

PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK FACTORS INFLUENCING MANAGERIAL DECISION IN ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD

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ABSTRACT

Managerial decision represents the most important activity in manager's work. Studying managerial decision means deepening all the factors involved in the entire decisional process. The aim of this paper is to underline the main risk factors mixed up in making managerial decisions concerning the managers that operate in the environmental field. Once these factors are discovered, it's much easier to have a complex view of all links and of the manager behavior in taking decision.

KEYWORDS: psychosocial risk factors, managerial decision, manager, environment, manager's activity

1. Introduction

The role of manager in the organization is a subject always open for new researches and for a better understanding of his role and importance in common good of organization strategy [1]. That's why managerial decision, the one which defines better manager's activity, represents an absolutely necessary direction of study for a better understanding of the complex processes which occur in organization. A category of decisions, known in Management field, and, probably the hardest to avoid in manager activity is taking decisions at-risk situations. These are defined by being those circumstances, when the manager has to make decisions, without sufficient or not completed information, and, in this case, it is difficult to reach the target [2]. What does manager need in these situations? Which are his allies in taking risk decisions? The authors from specific literature point out some of them, that help managers in situations like this: self-esteem, being self-confident, with a positive self-image [3]. Moreover, there is a list made up by authors, containing the manner manager perceives the risk situations in making decisions [4].

2. Literature review

Speaking about managerial decision in organization means to overall see the events and factors involved in it, and to therefore to have a big

perspective especially on factor risk that may interfere in this important activity. More or less, every manager is aware of his implication, which require their activity to be more careful, but also more exposed. That's why it is absolutely necessary for manager to be conscious about the presence and action of these factors. Some of authors prefer to underline the importance of psychological side in taking decisions. The managerial decision depends on a lot of factors, and of great importance are the psychosocial factors [5]. Psychosocial risk factors are those that can influence psychological moods of employees (manager in this case), and also can produce health problems [6]. They play a key role in determining a person to tackle with a difficult situation [7]. Psychosocial risk factors at work are problematic, having negative effects on employees, and this is one of the reasons why there is a need in looking for solutions to solving the problems produced by these. There is also a reaction from people regarding the action of these factors and it may consist in rejection, prevention, engagement (fighting), looking for solutions to reduce the effects, and other. Obviously, there are some situations when manager doesn't even realize the presence or action of these factors, but they'll see later the effects produced by these. This is one of the reasons why managers, and not only they, must have ideas about the influences produced by psychosocial risk factors at work, to reduce the effects and to use strategies concerning this fact. When defining risk psychosocial

factors, authors prefer to use words like: impact, action, influence, consequences, and so on. Strongly linked by the results of these factors in manager activity is the impact of manager illness. In this sense, Gatchel shows that managers are more exposed to risk of infarct than another professional category professional [8]. It is clear that these factors have a negative influence in manager's activity and especially in taking decisions. It is very important and also very well written in literature how these factors are acting on manager when he decides. Where do they influence? What is the sensitive point in manager personality that offers space to these factors and contributes to the changes in the whole decision process? All these questions are destined to help understand the way these factors are determinant on manager personality in taking decisions.

There are several ways of action of these factors, depending on every individual, and also on the way every manager reacts to this action.

In the literature there are some examples of these factors, many of them being very well known in everyday life. We can also find a list (no less than 13 risk factors) affecting the employee's work. [9].

One of the most known psychosocial risk factors is stress, probably the one with the biggest implication in manager's activity. The consequences of stress in our daily life are not an unknown subject. The effects it produces in organization is one of the most commonly presented topics by authors. One of them was talking about stress factors, highlighting the primacy of these in human activity. Manager's activity is a very complex one, having different duties, regarding both organization and employees that make the most fundamental and central point of Management. There is a certain thing that manager will feel stress especially in moments of strategic decisions that are so important for organization and for proposed strategies. This is explicable, especially from the importance of managerial decision, one the one hand, and also from the manager's personality, on the other hand. A decision is manager's duty, and stress seem to be the principal risk factor that can influence judgment, safety and manager efficacy in taking decisions. Stress in taking decision may be associated with time pressure, felt by manager in his organizational activity [11]. When authors speak about stress in manager's activity, they also use the term psychic exhaustion [12].

Generally, psychosocial risk factors may affect the work done by employees, and also managers. They can believe, as a result of the psychosocial risk factors, that they are no more productive in their

work, [13], which means reduction of self-esteem and of self-confidence in their activity.

3. Research

To obtain results, we used qualitative research, and the semi-structured interview as instrument, a technique that offer possibility to explore the research problem. Ours was strongly related to the way managers act in environmental field and perceive the influence of psychosocial risk factors in taking decisions. This is a research that opens new perspectives in understanding the processes and the mechanisms that occur in managerial decision in the environmental field.

The Interview:

1. What does it mean for you the act of taking a good and safe decision? What does it involve from your point of view?
2. How do you think your decision may be affected by different psychosocial factors? How do they act in your activity?
3. How do you feel the implication of stress in the decisional process? How is it like for you?
4. What are your personal strategies to manage the impact produced by these factors when taking decisions?
5. Do you feel you are exposed to such factors?
6. How do you manage to take a decision in the presence of psychosocial risk factors?
7. Do you think psychosocial risk factors act different in the field you work?

The participants:

The participants of this research are managers (15) that activate in environmental field at two different organizations in Iași.

4. Results

The results derived from manager's responses generally show that managers' awareness on the impact of psychosocial risk factors in taking decisions in organization. The results of this research have been divided in three main categories:

1. **The reality of the presence and impact of psychosocial factors in taking decisions at managers from environmental field.** There is no doubt about that manager's perception is linked to the implication of psychosocial factors in taking decisions. All the managers noted that they felt the presence and the impact of psychosocial factors in taking decisions in organization. At the beginning of

the interview, they received a list with some of psychosocial factors. After that, they've been asked to answer the questions. The notion of psychosocial factor seemed to be familiar for few managers, but once they've seen the list, they understood the significance of the term.

Managers preferred to detail about the main factor, which seemed to be the stress. When talking about the impact of stress in decisions, managers used words and expressions like: difficult, hard to decide, negative action, negative feelings, etc. For example, one of managers said: "It is almost impossible to make good decisions if you're feeling stressed. And, stress is so present in managers' activity, that is almost impossible to say I'm feeling out of stress". Another example shows us that stress can produce different behavior: "When I take decision, and I feel stress, I get nervous, irritated, and I have no patience. It is very important to stay calm and stay focus, to decide what's better for organization".

Another perspective of this topic showed us that some managers are already familiar with the presence of these factors: "Sometimes, I realize the influence of these factors, but I am so used to all of these, that I'm not surprised anymore. Somehow, I got used to be stressed when I have to take special decisions that are important for the future of organization".

There is also, a different perspective, that showed an opposite view of managers about the presence of these factors in manager's main activity. It is about the lack of importance given to these risk factors. On this issue, one of manager stated: "From my point of view, it is not important what factors influence your personality, but is more important to overcome all these actions, and stay calm, be yourself, and decide better and better. It is a duty to be like that".

2. The way psychosocial factors influence managers' personality in taking decisions in organization.

This topic presented us very interesting answers from managers, important aspects that must be known by them into organizations. If all of managers are aware of the presence of psychosocial risk factors, only a part of them can distinguish the strategy used for these factors in taking managerial decision. Few of them tried to avoid the answer in different ways.

For example, one manager said: "I cannot say clearly, how they act...it just happens". An alternative to avoid answer was to speak, generally, about decisions and manager's behavior in taking it. The managers that discern on the way psychosocial risk factors act on manager's personality, discussed about

the manner these factors proceeded in taking managerial decision. For example, one of them preferred to link the way of action with the effects produced: "These factors can change the way you think, you've prepared the decision, and also can produce different outcomes...anyway, there are perceptible changes because of these".

3. Personal tools used to manage the impact of these factors in taking decisions.

It is clearly that every manager has personal ways to respond to the action of risk factors. Even if for some of these they weren't immediately aware of, after some discussions and exploration, managers named some qualities or internal resources meant to offer self-confidence to manager, and to show that he responds and reacts to the action of these factors. Some of them claimed that the principal tool in these situations is power, understood as the way to react with all the heart into these situations: "I use my power to get over this influence". "I realize I must be very powerful when I'm stressed...otherwise, I can't take the best decisions". Sometimes, power is placed next to other resources: "You must have power and confidence to succeed". Another asset that managers own is past experience: "How to not use my experience to protect my decisions? I have experience, and I know how to react if I'm stressed, or anything like that". An interesting answer in describing personal strategy in managing situations related to the impact of risk factors is the following: "I use my whole personality to face these factors. It is a very good and efficient strategy".

4. The perception of manager in relation to the impact of psychosocial factors in environmental field.

Most managers state that taking decisions in environmental field isn't much different from other areas. They believe that, generally, there are not remarkable differences between the field they act and other ones.

However, there were few managers that claimed a difference related to this topic: "I believe it is more difficult to decide as manager working in this field. It is different from other areas...It is more stress; it is harder to decide".

5. Conclusions

The presence and the impact of psychosocial risk factors in taking managerial decisions represent a reality in all organizations. This study highlighted the managers' perspective about the impact and effects

produced by these factors, with a particular focus on stress. For managers that work in the environmental field, psychosocial risk factors affect and leave tracks in their personality in the process of taking decisions. Managers' vision about the influence of these factors shaped up different aspects linked to managerial decisions taken under uncertainty. Nevertheless, managers have their own tools that help them find the best alternatives in such situations.

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