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The Influence of the Motivational Factors on Work Performance

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Abstract: The employee motivation at the organizational level is naturally quantified in achieving performance goals. In this paper are studied the motivational factors from the perspective of employee work performance reflected, vertically, in the organizational performance and further in the macroeconomic performance. Using an empirical study in which the observed data were obtained through a survey conducted in this year among the Romanian employees, in this paper we validate three hypotheses that establish the association of employee performance, on the one hand with proactive personality traits and on the other hand with certain motivational factors. As well, we highlight some managerial implications that can contribute to increasing workplace performance by using of appropriate motivational factors.

Keywords: *Motivation; Work performance; Motivational factors.*

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1. Introduction

First of all, we must emphasize that our discussion is placed in the context of the current political and economic situation. According to Johnson and Duberley (2000), since the 1980s, researchers have noticed the need to adapt knowledge to the conditions of random economic and social reality, instability, developing in the general theory of epistemology, the so-called current of Postmodernism. These features are now exacerbated by the reality of today, in which, globally, the economy is going through an unprecedented crisis, the health crisis COVID-19 being quickly succeeded by the political and social crisis generated by the Armed Conflict in Ukraine. The severe impact on the business environment has caused, generated a number of challenges for both researchers and practitioners in the economic field.

The fluctuations of the socio-economic conditions test as follows, the capacity of organizations flexibility, of fast adaptation as well as the speed of response and the resistance of the human resource in front of the inevitable changes.

Also, the character of ambiguity associated by the human resource, with any renewal program, entails a series of manifestations, conscious or unconscious, such as: the feeling of fear in front of the unknown, distrust of the usefulness of the change or of the people who support it, the risk of losing professional notoriety or the position held in the organization, loss of confidence in personal ability to perform new tasks.

The accumulation of these conditions has demobilizing repercussions, among the effects being a decrease in commitment, involvement in work, dysfunctions in the person's relationship system with the work group or with the organization, reduced performance and productivity at the same time with the appearance of job-insecurity.

Consequently, *What are the tools of Motivational Management, through which these disruptive factors can be balanced?,* as well as *What are the needs of employees in this circumstance?,* are topics that need to be clarified in the organizational context.

2. Literature Review

A major influence in addressing the counterproductive problem of resilience to change is organizational culture, beliefs, and values, habits, unwritten rules, decision-making authority, or adequate employee

motivation, which contribute to accepting change by replacing fear, insecurity with enthusiasm in front of the new (Marsh, 2001).

On the other hand, authors such as Savall and Zardet (2012), emphasize that the behavior of employees depends to a large extent on variables related to the specifics of each individual or the specifics of the group in which they carry out their activity. In the classical theory of human resources, behavior is considered to be expressed through work commitment, a notion that reflects the degree of individual commitment to work tasks (Kiesler & Sakamura, 1966).

Cohen (1999) considers that one of the fundamental notions of that organizational behavior depends on is work commitment, which can be expressed in various forms, such as *work ethics* measured by Neveu (2012) by the importance of work perceived by each individual, *career commitment* which represents the attitude towards the profession (Carson and Bedeian, 1994), *organizational continuity commitment* which evaluates, according to Meyer and Allen (1991), the costs of changing jobs, *organizational affective commitment* reflected by attachment to the employing company and *job involvement* given by interest in work tasks (Blau, 1987).

According to Marsh (2001), people react completely different, depending on the management style used in the organization, the *direct* management style, the *persuasive* management style, the *recommendation-based* management style, and the *participatory,* support management style. The perception of individuals will be positive if change is not forced, and problems are presented persuasively. Moreover, the involvement, the possibility of individuals to influence their activity by using their own ideas, increases the chance of obtaining favorable change results as well as its institutionalization. Also, the main catalyst conditions are the type of organization, OBSE, *Organization Based on Self-Esteem*, and the type of proactive personality of employees.

As can be seen from the existing literature, Pierce and Gardner (2004) or Long et al. (2015), OBSE are the organizations in which the direct superiors or the management in general, through the attitude, the behavior as well as through the adopted decisions and measures, transmit to their own employees feelings such as trust, importance, efficiency, respect, cooperation.

Regarding the proactive personality, we can say that this type of personality has recently been introduced in the literature field of employee motivation. According to Bateman and Crant (1993), Crant (2000), or Wang et al. (2017), the main characteristic of proactive individuals is to get personally involved, to have the initiative in improving the activity they carry

out, employees with such a personality having a significant positive contribution to the performance of the teams or organizations in which they operate.

Using the results of Gardner's studies (2020), which point the significant differences in the way employees with different personality traits, use OBSE autonomy, we can say that the individuals with proactive personality are those who can reap the benefits of this type of organization, being able to take the initiative or make decisions in certain new and complex situations that they may face at work.

Due to the complexity and multitude of economic parameters that are correlated with the concept of organizational performance, the meaning of the notion becomes broad, existing in the literature of the field various approaches, some even contradictory. In the last two decades, especially due to its importance and frequent use, scientific research has considered this subject a challenge, numerous researchers bringing their contribution to placing it in a rigorous and precise framework by eliminating any confusion (Gruian, 2010).

The performance of a company is, understood and consequently, viewed in different ways by the interest groups placed inside the organization, in the micro-environment or in the macro-environment (Stefanescu, 2005, pp. 83-85), each of them having dedicated specific indicators. For example, state institutions or international organizations may be primarily interested in the performance in terms of the value of goods and final services that contribute to the calculation of the real gross domestic product (real GDP) in the national economy, customers will aim for the quality-price ratio or the time of deliveries, creditors, the solvency and liquidity. In their turn, investors will express their interest in the performance regarding the profitability of the business, the managers will look at the productivity or success at the global level of the activity, and the employees will perceive it through the feeling of safety and stability of the workplace.

One of the most valuable recent opinions, was advanced by Parmenter (2012) and refers to the way of measuring performance by means of four distinct types of indicators, the author clearly delimiting each of their corresponding categories, thus the performance of a company is measured using: key result indicators, result indicators, performance indicators, and key performance indicators.

Concerning the motivational factors, according to the specialized literature, Amin et al. (2021), the motivational factors currently used in the

motivational research, are namely: recognition, financial, career opportunities and professional identity.

The purpose of this paper is to establish whether the motivational factors, namely professional identity and recognition motivational factor, that are on the first two places in the preferences of Romanian employees, Constantinescu (2021), in the current conditions, are or not in a association relationship with the performance of employees at work. From the ranking of motivational factors, we excluded the financial factor which, from our point of view, must be treated separately, being more a measurable consequence than a precondition of work performance.

3. Methodology

The particularities of our study require directing attention to Pragmatic-Critical Realism, as defined by Johnson and Duberley (2000), applied to management, the intention of the approach contained in this paper being to position scientific research within this epistemological approach. Our option is certain, even if we do not exclude considering the results of some researchers who choose to position their knowledge exclusively in the epistemological current of positivism, or on the contrary, exclusively of postmodernism. The justification of the epistemological positioning of our approach is based, on the one hand, on the fact that Motivational Management Theory must, like any science, submit to the rigors of the classical fundamentalist current of positivist epistemology, but on the other hand, being a discipline permanently connected to realities of the environment, requires the flexibility conferred by the features of postmodernist epistemology, claimed by the need for malleability and availability to change.

The objective of the research presented in this paper is to obtain, as a consequence of the coagulation of the results and conclusions, suggestions regarding motivational management, such as: measures to improve the staff recruitment process, thus ensuring a good balance of the collective from the point of view of individual personality types closely related to motivation and behavior, managerial ideas applicable in the activity of organizations, using the correlation between motivation and the type of organization, proposals regarding the adaptation of motivation to the specifics of human resources, through the right combination of motivational factors aiming to increase employee performance and implicitly the increase of labor productivity, recommendations on remunerating employees more in line with performance and the current situation on the labor market, at the expense of using it as a motivational factor.

The entire research approach follows seven essential stages, namely:

- Realization of a vision related to the identification of a research direction as well as the evaluation of opportunities for starting the research process;
- Consulting the current specialized literature in the field, with the aim of acquiring the most comprehensive information regarding the level and structure of the notions as well as the modern methods used;
- Setting up and explicit definition of research objectives;
- Elaboration of presumptions, hypotheses that encompass all of one's own research ideas;
- Identification of appropriate sources for observation and data collection;
- Analyzing data collected using statistical procedures implemented by specialized software packages;
- Interpretation of results, validation of hypotheses, and crystallization of conclusions.

Our study adopts the use of primary data, collected by the authors, during the realization of a mixed survey, physical-online, dedicated to the actual research, the description of the data as well as the consequences arising from their processing, being described in detail in the following sections.

The survey questionnaire could be completed both physically and online through the services offered by the iSondaje.ro website. We specify that we have encouraged the completion of the online version, which presents a series of advantages such as: protecting the environment by eliminating the printed questionnaire, reducing the time of distributing, going through and completing the questionnaire, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants by avoiding the interference of a moderator or making the process more efficient for recording the answers, the specialized platform iSondaje.ro, recording and structuring the answers in real time, without the need to use an operator to upload the data from the written format to the electronic format. However, due to the reluctance of the respondents, in order to reduce the weight of the refusal, we also organized the physical recording of the answers for a considerable part of the questionnaires.

In designing the collection of information from the research developed in this work, we considered it appropriate to simultaneously follow two essential observation units, about which the information is collected, on the one hand having the interest to process information that characterizes the type or structure of economic entities, we established as the

unit of survey observation, the employing organization. Thus, during 2022, a data collection activity was carried out from a series of companies selected from among the 127 companies in the class of medium-sized enterprises, whose activity is currently carried out within the Dâmbovița county, for which we sought to identify the definitory characteristics of Organization Based on Self-Esteem type (OBSS). The second unit of observation established is the employee, seeking to obtain information both about employees in management positions and about employees occupying executive positions, the features considered, being closely related to motivation, behavior, or performance achieved within the work group.

Taking into account the fact that one of the motivational factors of employees is the financial factor, we considered the class of medium-sized enterprises, with a number of employees between 50 and 249, to be representative because the average personnel expenses per employee are 48.38 thousand lei, value close to the average value calculated at the county level of 42.45 thousand lei, according to the Statistical Yearbook of Dâmbovița County (2022).

The processing of the observed data was carried out by means of one of the most used analysis program packages in the field of Social Sciences, SPSS.

For most of the questions in a questionnaire used in surveys that track the characteristics of interest attached to motivational management, the theoretical variables are qualitative because the answer options are words, as for example, for the characteristic of interest that measures the performance of employees in the workgroup, respondents must answer the question: "*At work, do you take the initiative to propose changes or improvements in the way you do your work?*". The five possible answer options are: "*never*", "*very rarely*", "*from time to time*", "*often*" and "*always*", the values being therefore of string type.

But in order to study the dependence or association of this variable with other variables that describe, for example, the motivational factors, according to the requirements of the mathematical statistical procedures specific to the application of statistical hypothesis testing tests, it is necessary to remodel the set of values and to transform the string type variables into numeric variables, thus, the answer options of the questionnaire were replaced with a scale from 1 to 5 corresponding to the scale with five hierarchical steps, from "*very rarely*" to "*always*". Thus building the survey questions, in the results worksheet, which for sites that offer online survey services, Microsoft Excel worksheets appear, with all the numerical values, compatible with statistical tests and procedures.

The main statistical procedure used in the processing of the data subject to our research is the *Chi-square test*, which establishes the association between two categorical nominal characteristics of interest. For this reason, it was necessary that the variables such as work performance, proactive personality, or motivational factor correspond to them in the questionnaire, questions whose answers should provide data that can be classified into two categories, such as *Significantly* or *Rare*, *High* or *Low* and *Most preferred* or *Not*.

4. The Influence of the Motivational Factors on Work Performance, Results

The starting point of our research was to test the following three hypotheses regarding Romanian employees:

H_1: There is an association between the work performance and the proactive personality;

H_2: There is an association between the work performance and the professional identity motivational factor;

H_3: There is an association between the work performance and the recognition motivational factor.

For this purpose, we did a survey with the sample size 220, where the individuals were Romanian employee, with the respondents age between 18 and 70 years old, and the observed data were analyzed using IBM SPSS program package.

The figure 1 shows the distribution of respondents by age. Also, as we can seen in figure 2, over 60% of employees surveyed prefer the motivational factor of professional identity and almost 20% prefer the motivational factor of recognition.

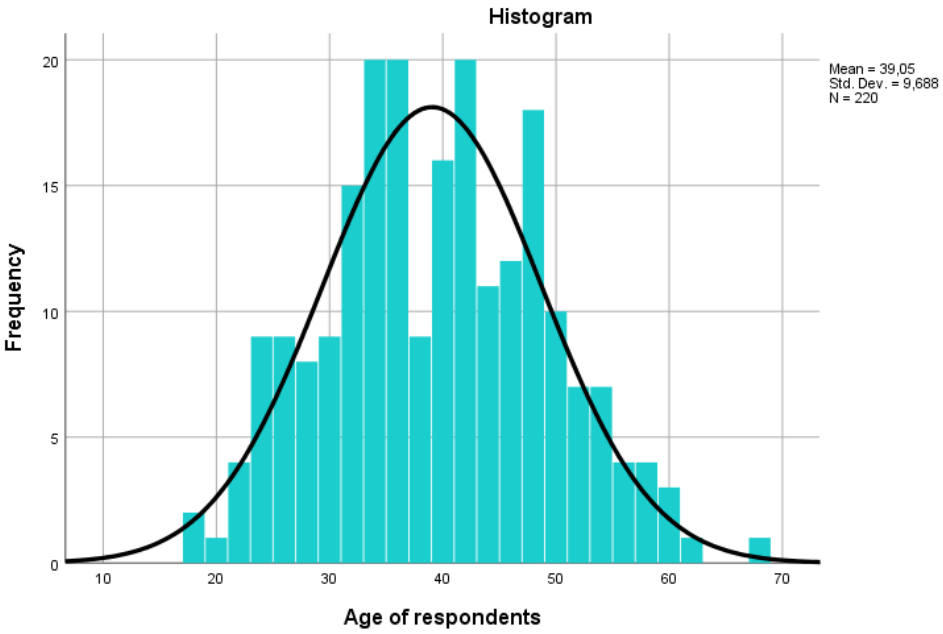


Figure 1. Distribution of sample individuals by age characteristic.
Source: Own projection.

Testing the null hypothesis: H_{01}: *There is* ***no association*** *between the work performance and the proactive personality*, we obtained the results presented in table 1, figure 3, and table 2.

Table 1 describes the distribution of respondents according to the two characteristics of interest pursued, namely the level of performance at work and the presence of proactive personality traits, results that are also represented by the bar chart in figure 3.

The Chi-square Test results from table 2, indicate the rejection of the null hypothesis, H_{01}, because the p-value is .000, so based on our observed data, there is an association between the work performance and the proactive personality.

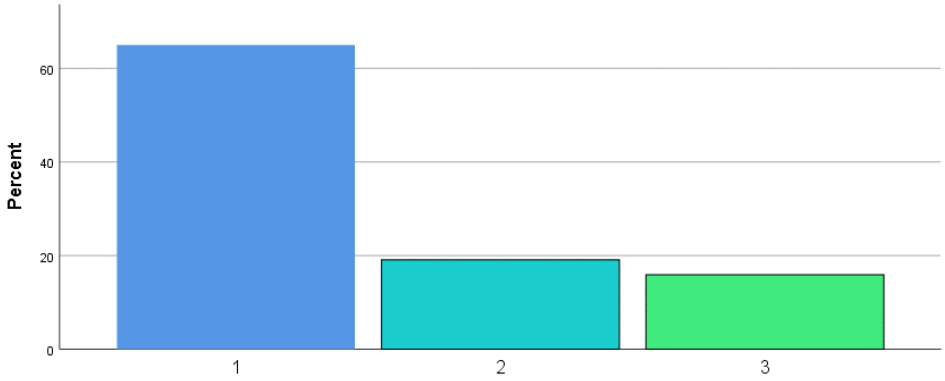


Figure 2. The ranking of motivational factors, '1' is professional identity, '2' is recognition and '3' is career opportunities.
Source: Own projection.

Table 1. Crosstabulation for performance and proactive personality traits.

			Proactive personality		
			Significantly	Rare	Total
Work performance	Low	Count	22	6	28
		% of Total	10,0%	2,7%	12,7%
	High	Count	184	8	192
		% of Total	83,6%	3,6%	87,3%
Total		Count	206	14	220
		% of Total	93,6%	6,4%	100,0%

Source: Own projection.

For the null hypothesis: H_{02}: *There is* ***no association*** *between the work performance and the professional identity motivational factor*, the results obtained from data processing are presented in the table 3, figure 4 and table 4.

The Chi-square Test results, from table 4, indicate the rejection of the null hypothesis, H_{02}, so there is an association between the work performance and the professional identity motivational factor.

Finally, for the third hypothesis, H_{03}: *There is* ***no association*** *between the work performance and the recognition motivational factor*, whose corresponding contingency table is in the table 5 and the graphical representation in the figure 5, we conclude that the null hypothesis H_{03} is rejected, the table 6,

therefore there is an association between the work performance and the recognition motivational factor.

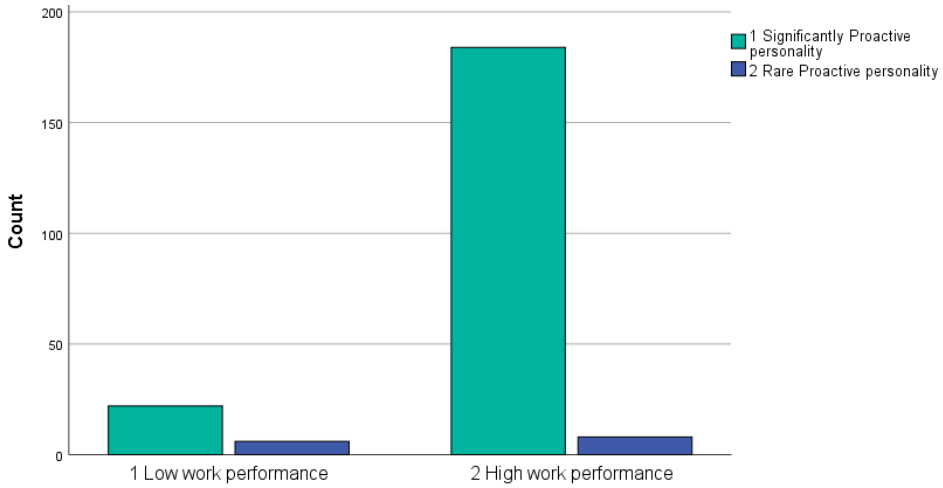


Figure 3. Representation for performance and proactive personality traits.
Source: Own projection.

Table 2. Chi-Square Test results for hypothesis H_{01}.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12,220[a]	1	,000		
Fisher's Exact Test				,004	,004
N of Valid Cases	220				
a. 1 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,78.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Source: Own projection.

Table 3. Crosstabulation for performance and Professional identity motivational factor.

			Professional identity motivational factor		
			Is the most prefered	Is not the most prefered	Total
Work performance	Low	Count	17	11	28
		% of Total	7,7%	5,0%	12,7%
	High	Count	153	39	192
		% of Total	69,5%	17,7%	87,3%
Total		Count	170	50	220
		% of Total	77,3%	22,7%	100,0%

Source: Own projection.

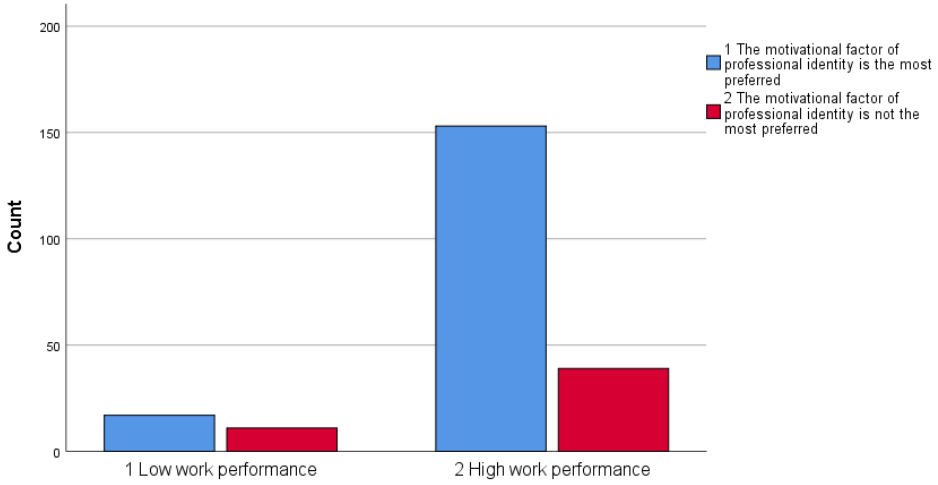


Figure 4. Representation for performance and Professional identity.
Source: Own projection.

Table 4. Chi-Square Test results for hypothesis H_{02}.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5,009[a]	1	,025		
Fisher's Exact Test				,032	,027
N of Valid Cases	220				
a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6,36.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Source: Own projection.

Table 5. Crosstabulation for performance and Recognition motivational factor.

			Recognition motivational factor		
			Is the most prefered	Is not the most prefered	Total
Work performance	Low	Count	7	21	28
		% of Total	3,2%	9,5%	12,7%
	High	Count	85	107	192
		% of Total	38,6%	48,6%	87,3%
Total		Count	92	128	220
		% of Total	41,8%	58,2%	100,0%

Source: Own projection.

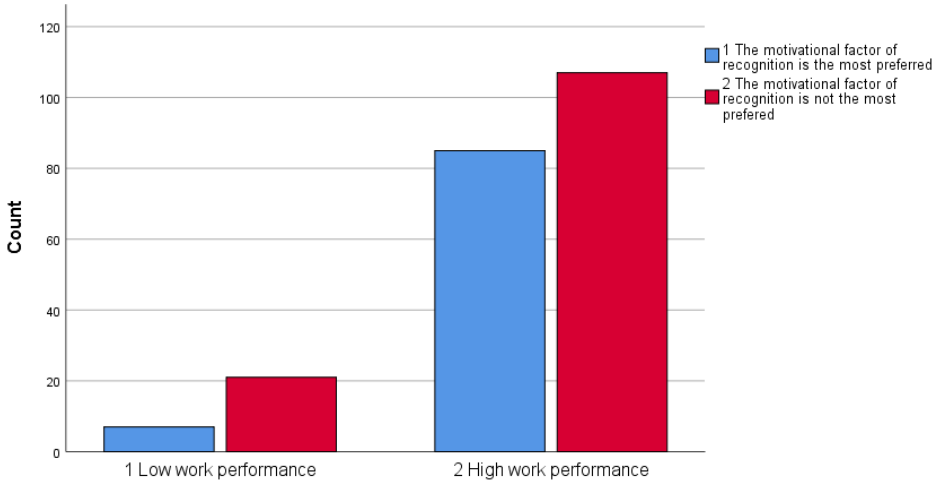


Figure 5. Representation for performance and Recognition.
Source: Own projection.

Table 6. Chi-Square Test results for hypothesis H_{03}.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3,730[a]	1	,053		
Fisher's Exact Test				,065	,040
N of Valid Cases	220				
a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11,71.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Source: Own projection.

5. Discussions

This section is dedicated to the implications that derive from the research whose results are presented in the previous section. To begin with, we consider it necessary to establish the context related to the typology of the observed employees personality, as well as the type of organizations in which they carry out their activity. For this purpose, using the same package of statistical programs, IBM SPSS, we researched the situation of the respondents regarding the characteristic that measures the proactive personality traits of individuals, and the results revealed by table 7, show that a percentage of 93.6% of studied employees hold in significantly way these traits, while only 6.4% do not have the proactive personality type.

This fact shows that most of the surveyed individuals have the availability of a high degree of job involvement, they can generate work performance both personal and group or organizational. It is good to emphasize, that the existence and valuing, the expression of these traits of the employees contributes decisively both to the positive reaction to new challenges, encountered spontaneously during the activity and to the faster acceptance of some proactive or reactive organizational measures, aimed to reduce the inherent risks generated by economic crises or by ample fluctuations of the economic environment.

In order to complete the description of the context in which our results were obtained, we completed the study related to the employees' traits with the research of the conditions for putting them in value, for expressing the characteristics of proactive personality traits.

Thus, we turned our attention to the characteristic that shapes the type of organization, Organization Based on Self-Esteem (OBSE), the characteristic for which we considered two categories, denoted with '*Yes*' corresponding to the category in which OBSE features exist and respectively with '*No* ' for the case where these features are barely present or even absent.

Studying the centralized results in table 8, it can be seen that a percentage of 65.5% of the economic entities present relevant characteristics of organizations of the OBSE type, while the rest, in proportion to 34.5%, do not possess this characteristic. Even if the percentage of OBSE-type organizations is one that confers the majority, it can be stated that there is still a considerable number of companies, in which the management is still cautious in terms of granting employees decision-making autonomy, perhaps considering that it is more favorable for them the atmosphere in which decision-making power and control are concentrated at the administrative level.

Table 7. The absolute and relative frequencies of the observed data, corresponding to the proactive personality characteristic.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significantly	206	93,6	93,6	93,6
	Rare	14	6,4	6,4	100,0
	Total	220	100,0	100,0	

Source: Own projection.

Table 8. The absolute and relative frequencies of the observed data, corresponding to the OBSE characteristic.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	144	65,5	65,5	65,5
	No	76	34,5	34,5	100,0
	Total	220	100,0	100,0	

Source: Own projection.

Regarding the interpretation of our research results, according to the study carried out in the previous section, we can state that the work performance is associated on the one hand with the proactive personality of the employees, and on the other hand with the motivational factors of professional identity and recognition.

Even if, naturally, it is expected that performance is closely related to the qualities of the employees or the organization as well as motivation, there are still a number of aspects that must be taken into account, namely:

- There are motivational factors, apart from the financial one, which are in a relationship of association with performance, among them, the one that stands out after our study is that of the professional identity which can be seen as an advantage both for the proactive employee and also for the employer, especially if this is an organization of the OBSE type;
- The association of work performance with the proactive personality of employees is indeed strongly supported by the value of the test significance, a value far below the null hypothesis rejection threshold of 0.05;
- Proactive personality traits can be capitalized and converted into increasing both individual and organizational performance;
- As shown by the structured data in the contingency table, table 1, the total percentages related to the two levels, *Significantly* and respectively *Rare*, of the personality type, are respectively 93.6% and 6.4%, while the same percentages related to the performance categories, *High* and *Low* respectively, rise to the levels of 87.3% and 12.7%. A detailed study of the table shows that the main cause of this difference, lies in the common relative frequency of individuals possessing the proactivity characteristic in the *Significantly* category and the performance characteristic in the *Low*

category, a fact that can be explained as a lack of valuing of the employees work involvement, caused by external factors related to the organization;

- We also consider that the results related to the association of performance with proactivity were obtained in the context of the existence of a majority percentage, 65.5% of organizations of the OBSE type, a fact that favored the valorization and expression of the proactivity of individuals, the decrease of this percentage could have influences on the association to which we refer;
- The tests for the association of work performance with the motivational factors of professional identity and recognition, both provide values of significance that lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis, but there is an obvious difference between the level of these values;
- Among the considered motivational factors, that of professional identity stands out for its double valence, on the one hand, it is the motivational factor preferred by employees but at the same time it is also the one that proves to be well associated with performance, this association giving a first degree error of the test of 0.025 well below the cutoff;
- Even if our results indicate an association between work performance and the motivational factor of professional identity, by taking into account the very high weight of 93.6% of employees with a proactive personality and the association revealed by Constantinescu (2021) between this type of personality and motivational factor, it can be stated that in fact there is an association between individual work performance and professional identity factor. Moreover, this association in the context of a company that does not encourage the autonomy of its own employees and that does not ensure the conditions of mutual respect and collaboration between the staff in managerial positions and the executive staff, can be interpreted more as a personal interest of the employees who actually want to increase the level of professional training in view of a possible change of employer or workplace, with one that will ensure them the professional development.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the results of our empirical research reveal that all three hypotheses, H_1, H_2 and H_3, are accepted. So, we can highlight the following managerial implications that contribute to the increase in work performance:

- Internal or external trainings, the improvement of employees' skills, are not only measures to increase productivity but have become

necessary measures to adapt to the rapid changes such as those caused by digitization or the emergence of new technologies;

- As Constantinescu (2021) showed in a paper published last year, employees with proactive personality traits, prefer the motivational factor of professional identity, they perceive the assimilation of new knowledge as an opportunity, a new challenge;
- The results of data processing, presented in this paper, show the association of work performance with both professional identity and recognition, however, the p-values indicate a tighter association of work performance with the factor of professional identity than with the factor of recognition;
- In situations of uncertain economic conditions, the managers of the organizations can use mainly the motivation of professional identity type especially for the proactive employees and in the context of OBSE organizations, *Organization Based on Self-Esteem.*

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