Applying Metaphor in the Motivational Process within the Organizations

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Abstract:
Through motivation, managers are looking to fulfil certain needs of employees with the purpose that this way, through their behaviours and actions, they can more easily achieve the goals of the organization. Motivation addresses some needs, tensions of the employee that he needs to fulfil. But, in order for motivation to have results, we must consider that once a need or tension is fulfilled, it is no longer generating motivation. The metaphor using analogies form explanations that have the role of passing the barrier of the consciousness. The metaphor makes different connexions between the processes, symbols, situations and behaviour of the respective employee. These elements improve communication with the help of words, expressions and stories. Using metaphor in the motivation process of employees has allowed: to surpass resistance in the communication process by using analogies because they induce for that employee a possible solution of the problem, using analogies induces a certain way to solve problems, it allows for an easier transmission of information. In the motivation process, by using the motivational triggers, special constructions, verbs in active voice, it helps to easily transmit messages towards the employees but they also have the ability to make the message last in time after reaching the recipient. It can be appreciated that the metaphor has a more efficient effect in the motivational process than traditional theories, because they address the employee directly, and the commands it sends to it do not depend on the direct way of fulfilling some needs of the respective employee.

Keywords: metaphor, motivational process, organization, neuro linguistic programming, process

Motivation represents the convergence of the individual aspirations with those from the level of the organization [3]. Through motivation, managers are looking to fulfil certain needs of employees with the purpose that this way, through their behaviours and actions, they can more easily achieve the goals of the organization. Performance depends on two main factors: motivation and the professional activities of the employee. The two factors are interdependent: the decrease or increase of one of them will lead to the general decrease or increase of the performance of the employee.

In Figure 1 the factors that ensure an efficient motivation in the organization are presented. In order for motivation to be effective, it must answer to three questions: how can the behaviour of an employee be activated, how can the behaviour of an employee be oriented and how can this behaviour be maintained for a certain period of time.
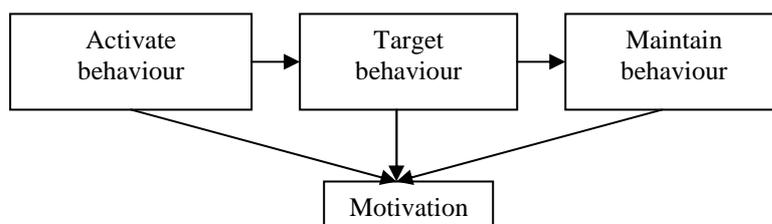

Figure 1. Factors ensuring an efficient motivation
Source: prepared by the author

Motivation addresses some needs, tensions of the employee that he needs to fulfil. But, in order for motivation to have results, we must consider that once a need or tension is fulfilled, it is no longer generating motivation.

The roles acting in the organization influence directly the actions and behaviour of the employee. In Figure 2 the influence of the organizational roles on employees is presented.
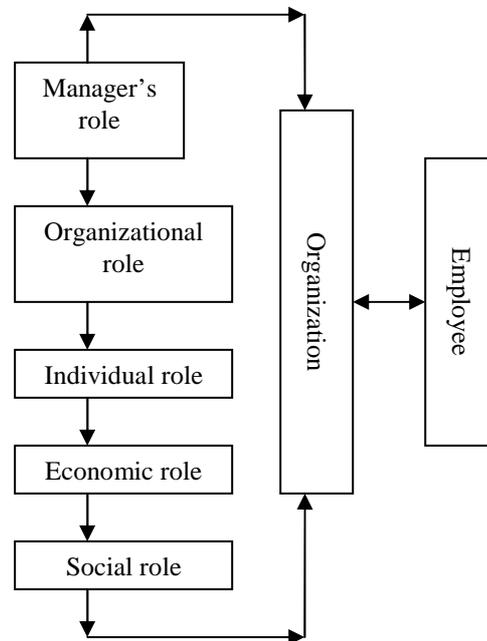

Figure 2 Influence of the organizational roles on employees
Source: prepared by the author

- The Manager's role – by its training function, it sets the other four managerial main functions in motion: prevision, organization, coordination, control- evaluation.
- The organizational role – shows the impact of motivation on the performance of the organization.
- The individual role – shows a directly proportional relation between the employee satisfaction and the motivation they receive at the level of the organization.
- The economic role – is different from the type of motivation used in the organization.
- The social role – is a role composed of all the others, its quality and intensity depending on the previous ones.

There are various motivational theories, including: Lopez's typology, Longenecker and Pringle's typology, McGregor's theory, Maslow's theory, Herzberg's theory, Vroom's theory, contingency approach.

The Lopez typology divides motivation in three main factors: mechanical, psychosocial and anthropological. If for the first two factors the accent in motivation comes from the exterior, for the third, the accent comes from the inside and is considered as being the most important factor because it incorporates both knowledge, traditions, a certain work style, etc.

The Longenecker and Pringle typology considers that all motivational theories are divided into content and process theories. Content motivational theories take into consideration only those factors that motivate employees directly, thus helping them succeed in improving their performance. Process motivational theories focus on the way in which motivation is performed starting from the construction of this process, choosing the best alternatives and finally evaluating the results.

McGregor's theory has led to the emergence of two theories: X theory and Y theory. X theory considers that the employee is not ambitious and is negligent, avoids work, the changes in

the organization. In these conditions, the employee must be forced to achieve the goals from the level of the organization. Y theory considers that the employee is hard-working and avoids punishments, assumes responsibilities, so the employee willingly participates in achieving the goals of the organization. Z theory, developed by William Ouchi, considers that the employee is neither ambitious nor negligent, does not avoid work, but is not too hard-working, accepts the changes in the organization at a medium level. Thus, Z theory represents a merge of the two theories elaborated by McGregor.

Maslow's theory states that before an employee can be motivated, he/she needs to fulfil his/her elementary needs: physiological, safety and security, group affiliation, social status. Self-achievement has motivational value for an employee, only if the other four needs have been met [3].

Herzberg's theory is a particularity of Maslow's theory and considers that an employee needs hygiene and motivational factors to be motivated. Herzberg considers, as well as Maslow, that if the hygiene factors in the organization are met, then these will help in the application of motivational factors.

Vroom's theory considers that the expectations represent the motivational engine of an employee. Within this theory, there are three component elements: the desire to do something, the expectations of the employee and the performance - results relation.

The contingency approach follows the identification of as many elements as possible that can influence the motivation of employees in an organization targeting: internal and external environment of the company, management system, employee feedback. This way, motivation is personalized according to as many particular elements of the organization as possible, having as a final purpose the supply of motivational information as close as possible to the specific of each entity.

It can be thus concluded that there are three main variables determining the intensity of motivation: individual, organizational and contextual variables [3]. These variables are influenced in turn by certain needs of the employees: economic, cognitive and emotional needs. In Figure.3 the influence of the main variables in an organization on the motivation of the employee is presented.
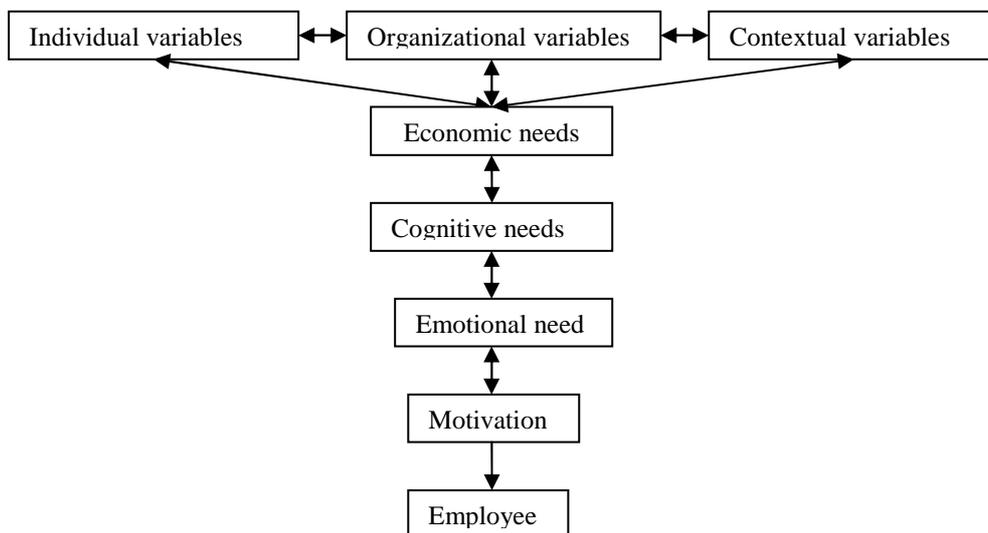

Figure 3. Influence of the main variables in an organization on the motivation of the employee
Source: Scheme adapted from [3]

The stronger the individual, organizational and contextual variables are, the bigger the economic, cognitive and emotional needs that must be fulfilled are. This way, variables and needs are interdependent and influence in the same way the level of motivation of the employee.

The metaphor using analogies form explanations that have the role of passing the barrier of the consciousness [4]. The metaphor is based on two elements: isomorphism and symbolism. Through isomorphism, the metaphor transforms certain information from the environment according to the previous experiences of the respective employee. Through symbolism, the metaphor is structured on certain elements. The main construction of a metaphor is as when. This has both the role to make comparisons as well as a persuasion role reported to the information the employee receives from the environment. The effect of metaphors is extremely powerful because it acts directly, passing all the conscious barriers that the respective employee has.
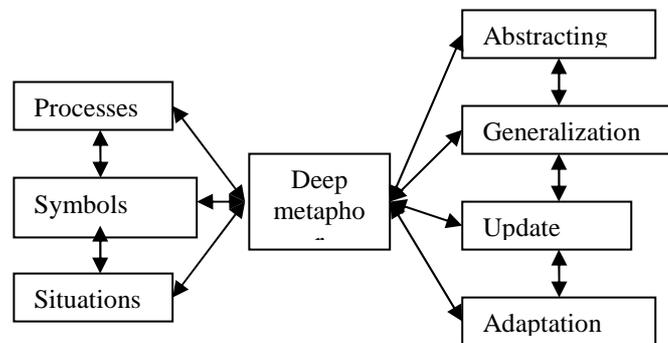

Figure 4 The effect of the metaphor on the processes and symbols of the employee
Source: prepared by the author

Metaphors can be divided into surface metaphors and deep metaphors. Surface metaphor has the behaviour of comparisons and uses constructions like: likes, or, as. Deep metaphors target the relations that are established between the processes and symbols that an employee uses. Deep metaphors lead to their abstraction, generalization, update and adaptation [6]. In img. no.4 the effect of deep metaphors on the processes and symbols of an employee is presented.

The metaphor makes different connexions between the processes, symbols, situations and behaviour of the respective employee. These elements improve communication with the help of words, expressions and stories. The main idea is to make the information as accessible as possible for the respective employee [5]. This way, the information becomes even more easily accessible by that employee.

In Figure 5 we present the functioning scheme of the metaphor. This can be applied in optimal conditions at the level of the companies, if the employees possess an average level of using verbal language, if there are no powerful communication barriers in the organization and if the employees have a minimum creative language.
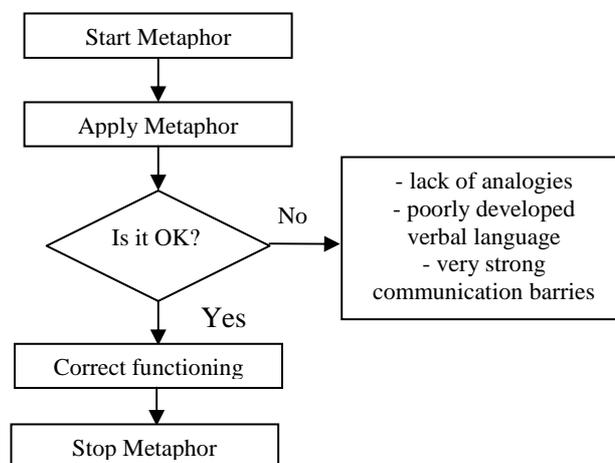

Figure 5 Logical functioning scheme of the metaphor
Source: prepared by the author

Metaphors are used by an employee to capture reality as well as possible [1]. Using metaphor leads to making particular the information received from the environment by de respective employee. Metaphors can, by using certain linguistic markers, change some perceptions and redirect their basic meaning.
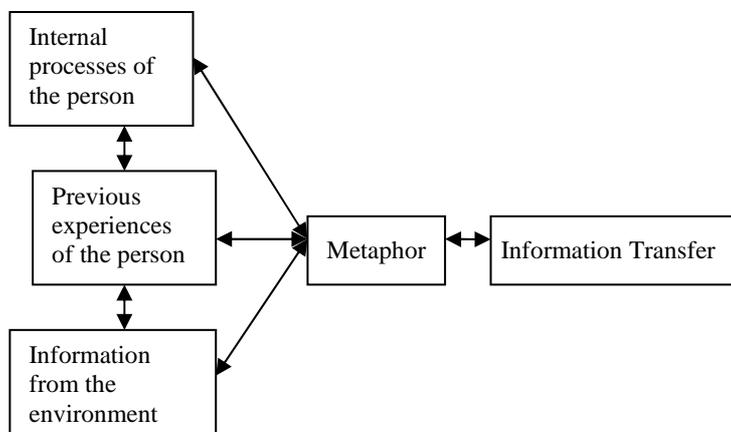

Figure 6 Transfer of information in the case of the metaphor
Source: prepared by the author

Metaphors have the ability to make connections between the different internal processes of an employee and the stimuli from the external environment where he/she acts. Through the analogies used, the metaphor forces the conscious to find solutions to the different problems it is dealing with.

In Figure.6 we present the transfer of information in the framework of the metaphor. The solution found is always made particular reported to the previous experiences of the respective employee. Metaphors have a transfer role for information because they connect the internal processes of the employee, his/her previous experiences and the information from the environment. Through the transfer of information, the metaphor generates a certain linguistic structure describing the analogy involved in the metaphor [2]. Metaphors have the quality to represent reality in an extremely simple manner.

Applying metaphor in the motivational process of the company's employees

In the motivational process, special constructions are used with the help of metaphors. They use action verbs, using active voice, reported to the main sensory system of the respective employee, motivational triggers so that the construction gives a particularized answer for that employee.

Using metaphor in the motivational process helps: break the barriers of the conscious, use motivational triggers and special constructions with the purpose of sending a certain message to obtain from this an immediate answer.

Using metaphor in the motivation process of employees has allowed: to surpass resistance in the communication process by using analogies because they induce for that employee a possible solution of the problem, using analogies induces a certain way to solve problems, it allows for an easier transmission of information. In the motivation process, by using the motivational triggers, special constructions, verbs in active voice, it helps to easily transmit messages towards the employees but they also have the ability to make the message last in time after reaching the recipient. The more often these constructions are used, the stronger they act on the targeted employees. The metaphor has the advantage of directly addressing the employee at the unconscious level, of breaking his/her barriers at the level of the unconscious and of forcing him/her to find internal resources to achieve a certain goal.

In order for motivation to be efficient, it directs towards activating, orienting and supporting behaviour. Motivation to achieve results considers the fulfilment of the needs and tensions of an

employee. But, when a need or tension is met, it no longer generates motivation. Motivational theories mainly consider the internal and external factors of an employee, the processes he/she undergoes or the fulfilment of basic needs. New theories accentuate motivational particularization, insisting on all the elements that might influence it, among which we find: the internal, external environment, the management system and employee feedback. In conclusion, motivational theories are focused on modifying the behaviour of an employee with the purpose of motivating him/her so that he/she completes better actions and finally allows, through his/her actions, for the organization to achieve its proposed goals.

Metaphor has, at the basis of its functioning, the comparison, directly affecting the conscious of the respective employee, passing the barrier of the conscious. Metaphor uses linguistic markers – special constructions, motivational triggers – which have the role of making connections between the internal processes of the employee and the stimuli from the exterior environment. In conclusion, it can be appreciated that the metaphor acts on the conscious, passes the barrier of the conscious and the commands it launches have a large range of action and a high probability of achievement.

It can be appreciated that the metaphor has a more efficient effect in the motivational process than traditional theories, because they address the employee directly, and the commands it sends to it do not depend on the direct way of fulfilling some needs of the respective employee.

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