

Research Article

Motivational Particularities among the Members of Successful and Unsuccessful Teams in Local Organizations

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ABSTRACT:

This article presents data from a study on the motivational peculiarities of team members (leader and subordinates) and their impact on the efficiency of individual and cooperative activities in local organizations. Projective diagnostics based on TAT were used as the main research method. The method of ranked, expert evaluations was used to determine the level of successful of the functional teams. The object of the study was represented by 20 teams, each of which was a unit or administrative department of a local organization. The power motivation of each team member was measured, which subsequently allowed two criteria for analysis to be identified: the common factor of team power motivation (as the mean), and the coefficient of the dominant power motivation in the system "leader – subordinate". The results confirmed that successful and unsuccessful teams possess different characteristics in the expression of power motivation on the selected criteria, and the combinations of the expression of power motivation in the "leader-subordinate" system plays a critical role. We were thus able to identify significant psychological and acmeological determinants of power motivation, related to the gender and age of leaders. These identified trends allow us to reveal new aspects in the "supervisor – subordinate" system and to identify methods of increasing the efficiency of management and personnel activities, and the success of functional and interpersonal interaction.

Keywords: Functional team, power motivation, activity efficiency, local organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Motivational particularities are one of the key factors determining the success of both individual and cooperative activities. Considering the question of management efficiency, numerous studies in psychology and management over the past 50 years have pointed out three basic social motives. Taking all of them together allows us to predict a result: motivation for achievement, power, and affiliation. Each of them presupposes the existence and participation of other people who

may appreciate achievements and contribute to them, be included in the system of power relations, and communicate with each other for the sake of the specific tasks and overall objectives of the organization (Vasyakin et al, 2015). Considering of the phenomenon of power, its value and role in the social life of a person is a current topic in the context of the contemporary transformation of power structures. Power as "a global phenomenon inherent in human society" (Hekhuizen, 2003)

has a long tradition of analysis in the history of social ideas. The genesis of power led to the multidimensionality of its manifestations in various spheres of life and thus to the constant formulation of new issues in studying it for scientists. The psychological aspect of power motivation drew attention to itself for the first time in neo-Freudian studies and was declared as one of the main motives of human social behavior. In subsequent years, researchers have repeatedly addressed the phenomenon of power by analyzing both the notion of power in psychology and the effect of power, such as individual differences and correlation with other personality characteristics (Simon et al., 1950; Sinyagin, 1995; Winter, 1988; Rean et al., 2013; Vasyakin et al., 2016).

There are different points of view in understanding the psychological characteristics of power motivation. According to A. Adler (1997) the will to power (dominance over others) is the main driving force behind human behavior and activities. Instead of sexual attraction (which, according to Z. Freud (2005), is the basic motivating factor of human behavior), A. Adler (1997) introduces another desire - the desire for power. In accordance with the ideas of his "individual psychology", the desire for power over other people allows a person to compensate for a feeling of inferiority. Deficiencies, various physical defects, or the dependence of a child on adults are all experienced as an inferiority complex. By striving for power people are trying to compensate for this complex. For example, a boy with physical disabilities may intensively develop a certain skill and thereby seek power to compensate for his physical defect.

A sense of power, according to K. Horney (1942), may occur within a normal person because of a realization (or awareness) of his ability and strength. His pursuit of power can be caused by political or family circumstances and ideas. However, the neurotic desire for power, per K. Horney (1942), arises out of anxiety, hatred, and feelings of inferiority. In other words, the normal pursuit of power arises from a sense of strength, while a neurotic pursuit comes from weakness.

E. Fromm (1976) deduced power motivation to be from the desire of an individual to avoid isolation (loneliness). The subject of power (sadist), according to E. Fromm (1976), is completely dependent on a weak human that he controls. Per Fromm, the desire for power is predetermined not by strength but by the weakness and the inability of the person to stand up for himself and live by his own power. The desire for power is an attempt to acquire a feeling of power when real power is not enough. Power and strength are different terms. One could be a strong person without seeking power. But at the same time another one could experience its own powerlessness and would seek power to compensate. The feeling of weakness causes a sadistic desire for domination. Conversely, when the individual feels his strength and ability to realize his own capabilities, he doesn't need dominance over other people and he doesn't aspire to power.

E. Fromm (1976) proposed the term "authoritarian personality." People with this kind of personality enjoy power and want to obey. At the same time, they strive to be in power to make others obey them. Such a person divides all people into strong and weak categories. Power automatically causes a sense of love and willingness to obey and is attractive in and of itself because that is its essence. Conversely, weak individuals and organizations ipso facto cause disdain and contempt. The very appearance of a weak person causes a desire to attack, debase, and suppress. Another person may be terrified just by thinking of attacking weaker people or humiliating others. But the more weak and helpless the victim is, the more the authoritarian personality feels anger and a desire to humiliate.

D. McClelland (1987) defines power motivation, firstly, as a need to feel strong and, secondly, to manifest one's power in action. He supposes that impact on other people is only one of many ways to satisfy the need to feel strong. D. McClelland distinguishes the sources of power and its ends; moreover, both the former and the latter may be either the subject itself or its environment. Accordingly, there are four stages of power motivation development: (I)

assimilation, (II) autonomy, (III) self-affirmation, (IV) productivity. In the author's opinion, these four stages may be supposed to represent the successive stages of maturation which a person goes through in the process of his or her development.

Numerous theoretical and experimental studies exist in world practice but the problem is insufficiently developed in Russian psychology (Efimova et al., 2015). For a long time the will to power as a psychological characteristic of personality was not considered as possible or acceptable, and thus was not considered as a component of effective activities of an individual or of a command. The idea of the collective itself has also changed. So, now an increasing number of researchers consider the team as the main unit of organizational activities, which is ambiguous and, along with rising interest in it, has been controversial for foreign and domestic authors (Salakhova et al., 2016a; Masalimova et al., 2014).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main difficulties in measuring motivation with questionnaires are related to the decrease of accuracy in the subject's answers due to factors of social desirability or defensive motivation (Bodalev, Stolin & Avanesov, 2000; Salakhova et al., 2016b). Numerous productive studies on motivation made using projective techniques, based on the analysis of products of imagination and fantasy (TAT, S. Rosenzweig (1949), various modifications), as well as the detection of indicators of the need for power in the content of verbal texts (Winter, 1988), allowed us to make assumptions about the possibility of a projective measurement of power motivation.

So, a modification of a procedure for measuring achievement motivation, produced by us under the guidance of Y.V. Sinyagin (1995), proposed by R.S. Nemov (1995) and based on the idea TAT, was used as a method for identifying power motivation. The technique was that subjects would be asked in writing for a specific, predetermined outline interpreting a series of stories made of unspecified images, depicting people in various situations. Afterward, the test subject was provided with four textual

descriptions, each of which were subjected to content analysis according to certain categories. Note that already in the 1960s and 1970s D. McClelland (1987) used the diagnostic capabilities of TAT to plan and implement motivational training courses to strengthen achievement motivation among merchants in the US and India. Overall, the diagnostic measurements before and after the training courses showed that they had a definite effect. The share of active entrepreneurs increased from 18% to 51% (against 22% that had not passed training), higher rates of employment were recorded, as well as increasing standards of living for more than 1000 families engaged in small and medium-sized businesses (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982).

The object of the study was represented by 20 functional teams. We have used the term "functional teams" in accordance with the classification of G. Parker (2003). In his opinion, an army unit can serve as an example of this type, as well as any pyramidal structure (with a leader and his or her commands). Most organizations are based on this principle and do not contain any other teams except the functional one. In our study, each team included a leader (1st person) and subordinates, while in some cases there was also a deputy head (acting as the 2nd person). Each team represented a unit or department of the administration of local organizations with strictly defined functions.

Using the technique mentioned above the intensity of power motivation was measured for each of the team members. We made a hypothesis about the impact of the intensity of the team members' power motivation on the success of the team as a whole. To analyze this hypothesis, we identified some parameters:

First, I determined the *general factor of power motivation* for the team as a whole. This was calculated as the average of the intensity of power motivation for all team members.

Secondly, I determined the *prevalence of power motivation intensity among the leader or the subordinates*. Initially the average of the intensity of power motivation among the subordinates was calculated, which was then deducted from the intensity of power motivation

of the leader. Thus, a coefficient with a minus sign indicates a greater intensity of power motivation (PM) among subordinates, while the plus sign means greater intensity for the leader. The *success of the teams' activity* was selected as the third parameter measured using the method of expert evaluations. Let's expand upon this point.

The method of expert evaluations is essential to studying the sphere of governance, which is one the most effective, if not the only tool for dealing with this problem. In our study we considered as experts leaders in higher positions who were familiar with the work of the teams we had chosen. They were asked to order individual cards with the names of the teams on the criterion of successful performance of their functions. This ranking method was chosen on the grounds that "the reliability of a ranking with a small number of objects (20-30) is higher than simply scoring individually" (Mikhailova et al., 2013; Ovsyaniket.al., 2016).

Then, based on these data, the average ranking of a team was calculated. Based on the fact that the maximum possible value was equal to 20, 10

was proposed as the boundary between "successful" and "unsuccessful". As a result, the first 11 teams were assigned to "successful" and last 9 to "unsuccessful". Further analysis occurred by comparing the parameters of the "successful" and "unsuccessful" teams.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

These parameters, namely, the general factor of power motivation, the prevalence of power motivation intensity in the "leader – subordinate" system, and the success of teams' activity in particular were compared using a graphical method. It has been possible to identify the following trends.

First, the typical features of "successful" teams are (Fig.1):

- the power motivation of the team as a whole is slightly above average;
- in the prevalence of motivation in the "leader – subordinate" system, there is a significant difference between the indicators of the leader, on the one hand, and subordinates, on the other, however, it is not important whose power motivation is more intense.

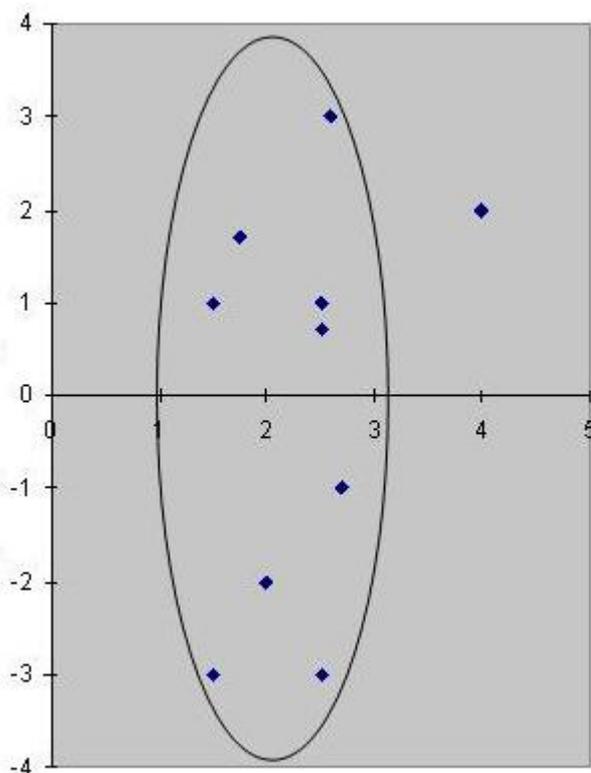


Figure1. The distribution of "successful" teams in the parameters of the power motivation of the team in general (X-axis) and the prevalence of the desire for power in the "leader – subordinate" system (Y-axis)

Researchers have noted that a medium amount of power motivation in the leader is the most favorable for successful management (McClelland, 1995; Hermann, 1986). Our data indicate the success of team activities when the intensity of its power motivation was approximately at this level. In which case, the team isn't considered as a grouping (with the meaning per G. Simon (1995): "A team in an organization whose primary purpose is the seizure of power in the organization – a *grouping*") and does not "close" the performance of their direct functions with struggle for power (Simon, Smithburg & Thomson, 1995). However, taking the power relations in the organization into account allows us to coordinate the actions necessary for directing the team (Gnedova et al., 2015; Lipatova et al., 2015).

The difference between the indices of the leader on the one hand, and the subordinates on the other, can be seen as a "balance" in the power motivation of the leader and the subordinates (which is reflected in the above average desire for power of the team in general). At the same

time, one of the links in the "leader – subordinate" system has strong power motivation and "pulls up" the team to, as you might expect show off its "best side" to the administration. So, R. Stogdill (1948), having analyzed many studies, has shown that a similarity in the attitudes and perception of roles between leaders and the administration leads to a preference for the leaders by the latter, and in this case they are estimated by the management as more effective. M. Balm (Andreeva, 1994), studying interpersonal perception on three levels of the hierarchy, came to this conclusion: a leader, identifying him or herself with the "management" is evaluated "from above" as leading a more productive group than one which identifies himself with the administration to a lesser extent.

Second, "unsuccessful" teams are characterized by (Fig.2):

- a lack of trends in the power motivation of the team as a whole,
- a prevalence of "leader-subordinate" system characterized by minimal differences in the desire for power between them.

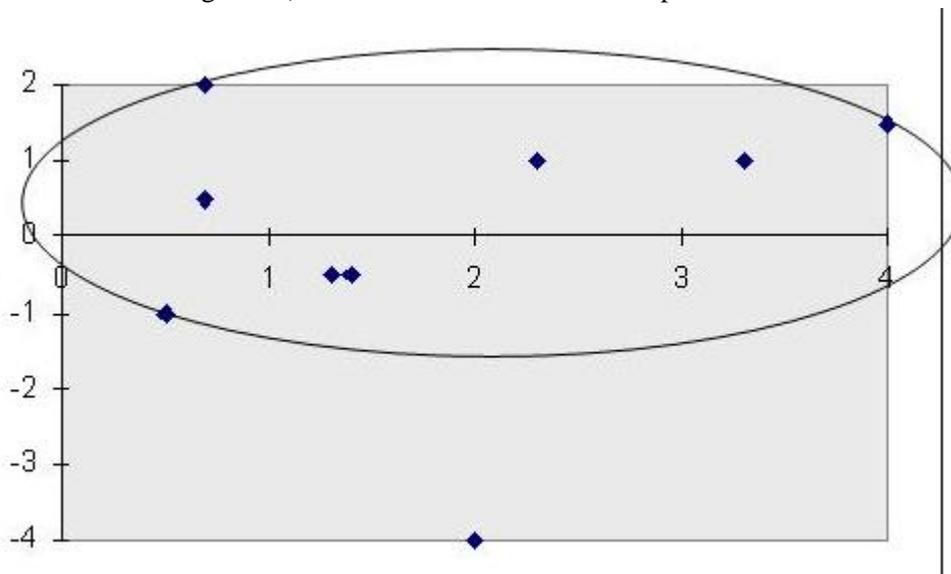


Figure 2. The distribution of "unsuccessful" teams in the parameters of the power motivation of the team in general (X-axis) and the prevalence of the desire for power in the "leader – subordinate" system (Y-axis). In this case, it is first of all interesting that the difference between the power motivation of the leader and the subordinates is minimal. The total ratio can be either high (i.e. the power motivation is high among the leader and the subordinates), or medium and low (similarly). In the first case, the team can aspire to power (at the expense of its main functions, taking the role of a grouping, as per G. Simon (1950) or in the second, just pay no attention to it (power) (remaining "unnoticed" and "unvalued" by the administration, as per R. M. Stogdill (1948) and M. Balm (Andreeva, 1994). Thus, there is a real or "apparent" lack of success of the team (Masalimova et al., 2016). Thirdly, some aspects were briefly considered that may be of interest in connection with the stated theme. It came to our attention that

success may possibly depend on some characteristics of the team leaders. We considered such characteristics as power motivation, gender, age, and the ages of the children in the family. Significant results were obtained when comparing the oldest and youngest children in the family, on the one hand, and middle children on the other (significance of 5%), namely: among "successful" teams oldest and youngest children predominate as the leaders while middle children are not encountered, and among "unsuccessful" teams the majority of leaders (56%) are middle children. It can be noted that the most successful are oldest children (63% in the group "successful" and 33% "unsuccessful"), then youngest (37% and 11%, respectively), and, finally, middle (0% and 56%).

Among the leaders of teams successful and unsuccessful in their work, the ratio between men and women is approximately the same. However, the teams experts judged the most successful and less successful had men as leaders. The question remains whether this distribution is the result of actual trends (for methods of assessment of achievement motivation, proposed by R. S. Nемов (1995), women have scores that are slightly lower than men (in this sample), but not statistically significant; while women leaders show a higher achievement motivation than women who are not leaders) or whether it is "apparent", stereotypical lack of success from the point of view of male experts of enterprise management. It is worth noting that each female leader of a successful team was the first born child in the family (while among men there were also younger children), while female leaders of unsuccessful teams are mostly middle children (same as men).

CONCLUSION

First, the power motivation in the leader and the subordinates has an impact on the success of functional cooperation in the team. The combination of power motivation intensity in team members plays a significant role.

Second, there are psychological and acmeological determinants of power motivation, such as the specific impact of individual

characteristics and personal development throughout life, the influence of the social environment, and the specificity of education and patterns of behavior.

Third, the psychological-acmeological support of the activity management teams will lead to improvements in the accuracy of expert assessment from the management, for example through the development of effective schemes of attributive processes in different situations, and to develop a professional identity and professional outlook of leaders and subordinates, which will increase the efficiency of management teams (Mikhailova, Sedunova&Salakhova, 2013).

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