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ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS IN POLAND – DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS

Introduction

Following Józefowicz's a ssumption that *the success of every company depends mainly on the people who work there*[1], one can conclude that the behavior of internal stakeholders will have a significant impact on the results of the organization. Thus, a question arises whether there is a possibility to influence successfully the behavior of employees. The concept of Positive Organizational Potential indicates that much better results can be achieved by building positive culture and organizational climate rather than by the prevention and elimination of undesired behavior[2]. The creation of behavior that is in line with the organizational values seems to comply with the current needs of human capital management. In the literature on the subject such behavior is referred to as the ethical behavior, which is *the behavior in line with the accepted standards and principles of the organization*[3] and the one that aims at the creation of the system of organizational values. Moreover, it is the behavior that is within the framework of the accepted social standards[4]. The ethical behavior of staff in the organization does not only result from human individual determinants but also from the traits of the organization itself, mainly from its culture (with a particular consideration of its ethical culture[5]).

According to Stachowicz-Stanusch, the employee has a set of final values (such as the entity's mission and vision) and instrumental values (i.e. the employee's main values expressed by behavior patterns)[6]. The consistency between the organizational values and the

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[1] Józefowicz B. (2010), Prorozwojowe zachowania pracownicze jako wynik pozytywnego potencjału organizacji, pozytywnej kultury organizacyjnej i pozytywnego klimatu organizacji [in:] Pozytywny Potencjał Organizacji. Wstęp do użytecznej teorii zarządzania, Stankiewicz M. (ed.), Wydawnictwo Dom Organizatora, Toruń., p. 141

[2] Cf. E.g. Glińska-Neweś A. (2010), Pozytywny Potencjał Organizacji jako prorozwojowa architektura zasobów przedsiębiorstwa [in:] Pozytywny Potencjał Organizacji. Wstęp do użytecznej teorii zarządzania Stankiewicz M. (ed.), Wydawnictwo Dom Organizatora, Toruń.

[3] Bugdol M. (2010), Wymiary i problemy zarządzania organizacją opartą na zaufaniu, Wyd. UJ, Kraków, p.58

[4] Griffin, R.W., (2004), Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami, Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa.

[5] Lewicka D., Michniak J. (2014), Rola kultury organizacji w procesie budowania wysokiej jakości środowiska pracy [in:] Metody zarządzania kulturą organizacyjną, Sułkowski Ł., Sikorski Cz., (ed.), Difin, Warszawa.

[6] Stachowicz-Stanusch A., (2007), Potęga wartości. Jak zbudować nieśmiertelną firmę, OnePress, Gliwice., p. 84

ones that are applied by employees in their everyday work seems to be crucial mainly due to the fact that the employee is aware that a reliable fulfillment of the assignments does not only lead to the realization of the organization's strategic targets but it also helps achieve personal objectives. As Stachowicz-Stanusch puts it, values bind the needs and aspirations of individuals with the objectives of the organization[7]. Consequently, value-oriented human resources management seems to be necessary particularly in the knowledge-based economy, where humans are considered the most valuable organizational asset.

The subsequent chapters of the article present a proposal for a development process of employee ethical behavior, the tools that can be implemented to reach that objective with a detailed (both theoretical and empirical) analysis of the diagnostic instruments.

1. The process and instruments of developing ethical behavior of employees

In the 21st century, organizations dispose of several means to achieve successfully their targets of personnel strategy. After a thorough analysis of the Polish and foreign literature on the subject, it was possible to develop an approach that seems to be an adequate offer to organizations that react to current economic situation[8]. The approach assumes a consolidation of the organization's targets with the employees' objectives by means of turning the focus to values that are shared by both parties. As it was mentioned in the introduction, the focus on the values and the behavior that is in line with the values (i.e. ethical behavior) seems to be the trend that may contribute to a successful achievement of HRM objectives of organizations. Below, a suggested process is presented as regards the development of the staff ethical behavior together with a set of tools that can be implemented during the process execution.

The suggested process of the ethical behavior development consists of five successive stages[9]. The first stage of the process consists in the diagnosis of the existing state. The stage is usually conducted by external consultants, which increases the objectivity of the process. Within the diagnosis, a satisfaction survey and an ethical audit can be arranged. Thanks to the diagnostic procedure, the organization obtains information on the threat level of unethical behavior in the organization.

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[7] Stachowicz-Stanusch A., (2007), Potęga wartości… op.cit., p. 85.
[8] J. Michniak (2015), Narzędzia kształtowania zachowań etycznych pracowników w zarządzaniu organizacją – unpublished doctor's thesis
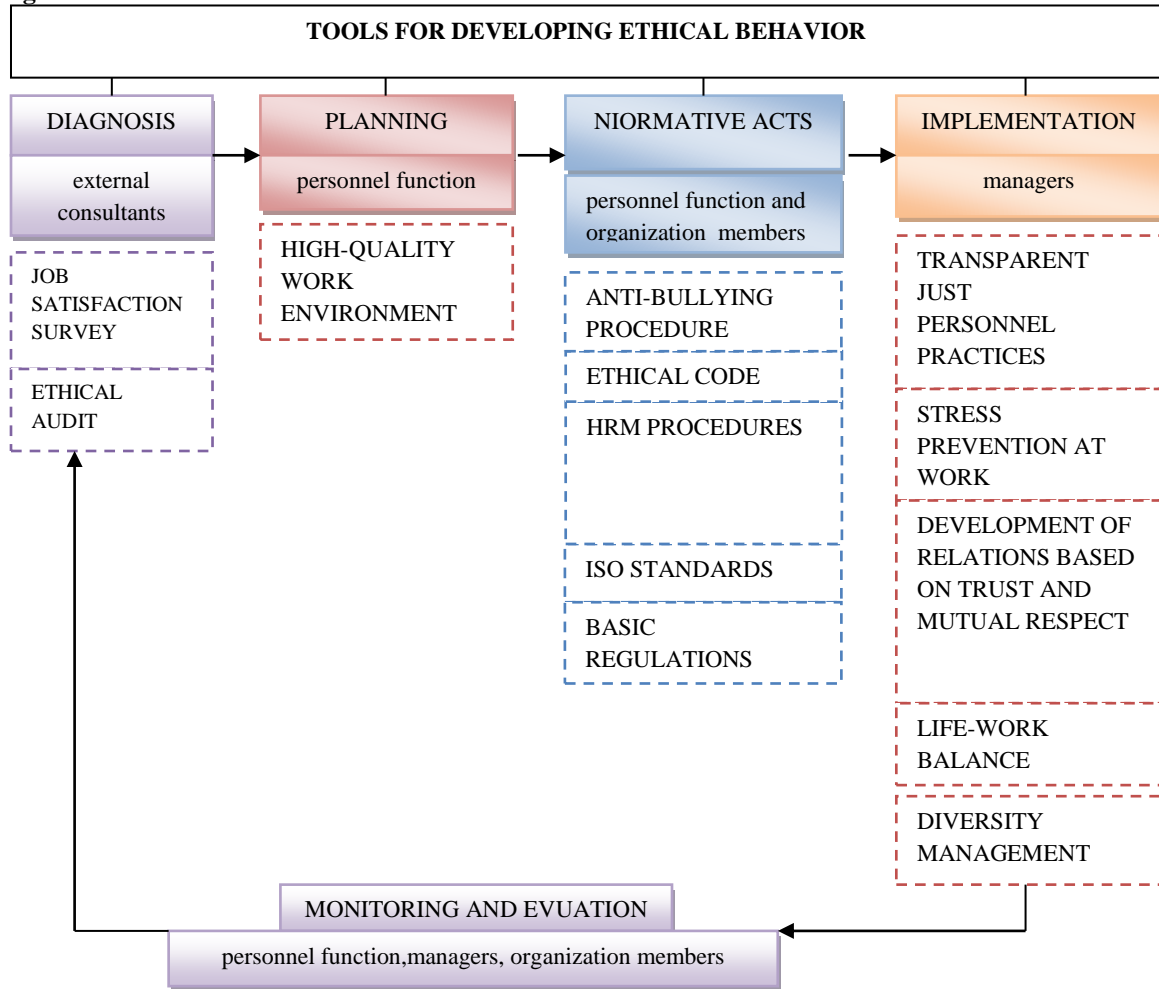[9] ibid, pp. 53-54.

Another stage –the strategy planning – is conducted without the external consultants. It is performed within the personnel function. At this stage of the staff ethical behavior development, the basic aim is to build a personnel strategy that would be focused on the interests of internal stakeholders by the endeavor to obtain a high quality work environment. This seems to be possible if the assumptions of the personnel strategy are based on the ideas originating from the concepts of human capital and Organization's Positive Potential.

The institutionalization of the designed strategy, which is the third stage of the process, is reflected in documents that are internal and external to the organization. They include basic regulations, HRM procedures, ISO standards, the ethical code and anti-bullying procedure. These elements constitute a second group of tools that build ethical behavior and are referred to as a group of normative acts that build staff ethical behavior.

The implementation of the strategy is a crucial stage. This task belongs to personnel managers. The process is conducted by means of transparent and just personnel practices, the prevention of stress, the construction of relations that are based on trust and mutual respect, the support of life–work balance and a successful introduction of diversity management. These elements constitute the third group of tools of ethical behavior development, which is referred to as the tools supporting high quality work environment.

The final stage of the staff ethical behavior building process consists in the ongoing monitoring of the development of the employee ethical behavior and its evaluation. As it shown in Figure 1, the conclusions drawn from the assessment lead to a subsequent diagnosis of the area/areas and to a continuation of the staff ethical behavior development. The process of the development of ethical behavior among the staff in an organization is cyclical in character.

Figure 1.

TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

DIAGNOSIS — external consultants
JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY
ETHICAL AUDIT

PLANNING — personnel function
HIGH-QUALITY WORK ENVIRONMENT

NIORMATIVE ACTS — personnel function and organization members
ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURE
ETHICAL CODE
HRM PROCEDURES
ISO STANDARDS
BASIC REGULATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION — managers
TRANSPARENT JUST PERSONNEL PRACTICES
STRESS PREVENTION AT WORK
DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS BASED ON TRUST AND MUTUAL RESPECT
LIFE-WORK BALANCE
DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

MONITORING AND EVUATION — personnel function, managers, organization members

Source: Michniak J. (2015), Narzędzia kształtowania zachowań etycznych pracowników w zarządzaniu organizacją, (Tools for developing staff ethical behavior in organization management) – unpublished doctor's thesis, p.54

2. Diagnostics of personnel ethical behaviour

Diagnostic tools are applied in the preliminary stage of the development process of staff ethical behavior in an organization as they make it possible first of all to conduct the diagnosis of the current state of affairs. As it was stated before, this group of tools includes the staff satisfaction survey and ethical audit. The characteristics of such tools is given below.

2.1. Job satisfaction survey

Job satisfaction has been one of the most frequently investigated areas in recent years[10]. Such significant interest results from the fact that human capital is the company's highest value in a knowledge-based economy. The employee's level of satisfaction from the relations with the employer will have an impact on the degree of the employees' willingness to share their capital with the organization. The success or the failure of the organization depend strongly on the staff's job satisfaction. According to the results of surveys, the behavior of a satisfied employee is coherent with the values of the organization, i.e. their behavior is ethical[11]. There is also, as the investigations show, a relation between the satisfaction level and the frequency of unethical behavior[12]. By the definition of the concept, job satisfaction is an affective reaction of an individual to his/her work and it results from the comparison of the expectations with the actual situation [13].

Due to the fact that the sense of job satisfaction is highly subjective, it is extremely difficult to diagnose its reasons or measure its level. The literature on the subject analyses the factors that affect job satisfaction either from the point of view of the subject matter (e.g. in A.Maslow's approach) or of the process (e.g. V.Vroom's approach); moreover, both approaches may be combined[14] or the emphasis may be put on the aspects of individual personality differences[15]. The literature on the subject also applies two approaches to the measurement of job satisfaction: (1) measurement by applying a general measure of job satisfaction – respondents are asked to express their general feelings about their jobs; (2) measurement concerns various aspects of job satisfaction. The most common measures of job satisfaction are as follows: Job Descriptive Index JDI (Smith et al., 1969), Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; Weiss et al., 1967), Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS; Spector, 1985) and INDSALES (Churchill et al., 1974).

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[10] By the end of the 20th century, over 8000 works were published on the subject: (Białas S., Litwin J., (2013), Satysfakcja z pracy i przejawy zachowań kontrproduktywnych wśród pracowników spółki przemysłu stoczniowego. Studium przypadku, Zarządzanie i Finanse 4/1., p. 161

[11] Mount M., Remus I., Johnson. E (2005), Relationship of personality traits and countrproductive work behaviors: The mediating effects of job satisfaction, Personnel Psychology No. 59., p. 598

[12] Spector P.E., Fox S. (2005), Counterproductive work behavior: Investigation of actors and targets, APA Books,

[13] Weiss, H.M. (2002), Deconstructing job satisfaction: separating evaluations, beliefs and affective experiences, HRM Review, Vol. 12 No. 2.

[14] Cf. e.g. Rollinson, D. (2008), Organisational Behaviour and Analysis: An Integrated App., Prentice-Hall, Harlow.

[15] Staw, B.M., Cohen-Charash, Y. (2005), The dispositional approach to job satisfaction: more than a mirage, but not yet an oasis, J Organisational Behavior, Vol. 26.

Job satisfaction is usually investigated with the use of a questionnaire or, infrequently, through in-depth or focus interviews. It is of significant importance that the results of the survey should be thoroughly analyzed and their frequency appropriately adjusted. The final stage of the investigation consists in the introduction of changes to the problem area with the consideration of the staff proposals.

According to Lewicka[16], surveys on job satisfaction in organizations are conducted increasingly more often despite the diagnostic problems. They may also constitute an early warning tool against the emerging ethical problems. Then, the organization has the opportunity to prepare to the crisis and, consequently, to alleviate its negative results.

The lack of job satisfaction results in the increase of different kinds of negative behavior at work[17]. Work environment that gives the employees the sense of job satisfaction may also be a factor that prevents from ethical misbehavior. Activities aiming at the increase of job satisfaction and regular measurements of its level can be considered as preventive measures against unethical behavior in an organization.

2.2. Ethical audit

Ethical audit is a tool that supports the management of organizations and helps create ethical atmosphere in organizations after the analysis of values shared by internal stakeholders, the behavior that is in line with the values and the results achieved by the organization[18]. Ethical audit consists in a regular verification of the organization's operations and is based on the methodology that monitors the implementation of values that are declared by the organization[19], *(...) it may concern different groups of stakeholders. It may also differ as regards its range, penetration and specificity*[20].

The basic objectives of an ethical audit are as follows[21]: identifying the standards and values accepted by internal and external stakeholders, informing the management on potential ethical threats, revealing the areas where the employees are unable to follow the organizational values, checking the extent to which the targets of the organization are compatible to those of the employees, searching business partners that follow similar values.

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[16] Ibid, p. 54
[17] Schulz D. P., Schulz S. E., (2001), Psychologia a wyzwania dzisiejszej pracy, PWN: Warszawa.
[18] Schulz D. P., Schulz S. E., (2001), Psychologia a wyzwania dzisiejszej pracy, PWN: Warszawa.
[19] Stocki R., (2012), Audyt etyczny organizacji [in:] Biznes, etyka, odpowiedzialność: podręcznik akademicki Gasparski W., Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa., p. 29
[20] Ibid.
[21] Gasparski W. (ed.), (2003), Europejskie standardy etyki… op.cit.; Zbiegień-Maciąg L. (2006), ed. Nowe tendencje i wyzwania w zarządzaniu personelem, Wolters Kluwer, Kraków.

Ethical audit should focus on: the assessment of the current state of ethics in the organization, the identification of ethical problems and the presentation of solutions[22]. The procedure of the ethical audit includes the analysis of the documents, the analysis of the structures and procedures, the internal and external assessment of the organization's operations[23]. Any stakeholder of the organization can initiate the audit. However, the external initiative involves some risk as it may sometimes aim at the damage to the organization's reputation or gaining undue benefits. Thus, it is more beneficial if the ethical audit is initiated internally. In this case, an auditing group (ethical commission) should be appointed, whose aim is to define the area of investigation, its scope and the level of penetration . It also determines the schedule of operations, appoints people who will participate in the audit, prepares a list of the necessary documents and information that will be necessary to complete the process. The commission conducts the audit, cooperates with external consultants and decides on the selection of methods. Finally, it presents a report which should be the basis for the suggested changes.

3. Diagnostic tools applied in organizations in Poland

Empirical research on diagnostics tools was conducted with the application of a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions and the respondents particulars[24]. The questions concerned both facts and opinions. The questions on facts were open in character while the questions about facts could be answered in a Yes/No system. The respondents were the sample group and there were two criteria of the selection of the sample: (1) the current professional activity of the respondent, (2) and in-depth knowledge on HRM in organizations.

The survey covered 185 respondents, who were personnel managers (48%) and the staff of personnel department on non-managerial positions (52%). The majority of respondents (63%) were in the 25-34 age range. The length of service of respondents amounted mostly to 2 years (34% respondents) or 3-5 years (29%). Employees with a longer experience were the majority – only 5% of the respondents worked longer than 21 years. The respondents came from various sectors: health service (19.20%), state administration (14.12%), finance and

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[22] Fobel, P., Fobelova D., (2007), Etyka i kultura w organizacji, Śląskie Wydawnictwa Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Zarządzania i Nauk Społecznych im. ks. Emila Szramka, Tychy, p. 44

[23] Gasparski W. (ed.), (2003), Europejskie standardy etyki … op.cit., p.140

[24] The survey was a part of the research included in the unpublished doctor's thesis of J. Michniak (2015): Narzędzia kształtowania zachowań etycznych pracowników w zarządzaniu organizacją.

insurance (12.99%), manufacturing industry (10.16%), trade (9.69%), education (7.34%), services (6.21%), power industry, consulting, high-tech, hotel industry (approx. 2%) and other (geology, media). The highest percentage of respondents (33%) were employed in organizations of over 1000 employees. A significant percentage of the respondents were employed in small and medium-sized business (23% respondents in each of the sectors). 31.6% of the respondents were employed in companies with Polish capital, 28.2% in the entities of public finance sector, and 28.9% worked in companies with foreign capital. Moreover, every tenth respondent was employed in an organization with State Treasury shareholding.

The survey was anonymous and was conducted in two stages: in summer 2013 and winter 2014.

The objective of the survey was to analyze the diagnostics tools that are applied in Poland. Below, the results of the survey are presented for particular subgroups.

Job satisfaction survey

The opinions of the respondents showed that job satisfaction surveys are not a common diagnostics tool in the majority of organizations where they were employed. A positive answer to the question whether there are job satisfaction surveys in the organization was given in only 36.9% of cases.

Dependence of the application of job satisfaction surveys from the size of the organization and the type of employer[25]

According to the research, the implementation of the job satisfaction tests is common (64.4% of responses) in very big companies (over 1000 employees). Moreover, such surveys are conducted in every third big company (over 250 employees) and in every third small company (up to 50 employees). None of micro-companies where the respondents were employed conduct such surveys. This may result from an easy information flow in micro-companies and a low level of staff anonymity.

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[25] In order to investigate whether there is a statistical dependence between the implementation of job satisfaction surveys and the size and type of the employer, a chi-square independence test was applied. At the significance level (alpha) = 5%, a zero hypothesis on the insignificant dependence between the selected variables was verified. For the dependences between *the implementation of job satisfaction tests* and *the size of organization* and *the implementation of job satisfaction tests* and *the type of employer,* the chi-2 statistics equaled 31,44610 (pv=0,00) and chi-2=29,48882 (pv=0,00), respectively. Thus, the hypotheses on the absence of dependencies between the size of the organization and the implementation of job satisfaction tests and between the type of employer and the implementation of job satisfaction tests should be rejected.

What is more, the survey indicates that job satisfaction tests are conducted in companies with foreign capital (67.5% of responses) rather than in companies with Polish capital (21.82%). It is worth mentioning that according to the respondents, such tests are implemented by every third entity of the public finance sector and every fourth organization with the State Treasury shareholding.

Frequency of job satisfaction surveys

The research shows that most of the organizations (67.6% responses) conduct job satisfaction surveys once a year. A lower frequency appears in few organizations (below 10% of responses) while a higher frequency (once every half a year) appears in 13.% of organizations.

List of measures that are taken after the completion of job satisfaction surveys

The research also included a verification of measures that are usually taken after obtaining the results of the job satisfaction tests. As many as 83.7% of respondents stated that the organizations that employed them did not take any measures in reaction to the results of the job satisfaction surveys. The responses of the remaining 16.3 % varied significantly. After the analysis of the responses, the measures taken as a result of the surveys can be divided by several areas: corrective measures, ad hoc measures (e.g. personnel changes), measures responding to the staff needs, measures based on the communication with the staff, measures maintaining a high job satisfaction level among the staff (e.g. definition of targets) and negative operations (e.g. the elimination of unsatisfied staff)

Moreover, the respondents were asked to give reasons why, in their opinion, the organizations where they are employed conduct job satisfaction surveys. 61.09% of them were unable to give official reasons. The remaining ones pointed at the following groups of reasons: organizational effectiveness factors, factors related to working conditions, reasons resulting from particular situations (e.g. a conflict among the staff), negative opinions about the legitimacy of job satisfaction surveys, reasons related to the quality of human capital, reasons involving the development of organizational image, issues regarding the development of employee identification with the organization, reasons related to the analysis of the current level of staff satisfaction, external reasons (e..g. ISO standards) and other (e.g. scientific research).

Conclusions

Staff behavior that complies with the values of the organization, i.e. ethical behavior, which is the subject matter of this article, is currently the issue that is of concern of both theoreticians and practitioners of management. The basic reason of their interest is the global tendency to value human capital. Consequently, the development process of behavior that complies with organizational value and, particularly, a correct diagnosis of the present state of affairs in the organization are becoming an increasingly more common object of investigation. The investigation results given in the article are not representative in character. However, they may constitute a basis for further research in the area as regards the theory and they may also provide practitioners with new methods of action.

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Abstract

The article discusses the tools that shape staff ethical behavior, which seems to gain in importance in knowledge-based economies. The author presents her division of tools into three groups (diagnostic tools, normative acts and the instruments that support the development of high quality work environment) and a suggestion of the course of the development process of staff ethical behavior, which consists of an appropriate selection of diagnostic tools, their correct preparation, application and, finally, a professional conclusion drawn from the results obtained. A detailed characteristics of the tools, both from the theoretical and practical point of view, is the main objective of the article.