high-level dedication, culture change and knowledge management, employer branding) are key elements at organisational competitiveness and performance (Chovan et al. 2017, Fehér 2011, Karoliny-Poór 2010, Losey et al. 2006). If the frames of organisational knowledge transfer are not ensured, there is lack of support, and individual's knowledge stay concealed from others, the outcome affects innovation and creativity negatively (Li-Ying et al. 2018; Gergely-Pierog 2018; Malik et al. 2019). In the finding of Lee et al. (2020), it stated that firm performance is not determined by how much firms know, but how effectively firms use what they know through their knowledge management systems. Rechberg (2019) said, there is a connection between emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing. If corporate strategies consider and develop individuals, it will help with knowledge processing in the organisation, due to knowledge creation through self-awareness, facilitation in knowledge sharing, promotion of commitment and job satisfaction results in aiding the retention of the organisational knowledge. According to Poór (2013), due to unpredictability, knowledge (supporting competitiveness) and its sharing become one of the most significant organisational potentials, because it improves adaptability. Organisational level adaptability has a value-creating effect.

4. Summary

The significance of intellectual capital is growing increasingly next to human capital. To correctly handle the challenges in the business environment, the organisation has to have a human resource strategy and management approach. Finding quality employees is not the only source of issues; retaining and developing are also a difficult task. However, if the employee became dedicated to the organisation, then investing in them worth it in the long run. Preserving intellectual capital can be the key to competitiveness. Success in knowledge sharing between employees has many elements.

The overall aim of programs related to knowledge sharing and knowledge availability is to make knowledge available and its transfer among the individuals. If the framework of storing, availability and sharing of knowledge is not established, and there is no managerial support, the process often fails.

Employee dedication has to be separated from motivation because emotionally based dependence not necessarily means higher quality work or better performance. However, motivation undoubtedly has its advantages from the organisational point of view.

Consequently, the employees' satisfaction depends on the work challenges, the fairness of received remuneration, the supportive working conditions, the

atmosphere experienced in the organisation as well as the factors communicated by the colleagues and the superiors. In conclusion, we can assume that the existence of satisfaction can be interpreted as a prerequisite for dedication since dissatisfied employees cannot contribute to the organisational operation in a dedicated way thus every dedicated employee is satisfied, as well but not all satisfied employees will be clearly dedicated towards the employer. The result of the Ipsos research (2019) and also the opinions of the people involved in the survey, few people experience the effort and the solution of the problem from the employers side after a negative experience at the workplace although, this could be a key factor in terms of creating employee dedication and satisfaction. Based on the results we can say that employer reactions greatly affect employee satisfaction so the introduction of active and purposeful practices on a corporate level should be necessary if the organisation want to employ employees who have long-term satisfaction and dedication. If the employee feels dedicated and satisfied in the current job, the process of knowledge sharing will be more effective within the frame of the corporation.

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