EMPLOYEES' WORKPLACE VALUES IN THE LIGHT OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

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Purpose: This study aimed to identify the values held by employees in their workplace in the light of the literature review.

Design/methodology/approach: A literature analysis and critique was applied. A non-systematic literature review was conducted using Google Scholar and PubMed scientific databases. The scientific items were complemented by industry literature and online sources on the issues addressed.

Findings: The broad spectrum of people's values in the work environment is derived from their personal values, age, gender, and race, as well as the industry they work in, company policies, and team relationships. Some values may become obsolete and lose their validity over time. There are also those we are only reminded of in crises, such as safety in the workplace.

Research limitations/implications: The literature review was based only on two selected scientific databases, Google Scholar and PubMed. Moreover, the literature search used a specific combination of keywords using a Boolean operator, which may have omitted other scientific items in the database.

Practical implications: An employer should examine the values of its employees to create optimal working conditions. Employees work better when surrounded by people with similar values, enhancing loyalty and job satisfaction. Employees' values in the workplace evolve depending on their personal and professional life stages.

Social implications: Differences in the values valued by employees should be considered in human capital management and in creating the conditions for the proper performance of job duties. Conscious management by values (ethical-social, emotional-developmental) is the basis for building employee well-being in a diverse work environment.

Originality/value: The treatment of issues treating the values professed by employees in the workplace is based mainly on foreign literature on the subject, enriching the previous scientific output on human capital in the enterprise, signalling the authors' contribution to the development of the discipline of management and quality sciences. The article primarily addresses researchers and scholars dealing with human resource management, organisation values, and work sociology. The work may also interest students in sociology, psychology, and pedagogy. In addition, the article is of value to managers and leaders of groups and teams dealing with organisational behaviour and communication in organisations.

Keywords: value, employee, workplace, human capital.

Category of the paper: General review.

1. Introduction

Employees' workplace values determine their work and are essential in modern organisations' functioning. They influence the commitment to work and, thus, the productivity of employees (Jarecki, 2019). In addition, the information obtained about employees' values can help organise their work, build motivation and remuneration systems, and create career paths (Jarecki, 2012). This situation is because, in this day and age, employers should be concerned with creating an environment for employee well-being in the context of their values. Such action is desirable as it gives companies a competitive advantage to thrive in an uncertain business environment (Salem et al., 2023). The perspective of young people is fascinating here, as they are more likely to be motivated and shaped as employees (Jarecki, 2016).

This study aims to identify the values held by employees in their workplace in the light of the literature. To achieve the stated aim, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the determinants of employees' values in the workplace?
2. What values do employees most often point to in their workplace?

2. Research Methodology

The research method used in this study was literature analysis and critique. For this purpose, a non-systematic literature review was conducted using Google Scholar and PubMed scientific databases. The search for relevant literature was based on the following condition using keywords and a Boolean operator: "value* AND employee* AND workplace*". Among the 52 bibliographic sources, there were scientific articles (30), books (2), and chapters from monographs (2). The scientific items were complemented by professional literature and Internet sources on the issues addressed (18). The paper combined "Results" and "Discussion", which made it possible to present the literature review results and discuss their implications in the same section. This arrangement made the article more concise and focused, allowing the results to be directly linked to the research questions.

3. Results and Discussion

The concept of value at work is derived from general values. S.H. Schwartz (1992) defines values at work as desirable states, goals, and behaviours considered standard and chosen from a group of alternative behaviours. Bissett (2014) defines workplace values as those individuals

hold and influence their attitudes towards the workplace. For Busacca et al. (2010), values at work are a crucial element of work-related motivation and personal goal setting.

The values held by employees vary and depend on several factors such as age, gender, race, education, work experience, industry or life situation (Bissett, 2014; Chirchir, 2016; Mortimer, Finch, Maruyama, 2019; Yu, 2021). In addition, values can be determined by organisational culture (Baumgartner, 2020; Herrity, 2022; Vakharia, 2018; Yohn, 2021), leadership (Das, Pattanayak, 2023; Klein et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2018; *Values-Based Leadership*, 2022), company policy (Hannig, n.d.; Kelly, 2020; Panel®, n.d.; Rebello, 2021; Willige, 2021), working conditions (e.g. job security, gender equality, equal opportunities) (Bashir et al., 2020; Byars et al., 2018; Hasan et al., 2021; Moody, O'Donnell, 2019; Yang et al., 2021), team relations (Factorial, 2020; *Importance Of Teamwork In Relationships And Business / BetterHelp*, 2023; Satell, Windschitl, 2021; Seppälä, McNichols, 2022), professional development opportunities (Martech, 2023; Parsons, 2022), work-life balance (Lupu, Ruiz-Castro, 2021; Panda, Sahoo, 2021). Furthermore, the research confirms differences in the values held at work by people from different generations (Twenge et al., 2010; Westerman, Yamamura, 2007).

S. Schwartz (2012) identified 10 fundamental human values that he believes are shared across cultures and then collated these values into four groups: transcending the self (universalism, benevolence), openness to change (self-direction, stimulation, hedonism), self-enhancement (achievement, power, hedonism), conservatism (conformity, tradition, security). Hedonism has been classified into two groups. Some of these values are contradictory, while others are compatible. According to the author, individuals and groups fundamentally differ because of their importance to these values. This situation means that people prioritise the same values differently because they are essential to them to a different degree.

Researchers (Ros et al., 1999) divided employees' values into three groups. The first is external values, such as financial remuneration and the possibility of promotion. The second group - intrinsic values - assigns values using which the employee can express himself, such as work variety and autonomy. The third group of values is related to the social sphere and concerns, among other things, the relationships created by employees, teamwork or joint action for the benefit of the community. Sullivan et al. (2002) identified employees' most commonly held workplace values: achieving results, reason, recognition, the opportunity to use one's abilities and skills, respect, quality, responsibility, creativity, and customer focus.

In turn Górniak (2017) proposed a set of 24 values that, in the author's opinion, can influence greater employee engagement. These are (in alphabetical order): selfless help, keeping things in order, appreciation of improving competence, appreciation of commitment, willingness to resolve conflicts, camaraderie, compromise, creativity, responsibility, openness to criticism, openness to others' ideas, openness towards others, seeking new opportunities, firmness about demands, honesty, boldness in expressing one's opinion, improving the good, ability to take example from others, attentive listening to others, willingness to contribute to change,

cooperation in achieving goals, forbearance towards mistakes made by co-workers, mutual trust, broadening one's knowledge. According to Dai et al. (2022), one of the most essential values in the workplace is safety, understood as meeting standards of appropriate working conditions. It is inextricably linked to employees' well-being and physical and mental health.

In their working environment, employees look for people with similar values. This situation can happen consciously and unconsciously (Abbasi et al., 2023). Research conducted in this area (Adkins et al., 1994; Billsberry, 2007; Chatman, 1991; Meglino et al., 1992; Yu, Verma, 2019) demonstrates that congruence of values at work leads to positive outcomes, i.e. job satisfaction, higher commitment and also reduces the risk of employees leaving on their initiative. In addition, when the values of individual employees align with those of others in the work environment, conflicts do not often arise between them. When they do, they are quickly mitigated. The overlap of employee values promotes more effective and efficient work (Leung, 2013). In addition, the study (Yang et al., 2022) has shown that the unity of employees' values with their employer strongly impacts their sense of self-efficacy and high levels of belonging to the organisation.

Consequently, employees develop a sense of responsibility for their functioning in the workplace and are encouraged to contribute more effort to the organisation's development. In general, values that were held in the past are now becoming obsolete. Indeed, research shows that each generation is characterised by different workplace values (Twenge et al., 2010).

4. Limitations

This article contains limitations. Firstly, the literature review was based only on two selected scientific databases, Google Scholar and PubMed, which may have limited the number and value of search results for relevant items. Second, the literature search used a specific combination of keywords using a Boolean operator, which may have omitted other scientific items in the database. Industry literature and electronic sources on the subject matter were used to supplement the analysis.

5. Conclusions and Practical Implications

Through a literature review, the authors' findings indicate a wide variety of values presented in the workplace. Answering the first research question posed in the Introduction, it can be said that the determinants of employees' values in the workplace are age, gender, race, education, work experience, industry, employees' life situation, organisational culture, leadership,

company policies, working conditions, team relations, professional development opportunities, work-life balance, and generational differences. Regarding the second research question, it should be noted that employees in their workplace most often indicate the following values: creativity, achievement of results/goals, appreciation of commitment, and responsibility.

Several practical implications have been developed based on the content of the academic and industry positions analysed. Firstly, an employer should take the time to examine the values valued among its employees, enabling it to prepare optimal working conditions for them. Secondly, people with similar values come to companies with a clear and precise value system. Such congruence influences employer branding. Thirdly, employees feel and work better when surrounded by people (colleagues, superiors) with similar values. This situation positively impacts adaptation, employee identification with the workplace, loyalty, more significant commitment, and job satisfaction, i.e., attitudes, behaviour and performance. This situation is a good starting point for building a sustainable, value-based organisational culture. Finally, employees' values in the workplace change depending on the stage of the employee's personal and professional life. Therefore, respect for the different values resulting from generational differences is the basis for building motivation systems, creating career paths, and employee well-being.

Despite the identified limitations, this article may provide a basis for more extensive research in the future, which could cover additional or quite different academic bases. In addition, the present paper offers a theoretical basis for a CAWI survey on a group of working students from two selected universities, which will be the subject of a subsequent article treating the values held by working part-time students in the context of their implementation in the workplace. Finally, the present work may begin a series of articles dealing with the issue of values held by employees in terms of different professional groups or generations.

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