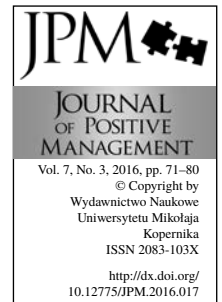


THE SIGNS AND BENEFITS OF POSITIVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN TEAMS OF WORKERS

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Abstract

This article presents the signs and the benefits of positive relations existing between employees, because one of the modern manager's main tasks is shaping friendly atmosphere and building positive interpersonal relationships. In order to confirm the thesis formulated by the author: *positive interpersonal relationships contribute to generate benefits for employees* were used diary method as well as corporate interviews focusing. The results of the research process has been verified by analyzing the content using encoding process.

The analysis of the records and of the answers of the respondents during the interviews the made it possible to isolate a lot of categories, confirming the existence of the signs and the benefits for the employees due to the occurrence of positive interpersonal relations.

The analysis of the results confirmed that the employees are aware of the importance of positive relationships and are open to their keeping, so it is worth that their immediate supervisor should implement behavior and tools that will strengthen them. In most situations the positive relationships between employees during the fulfilling their professional duties translate into their private relationships.

Keywords: positive relationships, benefits of positive relationships, the sign of positive relationships

Paper type: Review literature

1. Introduction

Modern organizations operate in the new economic conditions, that are mainly based on social capital. New trends and way include the development of knowledge organization, the reality of the Internet and the generational diversity on the labour market, therefore the actions of people and enterprises require constant flexibility. In order to achieve the assigned tasks it is essential to have mutual cooperation in teams, liberating in the workers the willingness to exchange knowledge and experience, as well as conducive to the creation of new ideas. It is changing the

role of the manager in teams of employees. Now, one of the manager's main tasks is shaping friendly atmosphere, where building positive interpersonal relationships fulfills the key issue.

In the face of contemporary challenges one can dare to express the view that over the next several years, relations with and among employees will be dominant in the area of management. The quality of relationships, as well as the dynamics of change in their formation can be seen as the source of the success of the organization, but it can also contribute to failures (Guca, 2010).

Positive interpersonal relationships inspire to cooperation and trigger a willingness to engage in the implementation of tasks. On the other hand, negative relationships may cause confusion and inhibit the development of employees, and ultimately lead to the devastation and potential burnout of employees (Guca, 2010). Interpersonal relationships play an important role in the enterprise, primarily because they generate the benefits for the organization, the team and the people. Employees are aware of the importance of positive interaction, so more and more are taking action to make them mutually shape. Identifying the elements and the basic building tools should also be one of the fundamental objectives of modern management.

2. Interpersonal relationships in teams of workers

The man is an initiator of interpersonal relationships in every situation in life, both in the professional and personal areas. Relationships are formed by the mutual contacts among the people, through exchange of messages composed of two components: the basic and relational. The first component contains substantial content, while the second presents the speaker's emotions. Mutual interactions reveal the personality of each of the partners, shape individual identity and create the ground to verify how their conduct.

Probably each of us is able to define what is meant by the term of interpersonal relationships and identify the factors affecting them. However, the diversity of interactions in the work environment makes their perception on the ground of work is not obvious. The lack of clarity in defining deepens the individuality of every human being and diversity of one's actions.

While fulfilling the professional duties by employees, they regularly exchange information among themselves, determine the scope and distribution of the tasks entrusted and communicate or receive instructions (Bartkowiak, 2011). So, in the teams are formed relations doubles (known in the literature DIAD), but also shapes the interdependence "me-we", reflecting the active participation and involvement and cooperation in carrying out group tasks. Employees aim to reach their personal goals, but also they focus attention on the benefits of teamwork.

R. B. Adler defines interpersonal relations as communication that occur when people treat each other as individuals (Adler et al., 2011). S. Duck, however, gives

special importance to feelings, treating them as the first signal that appears in respect of relations and relationships identified with the emotions, which are expressed in relation to another man (Duck, 2012). Interpersonal relationships reflect the quality of human relations and express the nature of their relationships. Therefore, they may take the form of interaction:

- positive - accompanied by the desire to reach an agreement with another person and achieving common goals, willingness to cooperation and a desire to maintain contacts,
- negative - expressed through hostility, indifference, contempt and in extreme cases, hatred or aggression,
- defense - disclosed as untrusting behavior, suspicion and the sense of social anxiety.

The overriding components of positive interpersonal relationships are trust, respect, honesty and reciprocity. “The importance of trust as a determining component shaping cooperation and development team is undeniable” (Henttonen and Blomqvist, 2005). “It underpins confidence in the good intentions and motives are guided by coworkers, so that team members rely on their words, decisions and deeds” (McAllister, 1995). They also exhibit the initiative to take on new challenges and finding innovative solutions. “Trust positively affects the sense of security of participants in the organization, fostering the openness of information” (Bratnicki and Strużyna, 2011), which in turn translates to initiate bold and innovative actions. The atmosphere of respect and honesty prevailing among employees contributes to the growth of a sense of support and builds confidence about the acceptance in the team.

An important role among the components of positive relationships plays reciprocity, not forcing the need for equivalence of exchange. It is a form of expression of confidence and respect by the need for voluntary sharing of knowledge and skills with colleagues. “Interpersonal relationships in the workplace are important because they can have a strong influence on the relations and behavior of employees” (Allen, 2012), therefore, a particular responsibility rests on the superiors who have a decisive influence on the quality of mutual interactions.

3. The role of managers in building positive interpersonal relationships

Managers fulfill a dominant role in the modern enterprise, and their task according to P. F. Drucker, “is to lead people, not to direct them”. The main objective of the organization is to use specific skills and knowledge of individual employees to achieve productivity growth (Drucker, 1995). Management based on giving orders and continuous control, revealing limited trust in employees is not conducive to create the conditions to generate new ideas or to share knowledge and experience.

Subordinates want to be seen as “partners” with whom a space to talk about the goals of the organization is created, as well as their individual benefits. According to the theory of balance of organizational by J. G. March and H. A. Simon compatible personal goals and organizations will be when the two sides will bestow mutual respect (Janowska, 2010).

In the new economic conditions priorities in the fulfillment manager’s duties change , but he or she still remains entirely responsible for the employees, as well as the effects of their work. Achieving efficiency in action and providing benefits of organizations is enabled by mutual cooperation of the band performed in a climate of partnership of interpersonal relationships, a sense of security and the desire of selfless help.

Evolution are also competences, which should have a modern manager. Nowadays, he is expected not only to improve knowledge and skills, but above all to shape social competence. Orientation for employees, wide ranging flexibility and empathy, serving identifying the expectations of subordinates clearly distinguishes the potential of the current manager. In the direct relationship with employees, the superior is the one who gives the direction for relations, no matter they are formal or informal ones, hence its competences should enable the development of appropriate attitudes in the team and allow the use of appropriate tools to build positive relationships. There is also a strong influence of the quality of interaction with the managers of the way and kind of shaped relationship between employees, at the same time determining their level of cooperation.

Everyday situations in the workplace reveal manifestations of good and bad interpersonal interactions. It is not revealing that the tangible benefits bring positive relationships, so to achieve the intended objectives, it is appropriate to seek primarily to their formation and elimination of consequences of negative interactions.

4. The benefits of positive interpersonal relationships

Some authors equate the relationships with the meaning of life and a key theme of shaping self-esteem (Reis et al., 2010). They set the direction for the internal and external environment and in a large degree they impact on the daily experiences of people also in personal life. Friendly atmosphere in the team facilitates communication and promotes finding constructive solutions (Bugdol, 2011). It also contributes to the improvement of mental health, so that triggers the desire to develop employees through organizational and individual learning.

Positive relationships allow the full use of the potential and “support the ability of the employee to engage in the tasks performed” (Glińska-Noweś, 2013). With the achievement of individual successes increasing labour productivity and a sense of unit efficiency and effectiveness (Dutton and Heaphy, 2003). Proactive attitude to the duties entrusted conducive to feeling more comfort, allowing you

to derive satisfaction from the ongoing activities and to see the meaning of their own work (Duck, 2012).

Positive relationships bring satisfaction to employees, thereby strengthening their “well-being”, which is an expression of well-being and reflects the level of physical and mental condition. Satisfied employee shows initiative in operation, he is ready for a longer and more effective working and carries out the operations more carefully, achieving better results. Mental well-being is strongly associated with the level of happiness and “happy people have a more positive attitude towards others, helping them less likely to come into conflict” (Majcherczyk, 2015).

Superiors and coworkers in certain situations may more than spouses or friends provide a source of support in reducing the symptoms of stress and eliminating the causes of uncomfortable situations related to the ongoing and planned. This is due to the fact that the team members share common professional interests and knowledge of the sensitive topic that caused adverse circumstances (Argyle, 2001).

Being together for a long time in the workplace, helps to develop friendship, meaning in a professional environment not only in positive relations, but also in voluntary relationship based on openness to others, to help counteract the difficulties and meet the expectations of the employer. Empirical studies also confirm that the interpersonal relationships with superiors also affect the emotions of employees, motivation, attitudes and health (Kalińska, 2013).

Each person entering the relationship with the manager and coworkers should be aware that different situations are accompanied by other external conditions, inside of organization, as well as the personal characteristics of employees. But whatever the circumstances are, it is worth to show respect for the other person and take care of disclosing of positive behavior, even in the form of small gestures that help to build positive interpersonal relationships.

5. The purpose of research

This article presents the types of signs of positive relations existing between employees with their impact to the generated benefits for subordinates. The aim of the research empirical is confirmation of thesis formulated by the author added:

Thesis: positive interpersonal relationships contribute to generate benefits for employees.

6. The methodology and process research

Comprehensive empirical studies were carried out in 2016 in the Kuyavian Pomeranian Voivodeship of 769 employees working in 31 companies (391 employees in 11 companies with a production profile, 281 in 14 services, 624 in commercial and 35 in 2 financial). The selection of respondents to the sample

occurred at random, stratified, to create equal opportunities to participate in the study of different populations. In order to verify the hypothesis diary method as well as corporate interviews focusing were used.

For the purposes of the diary methods, 74 employees in 5 enterprises, for one month, recorded their own observations, which concerned all the situations taking place in the team, starting with the moment of welcome by ways of spending breaks at work and the various circumstances including professional issues, to the time of departure from work. Employees accepted the records as the essential complement to the previously conducted interviews with them.

The workers' notes contained information about the ways of spending their time after work. They focused mainly on methods of verbal and nonverbal communication used in the context of greetings, farewells, mutual contacts during and after working hours, conversation topics and relationships occurring during the performance of official duties. The results of the research process has been verified by analyzing the content using encoding process. The observations of the respondents were classified in five categories, which reflect the nature of mutual contacts and highlight their positive dimension. Figure 1 shows the various categories of contacts created on the basis of analysis of the recorded observations.

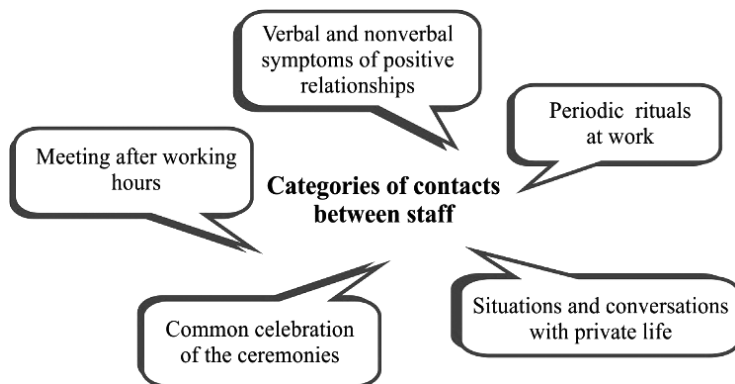


Figure 1. Categories of positive relationships between staff

The source: own study based on the research in enterprises.

To confirm the signs of positive interpersonal relations Table 1 was prepared, it shows the selected statements concerning employees' exposed categories that most accurately characterize the specificity of relationships and making desired quality of interaction in the team authentic.

Group interviews were conducted with employees during personal contacts and recorded in writing. They provided information about the most important determinants of positive atmosphere in the team, with particular emphasis on the benefits to subordinates, generated as a result of the formation of positive

Categories contacts between Staff	Statements employees confirming the positive relationships
Verbal and non-verbal symptoms of positive relationships	<p>“Paul entering the room called out hello sheilas!”</p> <p>“How nice to see Beata, who enters the room laughing and happy, I did a new report, and Kinga verified. It was enough to see her friendly eyes and I felt more confident”</p>
Periodic rituals at work	<p>“Today, as always, common morning coffee and let’s get to work”</p> <p>“During lunch: The information exchange: What happened yesterday? What is going to happen today? What do you need to do tomorrow?”</p> <p>“We have an unwritten contract-who leaves the last, controls all the equipment” Every Monday we exchange professional and private news gained during the weekend”</p>
Common celebration of the ceremonies	<p>“Monika has a name-day, now is coffee and cake” we also remember about birthday, but do not celebrate it”</p> <p>“We have a Women’s Day, friends brought us the flowers”</p> <p>“Today’s lunch break was used for decorating a room in connection with Easter”</p> <p>“Grażyna has a jubilee of 15 years of employment. She brought the cake, and we gave her a pen”</p> <p>“Kate was the best saleswoman of the month. Congratulations to her!”</p>
Situations and conversations from private life	<p>“holidays soon (Christmas soon)... we exchange of recipes”</p> <p>“Children’s literature? As it was long time ago ... I do not know anything. Peter is looking for something more”</p> <p>“It’s a moment of relaxation and laughter - a colleague told a joke, has a talent for it”</p> <p>“Who knows a good dentist for children? – We are looking for phones or some names,</p> <p>“Friend’s son has trouble with maths. Ela recommended her a tutor”</p>
Meeting afer working hours	<p>“In the afternoon we are watching a football game: Real Madrid against FC Barcelona”</p> <p>“It’s going to be a picnic, we are thinking about what to bring to the barbecue at Paul’s,</p> <p>“Today is sad afternoon, we’re going to our friend’s grandmother funeral”</p> <p>“At the nearest weekend we are meeting three other girls to look for accommodation in the mountains. We’re going on holiday together”</p> <p>“Charles is organizing white water rafting - We will participate for the first time together with Kate”</p>

Table 1.
Observations of employees on the basis of the diary method

The source: own study based on the research in enterprises.

relationships. The interviews also enabled the identification of the substrate and the conditions of both spoken opinion and disclosed the attitudes of people in the work environment. The results of the research process has been verified by analyzing the content using encoding process.

The analysis of the answers given by the respondents during the interviews made it possible to isolate six categories, confirming the existence of the advantages for the employees due to the occurrence of positive interpersonal relations. Figure 2 shows the exposed benefit categories.

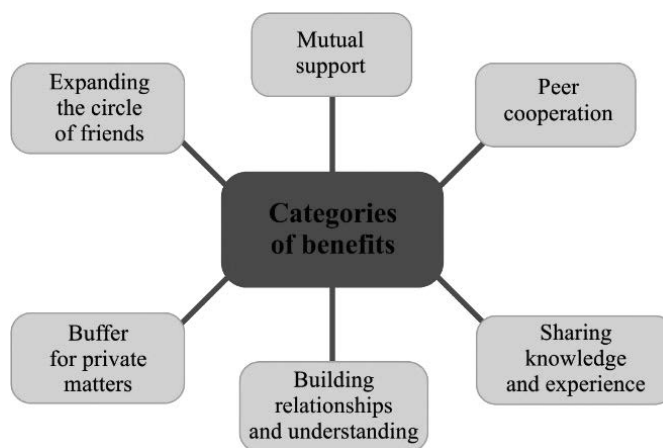


Figure 2. Categories of benefits to employees based on the results of interviews

The source: own study based on the research in enterprises.

In the following points, the most commonly occurring statements on particular categories of employees are presented:

- 1) *Mutual support* – “nobody conceals errors or does not hide the truth”, “we can ask one another for help”, “colleague feel pain in his joints, so we so we handle some difficult jobs for him”, “today I deleted an important file, well, fortunately Sławek will be able to help me to get it back”.
- 2) *Peer cooperation* – “an easy opportunity to substitute or change in schedule ‘motivation for me is that I’m doing something for the team, not only for myself”, “positive relationships strengthen self-confidence”.
- 3) *Sharing knowledge and experience* – “if I miss something, I know I can count on a friend”, “after the weekend we share what we saw, read or found out from a workmate”, “we make fewer mistakes, because we share our experiences”, “we tell about new programs, for example. invoicing, of which one has read online”.
- 4) *Building relationships and understanding* – “there is no jealousy and envy”, “I say openly what I do not like and avoid misunderstandings”, “ties among us reinforce”, “everyone feels like a cog in the machine”.

- 5) *Buffer for private matters* – “I need the opinion about my home problems”, “together we are looking for solutions, eg. a gift for communion, a good dentist, children’s literature, recommended accommodation in the mountains”, “co-worker may be the best support”.
- 6) *Expanding the circle of friends* – “we’re going on holiday with our friends from work”, “we have family barbecues”, “I joined the group of motorcyclists – my workmate’s passion”, “I have more contacts on the social networking sites”.

The results obtained during the research process, as well as known feelings and perceptions regarding the quality of the relationships in the team, enabled the verification of the hypothesis, and gave the basis to the conclusions and recommendations.

7. The results and conclusions of the research

The main issue of the research process was to identify the signs of positive relationships, as well as to diagnose the effects of their impact on employees in the form of existing benefits. Confirmation of the thesis: *positive interpersonal relationships contribute to generating benefits for employees* was based on content analysis of the results of the diary method and interviews focusing.

The analysis of the results of the diary methods confirmed the existence of signs of positive relations between employees at various levels of professional environment. It has also affirmed, that the subordinates pay attention to the atmosphere at workplace and they try to implement actions in order to keep good interpersonal relations.

The result of the verification of the responses given by employees during focusing interviews is a conclusion that in most situations the positive relationships between employees during the fulfilling their professional duties translate into their private relationships, which is manifested in meetings after working hours, as well as frequent conversations about private and personal matters. Employees are aware of the importance of positive relationships and are open to their keeping, so it is worth that their immediate supervisor should share the opinion of his or her subordinates and implement behavior and tools that will strengthen them.

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