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How to Increase Motivation and Job Satisfaction – Empirical Case Study

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Job satisfaction is becoming increasingly important, especially since the end of the last millennium, as there are numerous organizations that have fostered its relevance to increase job-commitment in their companies. On one side, managers have to learn how to handle and to manage efficiently the dynamic capabilities and their soft skills so as to adapt the environment in which collaborators operate. On the other side, the environment is adapted by employees. Although there is a wide research in this area, there is still a gap in the literature, as the latest literature review points to adverse situations of burnout and job stress with effects on organizational commitment, mediated by job satisfaction. Bearing this highlight in mind, this paper aims to explore the current state of research related to job satisfaction and its impact on organizational performance. It intends to analyze job satisfaction of employees towards the whole organization, as well as towards organizational managers and leaders.

Design/methodology/approach: The first part of this paper is based on the systematic literature review, embracing scientific papers related to job satisfaction, derived from the Web of Science and from Scopus databases, mapping analysis and bibliographic coupling using the R Bibliometrix software. Furthermore, bibliographic coupling and most co-occurrent keywords in the title, keywords and abstracts were listed. The next part of the research paper is based on the questionnaire analysis; the methodology used is qualitative and exploratory

in nature in order to deepen the knowledge of managers and leaders and the perceptions of employees, based on two case studies.

Findings: The topics covered in this study include, among other things, motivation, leadership, and influence of human resources policy, which need to be deepened in practical and 'in-loco' contexts. The topics have been tested empirically through questionnaires, based on which it was concluded that the overall level of employee satisfaction with the companies in which they operate is high, both as far as the organization itself and their managers are concerned. It was concluded that leaders adopt a transformational leadership style, motivating and inspiring their employees, and that employee satisfaction is related to their leaders' attitudes and motivational factors.

Originality/value: This research provides deeper knowledge on an empirical area, helping to fill in the gap related to the necessity to synthesize this important knowledge area, providing the contribution of various studies in this field and paving the way to further research.
The achievements of this paper open new avenues for other researchers because of the knowledge gaps identified in the existing research that lead to future research inspirations.

Research limitations: Unavailability of business associations in the central region (a non-profit organization to support entrepreneurs in the central region) to participate in the study; work modality was not taken into consideration. Although the databases used, i.e. ISI Web of Knowledge and Scopus, are the best-recognized databases in the academic field, restricting the research to those databases only might be considered a limitation. A further restraint is directly linked to the study's methodology, as it aims to recover and explore a large range of existing research and it does not result in a detailed analysis. Consequently, for future research, multiple-case studies would enrich this research area.

Key words: job-satisfaction, leadership, organizational culture, human resources, motivation.

Introduction

Bearing in mind the actual macro-economic situation, organizations are struggling to engage and keep committed high-skilled collaborators. Despite the actual recession, there is a growing need to foster collaborator's motivation, as managers nowadays recognize the impact of motivation on the organization's performance. The performance is affected by the use of dynamic capabilities; therefore, especially in case of financial crises, they start to play a very relevant role (Makkonen et al., 2014).

Bearing this requirement in mind, this research aims to identify the factors that relate to job satisfaction, determine to what extend job satisfaction is associated with the employee's managers and the organization itself, based on the theoretical framework of Attri and Devi (2014): 1) Great Man Theory assumes that leadership ability is inherent, meaning that great leaders are not born made. According to the theory, great leaders are often portrayed as heroes, mythical and meant to augment leadership when needed; 2) Trait Theory assumes that natural-born leaders inherit certain qualities and characteristics that make them better suited for leadership. The theory identifies certain personality trait shared by leaders; 3) Contingency Theory focuses leadership on specific variables, related to the environment, that can determine which leadership style is most appropriate for each situation; 4) Behavioral Theories are based on the belief that great leaders are made, not born; 5) Situational Theories imply that leaders choose the best course of action based on situational variables; 6) Participative Theories suggest that the ideal leadership style is one that leads to the input of others; 7) Transactional Theories focus on the role of supervision, organization, and group performance; and 8) Transformational Theories focus on the connections formed between leaders and followers.

Human resources are recognized as critical to the success of a business strategy, and therefore it is essential to understand how employees can contribute to the success or failure of the organization. Certainly, there is a wide range of reasons for organizations to stand out with regard to their behavior and strategic decisions (Porter, 1991).

Human resource management integrates the strategic management process by developing the concept of strategic human resource management (Wright & McMahan, 1992). Strategically, human resources management in the organization should foster human resources in the competitive market (Kydd & Oppenheim, 1990). Based on the strategy and the environment, rules or frameworks are provided for the formal policies of the company to be developed. Respecting these boundaries, human resource managers choose which policies should be emphasized , so that the organization could gain competitive advantage in the market and corporate performance (Guenole et al., 2017; Margherita, 2022). D. Joseph et al. (2012) referred that business success is related to headcount rather than capital. Competitive advantage is known as the basis of changing, being crucial to mature a framework to contest strategic human resource management problems (Çalişkan, 2010; Shaw, 2021).

Bearing this research objective in mind, the theoretical framework is based on the resource-based view, composed of tangible and intangible resources, featuring the needed competition capabilities (Mahoney, 1995; Priem & Butler, 2001; Progoulaki & Theotokas, 2010) These core competencies must be developed internally, while other competencies can be obtained from the outside. Core competencies are defined as those that are rare, valuable, and non-transferable (Barney, 1991, 2000). This definition highlights the relevance of strategic knowledge-related core competencies in order to get and maintain competitive advantage (Barney, 2000). Managers need to monitor valuable characteristics of human resources and to try to exploit their rareness in order to align them with personal needs, the company's goals, as well as employees expectations (Barney, 2002).

Tangible or intangible resources are the strengths or weaknesses of a particular organization (Kamoche, 1996); human resources are dynamic to orientate the organization to get to their targets (Jiang et al., 2012). Organizations provide their employees' satisfaction, so that they could feel engaged, as partners, not just collaborators (Progoulaki & Theotokas, 2010).

Nowadays, as the flow of information is unstoppable, organizations have to understand specific information, understand and adapt their resources accordingly, in order to maintain sustainable. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend

and implement the new resources, and to be very dynamic and flexible in what regards the tangible and intangible resources, such as interfirm relationships and human capital (Teece, 2012) certain dynamic capabilities may be based on the skills and knowledge of one or a few executives rather than on organizational routines. The thesis advanced here is that, in both large and small enterprises, entrepreneurial (managerial.

Job satisfaction as a dependent variable is the one most studied in organizational literature referred by Caetano & Vala (1994) because of its power to influence the organizations, as well as its impact on productivity (Alcobia, 2001). The term 'job satisfaction' is a complex one, due to its subjectivity, as every employee has different motivations and satisfactions (Fraser, 1983, cited by Martinez & Paraguay, 2003). Therefore, there is a need for the integration of human resource practices in the formulation of organizational strategies (Wright & McMahan, 1992; Shaw, 2021).

Considering its role, job satisfaction has been denominated both as an emotion (Locke, 1976, cited by Lima et al., 1995) and an attitude (Schneider, 1975, cited by Lima et al., 1995), in both cases being linked to positive emotional relations, related to experiences and work, in work context, as a dependent variable associated with strategic human resources management.

Currently headcount is an indispensable intangible asset in organizations that needs proper management to guide organizations to achieve greater advantage over the competition (Progoulaki & Theotokas, 2010). Therefore, strategic human resource management focused on competence and team spirit, quality, motivational factors, rewards, and other human resource practices (e.g., leadership, motivation, organizational culture) is needed.

Considering the aim of this research, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What links leadership style, organizational culture, and employees' satisfaction?
2. Is employees' job satisfaction linked to motivation, performance evaluation and incentive system?

Literature Review

Organizational Culture as a Determinant of job Satisfaction

Organizational culture is the operational process of the organization to share values and represent norms, which guides the attitudes and behaviors of individuals within organizations (Tong et al., 2013; Applegate et al., 1998; Baumgartner & Zieloshi, 2007) and consequently impacts their well-being (Khan et al., 2019). It can be defined as the set of implicit assumptions shared by a group, which determine how that group perceives, thinks and reacts to various environments, or it can be conceived as a set of values and practices defined and developed by the organization, based on which a system of beliefs, norms and expectations that shape the way of thinking and behavior of individuals is socially constructed (Cunha et al., 2007).

Organizational culture affects employee performance (Karneli et al., 2015). However, there are several scientific studies conducted that have shown otherwise. This contradiction is explained by the fact that organizational performance is affected by organizational culture only if they are combined with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Shah et al. (2011) concluded that organizational culture significantly influences job satisfaction and that job satisfaction also affects employees' performance in the jobs they do. Workers' success within organizations is characterized by their ability to modify their behavior to cope with organizational culture, and plays an important role in their satisfaction and happiness (Paul et al., 2019).

Tong et al. (2013) developed an empirical study, from which they concluded that organizational culture significantly influences knowledge sharing and, consequently, job satisfaction, and that knowledge sharing plays a mediating role between the relationship of organizational culture and job satisfaction. The results of this study imply that organizations, in the current context of globalization, have to establish appropriate strategies, namely human resources strategies, in order to keep their valuable staff and improve their efficiency through the implementation of performance evaluation and incentives and rewards systems (already analyzed in this work).

Fahey and Prusak (1998) also stressed that knowledge sharing is a form of organizational culture management, also having a positive correlation with job satisfaction.

Organizational culture can be influenced by the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the organizations' employees. This impacts the organizational behavior of individuals, their motivation, their degree of innovation, which, in turn, influence the level of job satisfaction, having a crucial role towards the sustained growth of organizations.

Finally, organizational culture and job satisfaction have been widely studied in parallel with leadership (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). However, Tran & Choi (2019) pointed out that no study had effectively simultaneously addressed the relationships between organizational culture, leadership style and job satisfaction.

Leadership Types Versus Job Satisfaction

Proficient leadership is a central component of management Gosling & Mintzberg (2003). Leadership is needed in every type of human organization, both in companies as wholes and in each of their departments. It is essential in all management functions, and knowledge of human nature and how to lead headcount is crucial for managers to know how to lead. Leadership is the interpersonal influence exercised in a given situation and directed through the process of human communication towards the achievement of one or more specific objectives (Chiavenato, 2004).

strategic leadership has focused on organizational staff, namely the characteristics of the staff, what they do and how they do it. The subjects of strategic leadership are considered to be executives, board members, company owners, top managers (Hambrick, 1971).

Leader assume the role to identify the needs of their groups, knowing how to direct via a functional relationship the satisfaction of the whole group. Thus, for a group the fact of following the leader can constitute a mean to increase satisfaction (Chiavenato, 2004).

Strategic leaders must possess, in organizational terms, the following capabilities (Davies & Davies, 2004): need to be strategically oriented, turn strategy

into action, align headcount and organizations, determine the strategic points of effective intervention, and develop strategic competencies. Leaders need to be strategically oriented, i.e., they should/must be able to perceive the long-term future, connect it with the present work and be visionary. Davies & Davies (2004) argued that leaders have the ability to turn strategy into action, converting it into operational terms.

The leader must align headcount and organizations, viewing them as a whole. The leader's personal values and ideas are fundamental in this process. Thus the leader needs to interact with himself/herself and his/her values so that s/he can communicate them to others. The leader must also determine the effective points of intervention, defining the key moment for strategic changes in organizations. The key is not only to determine what to do strategically, but also to know when to intervene and change direction. Finally, the leader must have the ability to develop strategic competencies in himself/herself and others (Davies & Davies, 2004). According to the authors mentioned, in personal terms, leaders must possess the following features: dissatisfaction or restlessness with the present, absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity and wisdom.

With regard to norms and values, Schein (2004, 2010) mentions that norms are interconnected with values, as they correspond to unwritten rules, although followed by employees. In this sense, according to Schein (2004) it can be said that group learning corresponds to beliefs and values, as it explains exactly how to proceed and how not to proceed. Following this idea, it is claimed that the first presented solutions to a given problem characterize the assumptions of each individual on what the person understands as right or wrong. Consequently, it appears that individuals whose solutions are accepted are generally individuals with a leader profile. However, in addition to rules, norms and values correspond to strategies, goals and philosophies, i.e., explicit explanations. It is recognized that in the face of new ideas, such as e.g. improvement solutions, managers need the involvement of employees, since employees are usually initially skeptical. Regarding the above mentioned assumptions, Schein (2004) mentions that they contain unconscious and unquestionable beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings.

A strategic leader is concerned with both internal and external spheres. An important task of the leader is to align the company with its environment, evolution of technology, actions of its competitors, and with other aspects. Another characteristic of strategic leadership is performing cross-functional/ interdisciplinary tasks across marketing, operations, finance, and other fields. This means that a strategic leader is given the complex task of integrating features across all areas of the organization. This unbalanced level of knowledge has important implications related to r information exchange, so as on the evaluation and reward systems (Hambrick, 1971).

 Strategic leader have a strong personal presence throughout the organization, but in fact s/he spends more time managing managers who are the links between the leaders and the employees (Hambrick, 1971).

Zeb et al. (2014) concluded that leaders are the main source of motivation for employees to efficiently achieve the organization's goals. They pointed out to the existence of a relationship between leadership and employees' job satisfaction levels. Leadership relates to how the leader provides direction, executes plans, and motivates employees (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

Emery & Barker (2007) mentioned that employee satisfaction generates high motivational levels in employees. This phenomenon is likely to be affected by several factors, such as individual and demographic characteristics, specific organizational culture, and leadership style.

In the 20th century, the types of leadership most likely to influence job satisfaction are transactional leadership and transformational leadership (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). In the research conducted by Chang & Lee (2007) the link and interaction between leadership style, organizational culture, and job satisfaction was studied and it was concluded that transformational leadership has a positive influence on these variables. Vigoda and Cohen (2003) state that job satisfaction and leadership style can improve the relationship between employees and organizations. The authors clearly indicate that leadership styles have an impact on employees' job satisfaction. In particular, effective leadership style in an organization is considered to have a direct impact on the relationships between superiors and employees, affecting performance, job satisfaction and

the total commitment of the organization as a whole (Belias & Koustelios, 2014, citing Wilderom et al., 2004).

Yang (2011) citing Yukl (2010) even stated that transformational leadership has a positive influence on job satisfaction. Transformational leadership is how managers create and communicate the vision of the organization, making employees stay united and focused on achieving the company's goals. Holcomb et al. (2009) indicated that transformational leadership efforts are directed toward long-term goals, encouraging employees to obtain a greater degree of responsibility for their own development and for achieving the company's goals, and these two situations increase job satisfaction. Job satisfaction also grows with a group that is cohesive and, consequently, in which there is interaction among employees. Transformational leadership can enhance job satisfaction by focusing on value creation, rarity and inimitability, which are the result of the knowledge and skills of the resources (Yang, 2011).

Research has shown that leadership styles fundamentally affect employee's perception of the organization's policy. This perception, in turn, affects their work outcomes (Saleem, 2015). Transformational leadership demonstrates positive correlation with job satisfaction, which means that a transformational leader, through his/her inspirational and motivational behavior, can induce changes in the psychological states of the organization's members (Saleem, 2015). On the other hand, there is a negative association between transactional leadership and job satisfaction, meaning that transactional leaders are more concerned with achieving organizational goals (through rewards or punishments) and show less concern for the motivation of the members of the organization.

Performance Evaluation, Reward Incentive System and Motivation – Their Impact on Job Satisfaction

The theories of motivation and their application in organizations are the key issues among researchers within the area of organizational behavior (Hamid, 2012). Hinggins (1994) cited by Zeb, Rehman, Saeed and Ullah (2014) argued that motivation is the aspiration to do more and better. Doing so leads to job satisfaction and, consequently, to higher level of performance.

Amalia & Fakhri (2016), Astuti et al. (2020), Pancasila et al. (2020), Rahsel (2016) claimed that motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Locke and Latham (2004) stated that motivation has been of interest to organizations since the mid-1930s, and this interest was largely stimulated by the Hawtorne's famous study, which focused primarily on the effects of supervision, incentives, and working conditions. In turn, Locke and Latham (2004) pointed out that Argyris (1957) focused on motivation and the convergence between individual needs and the demands of organizations. They also identified that Herzberg & Mausner (1959) studied the sources of job satisfaction, particularly in terms of projecting or defining work in order to make it more enriching and challenging. Later, this study was further developed and gave rise to a model which suggests that job characteristics and psychological characteristics increase job satisfaction and thus motivation excels (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

Locke and Latham (2004) pointed out to the importance of studying the individual's consciousness and personal traits. This study has gained popularity, and its results are consistently applied in effective job performance (Barrick & Mount, 2000).

Bandura (1997), cited by Locke and Latham (2004), argued that individuals' abilities have potent effects on motivation.

Barner and Wright (1997) cited by Shammot (2014) also argued that the strength of human capital provides competitive advantage in the organization. Thus, human resource strategy is a driver of competitive advantage, especially when motivation is considered (Shammot, 2014).

Thompson and Aspinwall (2009) cited by Shammot (2014) indicated that, currently, employees are increasingly concerned about the balance between their work and family life (Buren et al., 2020). Hauschild, Licht and Stein (2001) also stated that many studies showed that the most valuable knowledge is embedded in the minds of an organization's employees. Therefore, in order for organizations to succeed it is very important to understand motivation theory and its application to human resources (Amar, 2004).

According to Zeb et al. (2014), theories of motivation are frequently correlated with rewards, recognition and job satisfaction, namely:

Based on Maslow's Theory (hierarchy of needs, 1954), employees are motivated through recognition, increased responsibility, elevated status, appreciation, and positive feedback.

Referring to Herzberger's theory (1966), is crucial determinat towards motivation ,, so as, employee's self-esteem, while hygiene factors reflect physiological aspects, namely rewards, basically in the form of wages.

As far as Alderfer's Theory (1972) is concerned, it reflects a modification of Maslow's Theory, and according to this theory the needs in the hierarchy are divided into: physiological needs (wages, safety, and working conditions), social needs (family, friends, colleagues), and growth needs (self-fulfillment, career advancement, and skill development). This theory explains that individuals show interest and motivation for a behavior that satisfies the hierarchy of needs.

According to the Vroom's Theory (1964), it is claimed that motivation depends on individuals' expectations of their abilities to perform tasks by receiving desired rewards. In a broader context, this theory supports the argument that there is a strong relationship between reward and recognition of employees and their job satisfaction. It includes three crucial dimensions, which include: effort, performance, and expected results. Zeb et al. (2014) paraphrasing Porter and Lawler (1968) mentioned that high level of performance leads to job satisfaction, and that individual performance depends on internal and intangible rewards (feelings of job success) and external and tangible rewards (salary and promotion).

These theories of motivation described the behavior of individuals in their work environment (Hamid, 2012). According to this author, motivation is the strength that makes staff behave in a certain way, in which motivation raises their performance to the highest level, and strengthening motivation is a crucial management task. Hamid (2012) claimed that each individual differs in his or her motivational variables and in terms of levels of motivation, and even motivation may be different at different times.

In addition to the above theories of motivation, there are other theories which, rather than describing behaviors, suggest processes for studying the behavior of individuals in organizations, which, if applied in organizations,

improve employee satisfaction and performance (Hamid, 2012). According to Hamid, the theories include:

- Needs Theory, formulated by McClelland in 1976, which identifies three motivational needs: needs to achieve success (individuals impose challenges on themselves and take responsibility for their success or failure) are related to the profile of individuals, such as a high sense of responsibility, challengers, high creativity and able to assume moderate risk; power needs (tendency to manipulate and control others), where the profile of individuals includes a high sense of control; they find competition attractive and they strive to achieve high positions and better reputation; sense of belonging needs (tendency to interact with others), where the profile of the individual is reflected in relationships, based on mutual understanding, between leaders and their empoyees.;
- Equality Theory, formulated by Adams in 1965, in which he argued that staff try to find a balance between what they give (inputs) and what they receive (outputs). Employees perceive this as fair treatment, which creates motivation. Additionally, in this theory the comparison between one employee's situation and the situation of another is added (referenced comparison for similar situations). Adams helped to explain why salary conditions, by itself, is not the most relevant of employee's motivation, but, in case that salary conditions and rewards are not fair among employees, this can create feelings of unfairness, dissatisfaction, and demotivation.

In sum, Hamid (2012) considers that the equity theory is a suitable guide to implement a reward system based on employees' skills, i.e., the salary is considered a key motivational factor. Regarding the needs theory, Hamid (2012) points out that the theory provides an adequate framework to deal with the complexity of employees' behavior, being a good indicator of job satisfaction, as well as to understand that there is a high correlation between employees' needs and their good performance.

Zeb et al. (2014) argued that the challenge for any organization is to keep high levels of motivation of their employees, which is closely linked to

an effective reward and recognition system. The authors further concluded that employee motivation in any organization depends on the incentives and rewards implemented, regardless of the motivation theories applied.

Motivation and job satisfaction have a positive relationship, i.e., job satisfaction stems from the motivation of an individual to perform his or her tasks/functions (Suhartono, 2015, citing Saleem et al., 2010).

Amar (2004), paraphrasing other authors, conducted a study on the motivation factors in organizations, in order to identify them as a reflection of the current changes, and the factors are as follows:

- Sociological ones – (Maccoby, 1995) concluded that it is common to hear from young staff members that they can always find another job, but they only have one family. This means that the changes in the priorities related to values have given rise to a new value system based on one's ego and family (Amar, 2004).
- Psychological ones – Traditionally applied motivation theory was based on money (Kubo & Saka, 2002). However, the drastic changes in the behavior of employees in organizations (emphasis on knowledge) have transformed this notion (Smith, 2001).In the work environment ego, rather than money, has become the primary driving force, as has been empirically demonstrated in studies (Smith, 2001). Often employee's motivation may stem from being offered a new and comfortable chair (Cunningham, 2001).
- Knowledge ones – With the evolution of technology and knowledge, there has been a change in the attitude of organizations towards the future (Brenner, 1999). As early as the 1980s, companies began to realize that employees were more useful as a source of ideas and knowledge than by the use of their hands, muscles or motor functions (Drucker, 1988; Waterman, 1992). his change meant that managers became aware that knowledge is an essential and critical dimension of work and an important success factor for organizations (Amar, 2004).
- Culture ones – Culture has a serious impact on organizations around the world (Amar, 2004).

Campbell et al. (1998) concluded that in the last decades many authors have developed research/studies on motivation, aiming at discussing the best way to motivate human resources in organizations, both individually and as a whole (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Judge et al., 1995; Stroh et al., 1992; Turner, 1960) in which the way performance evaluation is carried out is crucial.

Campbell et al. (1998) proposed to find an alternative solution by conducting performance evaluation by work units/departments (group focus), where performance is considered at the unit level. This system is based on the use of performance indicators, which were widely analyzed and discussed by the authors. They identified the strengths (objective, quantitative, group goal/mission defined, group responsibility for performance, group thinking, and greater acceptance of feedback in terms of performance evaluation) and weaknesses (no emphasis on individual performance, problems are solved in group terms, so individual problems persist, reward is not individual but based on group performance) of the system.

Campbell et al. (1998) concluded that the performance appraisal system using the work unit/performance indicators can bring some benefits to organizations concerning obtaining better results in the field of motivation, leading individuals to give their best in the pursuit of the organization's goals, thus allowing the organization to achieve a greater competitive advantage. Also, the authors concluded that this topic needs further research and analysis in the future.

The contribution of human resources to any organization is one of the keys to success, which has led them to understand the importance of rewarding and recognizing them, in order to increase employees' performance and job satisfaction. The motivation of an organization's employees depends on the provision of incentives, appreciation, specific rewards and recognition, which will raise employees' level of job satisfaction (Zeb et al., 2014). Reward is defined as something that is received in return for achieving success/achievement/good performance (Bowran & Todd, 1999). In turn, recognition is the valuing of the individual within the organization for his or her success/good performance on the job (Hellman, 1997).

The question of how to motivate is another aspect. Maier et al. (2014) argued that the implementation of a reward system is important for innovation in the organization and for the development of human resources.

Reward/merit/incentive system is one of the most viable appreciation techniques to attract and retain talented employees and motivate them to perform well, and it can be used as an effective tool to ensure job satisfaction (Danish et al., 2015).

Maier et al. (2014) mentioned that the right reward system implies a strengthening of commitments, which stimulates the professional growth of the employee and changes the culture of the organization so that it becomes innovative.

However, organizations, particularly the human resources department, must take a critical stance on reward systems, asking themselves whether they are promoting the development of employees and the organization's culture (Maier et al., 2014).

The merit system should reward performance with merit and be a powerful motivating factor to keep and promote talented staff in organizations. One of the mistakes made in organizations is that they fail to motivate and promote skilled employees, and this element is a challenge for management (Maier et al., 2014).

Campbell et al. (1998), paraphrasing other authors, agreed that theories of motivation indicate that managers must demonstrate to their employees a clear link between performance and reward for there to be a sustainability of motivation (Skinner, 1974; Porter & Lawler, 1968; Vroom, 1964). These theories encourage the use of 'merit pay'; however, it can generate effects contrary to what is desired – dissatisfaction, discouragement, and decreased performance (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1992). This conclusion is also supported by Gerhart and Fang (2013), who argued that merit/individual pay depends on its design and the strategy chosen to implement it (they are usually based on financial results), and the system can be demotivating and conflicting for employees. However, there are also studies that point out to the success of this approach in terms of increased motivation and individual performance (Dessler, 1994; Henderson, 1989).

To attract and retain human resources, organizations need reward systems that satisfy employees (Terera & Ngirande, 2014). According to the authors, rewards and job satisfaction are key factors in retaining employees in

organizations, hence the importance of developing a human resource strategy that takes into consideration these two factors, as well as explicit incentives in training, promotions and performance evaluation.

In summary, the difficulty in defining an adequate performance appraisal and reward system is related to the system definition, i.e., individual rewards (merit pay) or rewards assigned by group (work units), rewards assigned based on qualitative or quantitative criteria, or variable or fixed rewards. All these topics influence the organizational behavior of employees and, consequently, their performance and job satisfaction (Gupta & Shaw, 2013). Also Danish et al. (2015) argued that employees strive for their organization when they enjoy their work (job satisfaction), when they are properly rewarded and considered a vital resource for the organization, i.e. generators of competitive advantage for the organization.

Since knowledge resides within employees' brains, companies have developed various strategies for creating organizational knowledge through employee knowledge development. Human resource managers must therefore engage in these activities aiming to find an appropriate leadership style that supports the implementation of knowledge management programs to thereby increase organizational performance (Birasnav, 2014), in which the acquisition of knowledge also functions as a motivating factor that can lead to increased job satisfaction.

Methodology

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, and taking into account the objectives outlined, a qualitative analysis of the content of the questionnaire responses was adopted.

Case Study

Optiframa, Lda. (SME) and Sojitz Beralt Tin & Wolfram (Portugal), S.A. (large company, subsidiary) were researched. Their geographical location is Beira

Baixa (Covilhã and Minas da Panasqueira). The research was carried out based on a convenience sample, in order to enable the access to the required information.

Data Assembly

The data are composed of primary information sources, decoupled directly from the analyzed companies.

The survey (Appendix 1) was linked to leadership style that drives the strategy, that is partnerships, resources and, finally, the satisfaction of its employees.

The time period in which the 3 studies were performed was March 2015, corresponding to a total sampling of 29 responses, including two leaders and their teams, performing a response rate of 93.94%, representative of the total sample. In the case of the Sojitz Beralt Tin & Wolfram (Portugal), S.A. organization, due to its size, only the administrative and financial department was considered. The survey was originally developed for public companies sector in 1997; however, it was adapted in the literature review to shed light on the proposals listed in this investigation.

Data Analysis

The results obtained from the questionnaires conducted among the managers/leaders were analyzed, and several conclusions were drawn. The results of the questionnaires were compared with the conclusions from the literature reviewed.

The Likert scale was used to measure the degree of job satisfaction in relation to the various items analyzed (1. Very Dissatisfied; 2. Dissatisfied; 3. Not Very Satisfied; 4. Satisfied and 5. Very Satisfied).

Results and Discussion

As already mentioned, the results of the questionnaires conducted among the managers/leaders of the two companies were analyzed qualitatively, i.e., in terms of content (in which the dimension addressed was job satisfaction of employees with the organization, leadership style and company culture, as well as satisfaction of the manager/leader with management and leadership), and the respective answers were compared with the results arising from literature review.

As far as the manager of Optiframa, Lda. (SME), is concerned, his understanding of job satisfaction was as follows:

- Overall employee satisfaction with the organization: The manager/ leader believes that employees are very satisfied with the image, performance, organizational citizenship, employee involvement in improvement activities and the degree of dialogue between them. However, regarding the management of conflicts and interests in the company's mission and their involvement in decision making, he is just satisfied;
- Satisfaction with management and management systems: The manager/leader is very satisfied with his leadership style in running the company and with the way he communicates with his employees. The manager/leader is very satisfied with the way in which the objectives of the employees and the company are aligned, as well as with their attitude towards change and modernization. Regarding the performance and reward system and teamwork, he is just satisfied, although there is no strategically defined human resources policy and he does not apply any reward system for employees;
- Employees' satisfaction with leadership style: The manager/leader is very satisfied with his leadership style, since he leads by example, engages in change processes, accepts constructive criticism and improvements proposed by his employees, tries to promote some training, encourages respect and trust between himself and the employees, and delegates competencies and responsibilities properly. However, he is just satisfied with the stimulus given to employees to take initiatives and with the

way he recognizes and rewards the individual effort of each employee, since it is only qualitative in nature, as he does not have (nor thinks of) implementing a reward system, which means that his employees only receive a fixed remuneration (monthly salary);

- Type of organizational culture: The manager/leader is satisfied with the organizational learning and human resources, in the sense that these topics are part of the company's culture. He is very satisfied with the fact that the company culture takes into account the family life of the employees, innovation, stability, customer satisfaction (quality/price) through the existence of specific rules and procedures, although not formalized. One of the main goals achieved by the manager is that in his company's culture cost reduction versus increase of results is always considered, which he is very satisfied with.

In accordance with the literature review conducted, it may be concluded that the company does not value its staff, because its manager/leader does not think about implementing a system of rewards and incentives to motivate the employees and thus increase their job satisfaction (Zeb et al., 2014). However, the manager recognizes the individual appreciation of his employees in the company, which encourages to continue to develop the functions that the employees already performed successfully, always approaching each employee individually, according to his to her specific needs and the situation at hand, thus generating employee's job satisfaction (Hellman, 1997). Regarding the organizational culture adopted, it is understood that it is shared by the company's employees, guiding their attitudes and organizational behavior in favor of the company, as pointed out by Tong et al. (2013). Culture should be analyzed simultaneously with performance versus job satisfaction (Shah et al., 2012). It is understood that this manager/leader assumes a transformational leadership style, since he motivates and inspires his employees to perform their tasks according to the importance assigned to them, thus managing to evidence a connection between him and his employees, as stated by Attri and Devi (2014). Finally, the manager adopts a leadership style that indicates the direction that employees should follow (Chiavenato, 2004).

As far as the Administrative and Financial Director of Sojitz Beralt Tin & Wolfram (Portugal), S.A. is concerned, his answers only refer to the administrative and financial department of that company since the company is a large one. In this context, the Director's perception concerning the topic under discussion was as follows:

- Overall satisfaction of employees in the organization: Regarding the way the company manages conflict of interest, employee involvement in its mission and the dialogue between the various hierarchical levels, has been considered with dissatisfaction. As for the image that the employees have of the company and their involvement in decision making, he was not very satisfied. In turn, as far as the overall performance of the company, its relationship with society and the participation of employees in the improvement process are concerned, he was satisfied. Given that the company is located within the municipality, the manager/leader considers that the company has a preponderant role in the local society, considering it's role as satisfactory.
- Satisfaction with management and management systems: With regard to the evaluation system in place, the system of bonuses and group incentives, and the adaptation to changes, the manager considers that the company does not meet the parameters required for its size. As far as the rewarding of individual efforts is concerned, they are evaluated at a satisfactory level, namely through occasional promotions. As for the aptitude of the management levels for leadership, he considered that there is dissatisfaction with the top management, and little satisfaction with the middle management (managers and directors of the parent company); in turn, at the local level, with regard to the communication factor, he considers that there is dissatisfaction with the top managers (expatriates) and satisfaction with the middle management (communication between the various directors of the functional areas);
- Employees' satisfaction with the leadership style. In the respondent's department, his employees feel that his leadership style is followed by their own example; it is characterized by accepting constructive criticism

or suggestions for improvement, by delegating skills and responsibilities, and by being receptive to change, promoting training activities (albeit occasionally) and by informally recognizing individual and team efforts, yet without any kind of monetary reward other than a bonus based on production performance. However, on a personal level and when evaluating the company as a whole, the Director is aware that the top managers do not show commitment to the change process, do not stimulate staff's initiative, as well as do not emphasize mutual trust and respect. It should be noted that the last issue is related to the culture of the shareholders/top managers (Japan).

As far as the type of organizational culture is concerned, the manager surveyed concluded that the company has a culture based on rules and procedures; it is conservative, stable, oriented to reducing costs versus increasing results (main objective of the parent company). However, he perceives that there is no culture of technological innovation, that organizational learning is not emphasized, that human capital is not given much attention, and that family life in a social context of the employees is not of great importance. This type of organizational culture is again related to the fact that the parent company is Japanese.

Given the fact that the company in question is not comparable at all levels with the previous one, as can be observed in the descriptions presented above and as arises from the answers provided in the questionnaires, enriched by the detailed company description, it is considered that as far as motivation is concerned, the manager/leader of Sojitz Beralt Tin & Wolfram (Portugal), S.A. is motivated, which is in line with what was argued by Zeb et al. (2014), who pointed out that motivation is the will to do more and better. The company has implemented a system of performance evaluation and a system of rewards based on production and the number of monthly accidents, which is in line with the argument of Maier et al. (2014) who claimed that the implementation of a reward system is important for the development of human resources. Also Danish et al. (2015) claimed that the reward system can be an effective tool to ensure job satisfaction. Organizational culture of the company in question

is very much related to the culture of the parent company, which has caused some problems in adapting to the organizational culture of the local company. This is in line with what Temimi (2015) stated, who namely that organizational culture can be influenced by beliefs, values and attitudes of the organizations' staff, which also influences job satisfaction.

Regarding the leadership style adopted, it is defined according to the situational orientations of the parent company at the general level, as in the case of this particular manager also transformational leadership style is assumed, because the manager is characterized by high ethical and moral standards, being interested in the potential development of each employee, and being concerned at a personal level with the employees' family problems. Therefore, this leadership pattern is in line with what is described by Attri and Devi (2014).

Global Analysis of the Results Obtained

Satisfaction with the Performed Function

Employees in both companies consider themselves satisfied with the degree of autonomy they have at work, with the variety of tasks they perform within their function, with the importance of their function in the company and, in general, they feel personally fulfilled with their performance.

Such results correlate with the fact that the secret to a business' success today revolves around headcount rather than financial capital (Ramkumar & Rajini, 2018). According to the analysis of the companies studied, these companies have focused on defining/projecting each individual's job in order to make it more enriching and challenging, which increases job satisfaction (Locke & Latham, 2004). Motivation and job satisfaction have a positive relationship, on how individuals perform the job (Saleem, 2015). From another perspective, motivation has a positive and relevant association with employee performance (Amalia & Fakhri, 2016; Astuti et al., 2020; Pancasila et al., 2020; Rahsel, 2016).

Career Development Satisfaction

In relation to the career development, the level of knowledge that employees have, regarding the organization's otargets pointed out a satisfactory result. The employees of both organisations are not very satisfied (although tending towards satisfied) with the opportunities created to develop new competencies (the provision of continuous training, the existence of dialogue and consultation between them and the managers/leaders). As previously mentioned, the employees are not very satisfied with the human resources policy developed by the companies.

The aspects discussed above are related to the issue of how to motivate employees. As argued by Maier et al. (2014), the implementation of a reward system is important for human resource development. Also Birasnav (2014) stated that knowledge is inside employees' brains, so their managers/leaders have to implement knowledge management programs (e.g. training, promotions, among others).

Organizational Culture Satisfaction

Organizational culture questions highlight, that employees are aware that companies invest in quality of service, aiming at customer satisfaction. As for the identification with the culture of the company itself, employees are satisfied and they also understand that the companies promote some training in order to foster organizational learning. Although the companies have specific rules and procedures (formal and informal) to follow, employees consider that organisational culture is within the acceptable limits.. As far as the human resources policy is concerned, the employees responded that they are almost satisfied with it yet there is no performance evaluation and reward system implemented in the companies concerned, although in Sojitz Beralt Tin & Wolfram (Portugal), S.A., there is a reward system based on production performance only, and the implementation of a program of individual performance evaluation, carried out by the human resources director, is in progress.

Based on these outcomes, these results are in line with the claim made by Cunha et al (2007), according to which culture is a set of values, beliefs, norms, and expectations that influence the way of thinking and behavior of individuals. Also according to Temimi (2015), culture influences the behavior and motivation of individuals and, consequently, the level of job satisfaction.

Working Conditions Satisfaction

Employees are almost satisfied as far as equal opportunities, promotion and treatment are concerned. As for work environment, internal conflict resolution, working hours, conciliation of work and personal life and conciliation of work and health problems, the employees interviewed are moderately satisfied.

As concluded by Martinez and Paraguay (2003), satisfaction is the subjective state that varies from person to person as they react to personal situations differently. These results can also mean that job satisfaction can be understood as an emotion or an attitude, and it is therefore a dependent variable in strategic human resource management, which implies having a positive attitude or emotion towards work and respective experiences in work conditions as a whole (Lima et al., 1995). Shammot (2014) stated that, currently, employees are increasingly concerned about the balance between their work and family life.

Satisfaction with the Conditions of Hygiene, Safety, Equipment and Services

Employees are satisfied with the availability of computer, software, and communication equipment, as well as with the conditions of hygiene, safety, and social services. Although it is not a topic focused on in the literature reviewed, it is understood that it may also impact employee job satisfaction. Paraphrasing Amar (2004), there are new motivating factors in organizations, namely generational and knowledge ones (technological and knowledge evolution in which employees give more importance to their ideas vis-à-vis technology than to their physical functions).

Levels of Motivation vs. Job Satisfaction

Overall, employees are motivated to learn new working methods, to carry out team/group work, and to participate in training activities, although these are not very much emphasized by the companies (as already mentioned), and they like suggesting improvements for carrying out their functions, i.e., in general, the employees are satisfied. Regarding the participation in change projects, it is typical for the companies studied to include their employees in this process.

The outxomes of this research might be interlinked with the theory of McClelland, which states that workers impose challenges on themselves, are attracted to competition among themselves and have a tendency to interact with each other where the employee profile is reflected in relationships based on mutual understanding and attraction to cooperation at work (Hamid, 2012). This theory is considered appropriate, because instead of describing the behavior of individuals in organizations, it suggests processes to study that behavior, which improves job satisfaction and performance (Hamid, 2012). As already mentioned, the system of rewards and financial recognition is not a common and effective practice in the companies in question, which may influence the motivation levels of their employees (Zeb et al., 2014). As mentioned above, Sojitz Beralt Tin & Wolfram (Portugal), S.A., is working with the aim of increasing employee job satisfaction.

Satisfaction with the Manager/Leader

Based on the qualitative analysis of the leaders' questionnaires and the answers provided by the employees on this topic, it was concluded that the employees are satisfied with their leaders and managers. This result is evidenced by the fact that the employees believe that the leaders motivate their performance, that the leaders are aware that job satisfaction is an indispensable factor for a good job performance, that employees have a good relationship with their leaders, and that they are satisfied with the performance evaluation, though informal, carried out by those leaders and managers.

This conclusion is supported by Chiavenato (2004), who argued that leadership is an interpersonal influence exerted in the most diverse situations,

through the process of human communication, leading to the achievement of specific goals for the organization. The same author stated that the manager/leader is a strategist who knows how to push the staff in the right direction. Also Davies and Davies (2004) argued that the leader must have the ability to develop strategic skills in himself/herself and in others, which implies a dialogue and knowledge on when to intervene and change the direction.

Overall Analysis of the Results Obtained

Having analyzed the data, it was possible to infer that the parameter the employees are most satisfied with are the characteristics of the function they perform, while their career development is the factor they are least satisfied with. The health and safety conditions, equipment and services provided also represent a factor with which employees are satisfied with. As far as the organizational culture and the relationship with the manager/leader are concerned, it was found that on average employees are satisfied with these two parameters. With regard to working conditions (working environment, working hours, etc.) and levels of motivation at work, employees are still on the limit of satisfaction.

In the questionnaire, also the following question was asked: Are you generally satisfied with the organization where you work? The answers provided demonstrate that the employees of both companies are overall satisfied with their work.

Although the results presented are positive in general, employees are increasingly concerned with their work-life balance, which corroborates the arguments of Haar and Brougham (2020); therefore, the balance should be of concern for managers as the stance of human capital has been superbly altered due to the pandemic.

It is also argued that employee motivation can be driven by an appropriate reward system, which goes in line with the previous research (e.g., Zeb et al., 2014; Kim & Kim, 2020). However, rewards may no longer be only monetary, as Covid-19 has changed the world of work, and satisfaction and motivation are no longer convertible in tangible issues, as intangible rewards are now valued, such as having time for family, the so-called work-life balance (Silva & Oliveira, 2020).

Conclusions

Taking into account the objective of this work, which is to study the company-related and leader-related factors that can influence job satisfaction, two proposals were put forward, based on which some considerations were made.

As for the leaders' perspective concerning their leadership style and organizational culture, it was concluded that leaders adopt a transformational leadership style, motivating and inspiring their employees. They instill not only group/team spirit, but also impact the development of skills at the individual level. Overall, the leaders of the companies studied are satisfied with their employees, although the organizational culture of each company has some impact on this dependent variable.

The employees' satisfaction with the studied companies themselves, although those companies do not have common characteristics (as already mentioned), is strongly associated with the topics discussed in the literature review, where motivational factors, general conditions in which employees perform their work, dynamic capabilities and the way their leaders exercise their powers, influence their relationships, which allows us to conclude that the attitude companies adopt towards their human resources (as intangible and valuable assets) is of vital importance as far as meeting the targets and making the companies successful is concerned.

The main limitation discovered in the preparation of this work was the difficulty in finding companies eager to participate in the study and to dedicate time to fill out the questionnaires, in addition to the very barriers that owners/managers impose, concerning the external disclosure of information about their companies. For this reason, it was not possible to include more companies in this analysis in order to perform a triangulation of data, both in terms of the perception of managers and employees, which would allow for a more a generalized conclusion for the Beira Baixa region. Another limitation is related to the fact that a business association in the central region was contacted (a non-profit organization to support entrepreneurs in the central region), whose employees completed the questionnaire, but the manager did not fill in his copy (although

he gave permission to others to complete them) and withheld the rest, which did not allow us to enrich this study with another different case and, possibly, with another perspective on job satisfaction. Another limitation, equally important in the context of job satisfaction, is that the distinction between the level of satisfaction of employees in relation to different work modalities, namely face-to-face, remote, or hybrid, was not addressed.

In future research, it would be interesting and pertinent to diagnose the degree of satisfaction of employees, because this parameter is strategic for an organization; however, such a measurement is only possible when there is a formal commitment of the top management. It is a process that requires the direct involvement of general management and human resources management. Without it, it will never be possible to identify the reasons why an organization and its employees are happier or less happy, and to implement policies that contribute to the increase in the employees' satisfaction. Satisfaction at work is understood to comprise dimensions such as employee engagement with the organization and with the job.

The companies selected for the study, as already mentioned, are not comparable, either in terms of activity sector, size and organizational behavior and management perspectives. As such, it is understood that the contribution of this work is related to the fact that the size of the company has an impact on the way employees and their managers/leaders view job satisfaction, in accordance with the themes addressed in this work, i.e., each company is a company, so it has to be treated in accordance with the objectives and mission of the companies concerned.

This study contributed to enriching the literature on job satisfaction and its impact on organizational performance. It analyzed the links between leadership style, organizational culture and employees' satisfaction. It also attempted to verify whether employees' job satisfaction is related to motivation, performance evaluation and incentive system. These are important issues under-researched in previous studies, and issues of significant importance for managers and other business practitioners.

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