HUMAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT IN ORGANISATIONS –
A NEW MANAGEMENT IMPERATIVE

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Abstract. *For many years, both theory and practice of management have been determined by hard (analytical) approach, placing the emphasis on quantitative (material) factors. The need for improvement in both strategic and operating effectiveness has stimulated research interest in soft, qualitative (intangible) factors, in particular those related to human dimension, such as human attitudes, behaviours, and energy. The problem of energy brought about by people and their involvement in organisations must be recognized. Organizational energy, in accordance with the synergistic effect, is not a simple sum of the energies of the individuals. The energy level determines the potential for organisational development. Lack of energy makes it difficult for organisations to introduce changes and implement innovations. Consequently, managing an organization's energy is vital to achieve the desired goals and to ensure productivity. It is surprising that, although so much has been said about the role of energy in the world we live in, there is not enough interest in managing the energy of organisations. We must realize that all organisational activities require energy to materialize. Professional literature dealing with issues related to organisational development, crises and successes rarely puts a proper focus on the concept of organizational energy. The aim of this paper is to indicate the need for rational management of an organization's energy. The deductive considerations on the nature of organisational energy and the need to manage it properly have been supplemented by the results of a survey addressing the practical understanding of the conceptual framework and the use of energy in organisations. In particular, the study examined some of the activities which support the release of human energy in organisations, rationalise its use (i.e. the progress in the implementation of the concept of Human Energy), and prevent energy wastage in organisations.*

Keywords: conceptualization of organisational energy; management of organisational energy; energy wastage; survey – energy in business practice.

Introduction

Elaborating on the thesis attributed to A. Einstein that 'everything is energy' (Lederman & Teresi, 2012), it may be postulated that every activity, every movement results in vibration and transfer of energy, and it is the energy that preserves and maintains the integrity and balance of the material world. In this context, the role of energy in the lives of individuals and organisations cannot be overstated.

Professional literature on the subject of development, continuation, crises and successes of modern organisations has put a relatively weak emphasis on the energy of organisations. In the organisational setting, energy can be perceived as:
- a source of its operational capabilities, through its potential to maintain homeostasis, both in internal dimension and in the organisation's relations with the external environment,
- a driver for the realisation of organisational objectives and expected results,
- the prime mover which may exert a positive or destructive effect on the organisation's development and stability.
In other words, energy represents the essence of an organisation and all its inherent traits.

While energy as a concept represents the most fundamental attribute of the surrounding reality, professional references to 'energy of organisations' have so far been fairly indirect and largely instinctive. In line with the former paradigm of 'hard approach' to organisations as technical and social systems, the bulk of organisational effort was concentrated on a suitable configuration of selected resources, on the optimisation of internal work processes, on the development of

organisational structures to support the evolving spectrum of managerial functions, and – in strategic dimension – on establishing directions and variants of activities adjusted to the internal and external determinants of organisational operation.

With the recent paradigm shift and the resulting recognition of the special role of human resources in organisations, the human factor has been elevated as the most primal (natural) source of organisational energy.

The recognition of the need for careful and insightful studies of organisational energy is manifested, among other things, in the context of:
- the growing pace of changes, with resulting demand for energy needed to effect those changes,
- the consistent decrease of organisational life cycle, which can be perceived as a manifestation of the scarcity of 'life-giving' energy at the level of the organisation as a whole,
- energy depletion as a growing phenomenon among organisational workers, manifested particularly by the increased rate of employee burnout.

The problem of sustaining a rational management and efficient flow of organisational energy is of particular importance in the context of recurring crises (economic, social, political), cost reduction, limitation of pro-development investment outlays and other symptoms of organisational stagnation.

Organisational energy – a conceptual framework

Energy - in a popular approach (Welbourne, 2014) - is understood as an internal ability/capacity to act or perform. Energy is a prime mover, offering the organisation a potential to achieve its objectives, to introduce and effect changes, and to improve the effectiveness of operation.

Loehr and Schwartz (2001) present a similar approach in their definition of energy, based on the *performance pyramid* concept. In their approach, a lasting capacity to perform work is a product of integrated physical, emotional, mental and spiritual abilities of individuals.

Schiuma, Mason and Kennerley (2007) emphasise the notion that reducing the nature of energy to a mere source of work performance (in the sense of involvement in daily, routine activities) is an unacceptable simplification of the concept, since energy involves other factors, such as vitality, enthusiasm and vigour. In this sense, energy is also a manifestation of the potential for work intensification. All the above qualities are of fundamental value for the formulation and realisation of organisational objectives.

Cross, Barker and Parker (2003) emphasise a functional similarity between the energy of individuals (human resources) and that of an organisation. Thus, assuming that man is the most fundamental source of energy and that an organisation is a structure/set of individuals cooperating with the view of reaching particular objectives, the energy of an organisation is directly correlated to the energy of individual members, but is far more than a simple sum of energy of individual members. The collective level of energy is supplemented and empowered by the energy generated within individual teams of cooperating individuals, and by the energy produced in cross-team relationships. Therefore, organisational energy is a result of synergistic integration of energy of individuals and teams (Schiuma et al., 2007).

Bruch and Vogel (2011) define organisational energy in terms of its ability to mobilise the emotional, cognitive and behavioural potential for the realisation of organisational objectives. At the same time, the authors highlight some of the most fundamental factors responsible for energy generation, such as the organisational infrastructure, organisational culture and social interactions. It is through social interactions that people exchange emotions, thoughts and actions, by means of imitation, guidance and direction (in the sense of following the lead of others), and by being inspired to take up certain actions.

All the above factors add to the combined effect of stimulating and increasing the collective energy of the organisation as a whole.

Organisational energy is thus inherently linked with human presence. Human qualities (such as knowledge, skills, physical strength, mental power, assorted personality traits and behavioural patterns, to name a few) give us power to generate new economic value – for this reason alone, organisations perceive humans in terms of capital.

The recently studies on human capital emphasise the role of 'creative capital' (Florida & Goodnight, 2005) as a driver of economic development by stressing that the key factor is not knowledge itself but the ability to utilise the accumulated knowledge for the purpose of generating new ideas, solutions or products.

The potential located in human (or social) capital is the main incentive for increasing its effects. A good example here is the so-called 'human capital investment'. On the other hand, it may form incentives to take up activities aimed at releasing this potential by transforming it into energy required for the realisation of specific objectives.

In the light of the above, there is a need for recognising the conceptual framework and the relations between the potential and the energy of human capital and the potential and energy of the organisation as such (the more so that the two are typically used interchangeably).

The nature of 'potential' as it applies to an organisation as a whole has recently been studied by Adamiec (2011). The author stresses that the term itself escapes easy definition due to the paradoxical nature of the concept ('a thing that is and is not'). On the one hand, potential cannot be identified by human senses (cannot be touched, perceived or measured). On the other hand, it constitutes a fundamental source of changes, due to its ability to create new values/products and its power to transform goals and objectives into specific results. Author accentuate the fact that the inherent properties of organisations make them particularly effective for exploiting and making the most of human potential. The opposite standpoint is based on the observation that the present operational qualities of organisations tend to stifle the real human potential. In this view, humans, with their complexity, open-mind approach and unlimited possibilities, are crammed into rigid frames of organisational structure, which has the result of limiting and constraining the development of their true potential.

Adamiec (2011, p.141) in his concept of an organisation open to human potential (OOHP), postulates that organisational structures should not be perceived as 'cages' for storing human potential. On the contrary – they should concentrate their effort on forming the best possible conditions for proper and effective utilisation of human potential. This may require the organisation to adopt some measures for shaping employee transgression (overcoming the existing boundaries) and self-realisation (accumulating new valuable skills and developing the most effective personality traits). By developing employee competences, organisations can boost the development of human potential as such.

The author of the OOHP concept places particular emphasis on human competences as the prime mover for the expression of human potential (this applies both to meta-competences such as the ability to learn, flexibility, interactivity, creativity, etc., and to specific competences directly related to the task at hand). By providing suitable conditions for its development, organisations can harness this potential and release the latent energy for the realisation of planned objectives or tasks.

In general, it is often emphasised that potential is difficult to predict *ex ante*, and it can only be examined *ex post*. In effect, research and professional literature are decidedly more involved in the identification of favourable conditions for releasing the potential and of solutions and instruments that facilitate this release for the purpose of defining new objectives and creating new values for the organisation.

In the light of the above observations, it may be concluded that potential is a feature that reflects hypothetical prospects of an organisation based not only on resource configuration but also on operational determinants (such as leadership level), while energy represents the released part of the potential employed for the realisation of specific activities and yielding specific effects. Hence, the two notions are closely correlated, but not identical, contrary to the apparent conclusion based on the frequent interchangeable use of the two terms.

The release of potential (and the corresponding energy increase) requires some form of motivation. Adamiec (2011, p.152) postulates the need to employ motivation 'of higher order', as opposed to the 'more-of-the-same' approach.

A relatively frequent phenomenon observed in the context of relations between motivation and energy release is the burnout effect. Since the will to act and the initiation of tasks do not necessarily lead to the effective realisation of an objective, the action (as a result of motivation interpreted here mainly in the sense of justifying the decision to act) is attempted, but discontinued after a period of stagnation. This type of situation can be interpreted as evidence for the lack/depletion of energy. This, again, proves that there is no true analogy between the notions of motivation and energy.

Motivation is particularly important in the context of stimulating the desired outcome. The released potential may take on the shape of positive energy, boosting the chance of success or helping the organisation survive crises. It may also take on a more negative form of energy, resulting in collapse (bankruptcy).

'Positive organisational potential' (Stankiewicz, 2010), a concept developed in the early years of the 21st century on the basis of the *Positive Organizational Scholarship* model (Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, 2003), In line with its assumptions, conditions for development and realisation of creative processes are directly related to positive emotions experienced by employees. It is those emotions that motivate them to reach outstanding goals, to strive for perfection, to broaden their horizons, to experiment and to cope with new challenges in a creative way. This forms the so-called *positive spirals of flourishing* which translate positive emotions into greater involvement, increasing the effectiveness of organisations and ultimately generating further positive emotions among employees (Cameron et al., 2003, p.3).

While the conceptual framework of positive organisational potential covers a broad spectrum of factors that condition pro-development behaviours of employees, its model representation is only reduced to two aggregated components: positive organisational culture and positive organisational climate (Stankiewicz, 2010, p.75, 107, 141). At the same time, the concept puts strong emphasis on the fact that the release of organisational potential is not an automatic result of the process – it must be stimulated by the use of carefully selected instruments and by provision of favourable conditions.

To sum up, the energy of an organisation as a techno-social system cannot be reduced to a simple task of amassing and configuring of suitable resources (material, financial, information-related), since the major determinant of success is the energy of people. Employee energy is the main driver of progress for the organisation (and its internal substructures), both in quantitative and qualitative dimension. It serves as a binding agent that enhances the inherent synergistic effects of organisational structure.

Without energy, there is no action, no movement, no potential for change, improvement or realisation of goals. Therefore, the main focus is placed on provision of a suitable energy level in an organisation and on shaping conditions that facilitate continuous flow of energy, based on the assumption that each and every task or objective consumes a certain energy quantum.

One of the most important discerning traits of organisational energy is its dynamics, closely related to the concurrent processes of energy generation and depletion (consumption), collectively referred to in subject literature as *oscillation* (Schiuma et al., 2007). Consequently, the levels and states of organisational energy fluctuate over time – with *level* representing the quantum, and *state*

corresponding to the characteristics or quality of energy. The state of energy at a given time point may be influenced by such factors as emotional agitation, involvement, intellectual capacities, the sense of responsibility, the urgency of the problem at hand, enthusiasm, contentment, and so on. The use of energy, therefore, is a continuous effort at balancing the oscillation between systematic generation/stimulation of energy and the ongoing depletion or release of it.

Managing human energy in organisations – the inevitable challenge for the future

Professional literature (Williamson, 2011) increasingly emphasises the postulates to depart from the universally adopted approach to humans as an organisational resource. At the same time, it postulates the need for adopting a *human potential management* approach or a shift from *Human Resource* to *Human Energy* (Powell & Gifford, 2014). This may be viewed as a manifestation of the trend to place the focus on human potential and energy in organisations. Rationalisation of this approach is established on the following assumptions:
- proper recognition of human potential/energy will offer more rational use of their organisational input, while at the same time offering individual members more optimal ways to manage their energy,
- if employee potential is taken care of, it is likely to enhance employees' responsibility towards organizations and create a feeling of organizational ownership/partnership, which could automatically lead to the achievement of organizational objectives,
- it helps employees develop their potential and contribute their best to the organization in the face of current dynamic environment, which necessitates continuous updates of organizational strategies, structures and systems.

The operation of modern organisations is increasingly determined by the pace of changes, both in the external and internal dimension, which has the effect of increasing the overall complexity of processes (and the number of objectives). In this context, the key challenge is to provide durable motivation (i.e., motivation kept at a desired level), both in the sense of inducing its flow and in utilising it for the purpose of reaching specific targets.

Under the previous context of relative operational stability, the classic approach to motivation defined in terms of induction phase (generating the objectives) and maintenance phase (ensuring the realisation of objectives) was quite capable of bringing positive effects based on the structure of the available energy resources. The present operating conditions have changed it: the organisational needs and the corresponding objectives are subject to dynamic fluctuations, with continuous inflow of new priorities and the associated strong motivations which compete with one another for the increasingly dispersed energy resources. Under equifinality conditions, the same results can be obtained using a multitude of approaches (techniques, instruments), each with different energy requirements. It is therefore essential to perceive organisational operation not only from the viewpoint of effectiveness in reaching their objectives, but also from the perspective of effective management of the scarce energy resources available for their realisation.

Due to the dynamic fluctuation of factors that determine the realisation of objectives, their energy requirements can also fluctuate over time. Some of the surplus energy can be turned down to increase organisational adaptation and flexibility, some may be redirected to ensure the realisation of new objectives which are more adequate under the changed conditions. Some of the ongoing objectives may be postponed or discontinued, regardless of the current stage of completion, resulting in disturbances in the flow of broadly defined motivation (both at the induction and at the maintenance phase), and ultimately leading to energy waste.

To meet the present challenge of ongoing changes in organisational environment, it seems necessary to redefine the concept of motivation, hitherto approached as a coherent factor released in response to particular needs (including the organisational needs for development), and ultimately fulfilling the essence of management. Nowadays, in the face of increased competition which may emerge even as early as the objective generation phase, the study of objectives in the context of motivation required

for their satisfaction is no longer adequate. Organisations need to optimise their structure of objectives in terms of their impact on the process of managing the organisational energy expenditure.

In the opinion of Bruch (2010), modern companies operating under constant effectiveness pressure in an increasingly unpredictable environment and in the face of returning crises are equally more likely to fall into the *acceleration trap* – they keep pursuing their objectives at a similar or even greater scale and complexity, with no regard for the increased scarcity of resources, including human resources. The excessive pace may help the organisation meet the expected targets, but at the cost of depleting the available energy. In such an approach, employee energy can no longer be effectively utilised for productive purposes. Employees are burdened with the so-called *destructive engagement* practices, which may manifest in aggression, frustration, increased resistance to change, lack of identification with organisational ant team objectives, and so on. Ultimately, this may lead to deterioration of financial position, customer relation problems or the loss of competitive market advantage.

Therefore, to avoid the unnecessary depletion of energy on the realisation of unwarranted objectives (activities, changes), the organisation should concert their effort on releasing this energy at a suitable moment, and on maintaining its operational level (the so-called *feeling of urgency*) to keep it manageable ready to be utilised in accordance with the current structure of priorities. In other words, organisations should focus on activities that streamline the use of energy and manage its flow.

Questionnaire survey results

A questionnaire survey which was as part of preliminary research grant application procedures, conducted in the 4th quarter of 2014, was designed to study the problem of organisational energy and its significance for business practice. Ultimately, for the purpose of this report, 44 responses were taken into account, representing 25 companies. The respondent sample was random, and the selection was based on reported willingness to participate in the survey.

Research methodology was construed on the assumption that each company under examination should be represented by no less than two respondents: a representative of the ownership/top management level, and a representative of a functional area related to human resource management (*de facto*, for six of the companies under study, the author was unable to obtain a second response).

A dominant group of respondents were representatives of production companies, typically with no outstanding market position. In general, the companies under study operated on domestic market and were in a relatively good financial and economic standing. Of all the respondents, 20 represented companies founded before 1989 (i.e. before the date of Poland's transition to market economy), and 24 represented companies founded in the transformation period. A little less than half of the respondents worked for companies still in their growth phase, with similar representation of companies in expansion phase.

It should be noted that the research sample based on the above methodology cannot be regarded as representative. For this reason, the results of the survey cannot be used as basis for any verifications or generalisations – they can only provide poll results for the sake of exemplification of certain observations or speculations which should be addressed in a more detailed study.

Of special note is the fact that of all the 44 respondents, as many as 36 (82%) voiced their explicit belief that energy is a factor applicable in the organisational context, that energy is a precondition of effective operation of the company, and that energy directly translates into economic results (success).

Ca. 61% of the respondents were adamant in their belief that organisations utilise their energy mainly for the realisation of objectives/targets directly related to the current business model, with the remaining responses representing the view that organisational energy is mainly directed to those objectives that lead to the change of the present *status quo*. At the same time, some 11% of the

respondents believed that this type of involvement was related to changes introduced with the view of satisfying the requirements of company development, while 18% described those changes as reactive, i.e. undertaken in response to (or under the compulsion of) external or internal stimuli/pressures. The remaining 10% of the respondents believed that their companies were equally involved in utilising their energy for effecting pro-development changes and for responding to current operational requirements.

With respect to the understanding of organisational energy as a factor inherently related to human presence in the organisation, both business practitioners and theoreticians found it hard to provide an unambiguous (i.e. based on the ontological principle of rigid logical reasoning) definition of the term 'organisational energy', despite the relatively universal use of the term in everyday setting. The most often quoted responses to this query identified organisational energy as:
- the prime mover in the process of realisation of objectives (15.5 pts)[1]
- a 'fuel' used to intensify the effort in reaching company objectives, one that requires concentration and involvement, and one that is inherently related to human presence (15.5 pts)
- a degree to which the company is able to mobilise the emotional, cognitive and behavioural potential for the realisation of its objectives (14 pts).

The following definitions were decidedly less frequent in the survey responses:
- a sense of positive agitation, will to act, vitality (9.5 pts)
- a form of translating motivation into action, with motivation defined as the ability to utilise the energy (6 pts)
- an ability to perform work or to make an effort (4 pts).

It is worth noting that the responses to the question identifying a definition of organisational energy are fairly accurate in describing its nature; they also directly relate energy to the realisation of objectives (as one of the inherent management functions).

One of the most notable results confirming the problem of energy in organisations (irrespective of the difficulties in identifying the sense of the term) can be found in responses to the question on the perceived level of energy waste. An overwhelming 75% of the respondents subscribed to the view that organisations do indeed waste their energy. Their reported estimates on the amount of energy wasted (misdirected) by their respective companies are shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Estimated energy wasted by organisations

No.	Level of wasted energy	% of responses
1.	10-15 %	23
2.	20-25 %	25
3.	30-35 %	13.5
4.	40-50 %	13.5

Analyses of data describing the respondent sample structure offered no potential for discerning any trends or discriminants that would suggest certain 'predisposition' to waste energy (large variances were found in every segment of the respondent sample). Table 2 presents the perceived manifestations of energy wastage in companies under study:

Table 2. Manifestations of energy wastage

No.	Identified manifestations of energy wastage	% of responses
1.	poor work-time organisation	30
2.	unfinished projects	24
3.	needless processes	17
4.	needless expansion of structures	15
5.	others, such as: poor management of information flow (documents), increased complexity (offers too elaborated, too much pressure on	10

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[1] Points were calculated with weight of 1 for answers placed at the top of the list, and 0.5 for answers ranked second.

	formalisation), inability to learn from errors, etc.	
6.	excess inventory	4

Summing up the above, it seems that, despite considerable progress and plentiful applications in such management subdisciplines as process management, project management, and design of organisational structures, these particular areas of operation remain fairly unexplored in business practice. As such, they appear to be prime targets for the exploration of potential sources of effectiveness increase. One of the most characteristic observations made in relation to the study was the emphasis on time factor – poor organisation of employee work time was reported as the most frequent manifestation of energy wastage. Time-related problems are also evident in such management flaws as failure to respect the proper sequence of activities and by unwarranted reduction of preparation phase – with resulting stoppages, overlapping tasks (e.g. data input), excessive focus on selected activities (obsessive inbox checking), conducting personal business during the working hours, and so on. It seems that time organisation and management is the prime target in the search for rationalisation of energy use in organisations.

The next question tackled by the respondents addressed some of the factors (conditions) that facilitate the release of positive energy in organisations. It must be noted that the respondents generally acknowledged their polarity and ambivalence: in some configurations, certain factors may stimulate the release of positive energy, while in others they may have a decidedly opposite effect of obstructing it. Table 3 presents a ranking of determinants believed to have a stimulating effect on the release of positive energy in organisations.

Table 3. Factors that support the release of positive energy in organisations

No.	Factors that affect the release of energy in organisations	% of responses
1.	personnel policy (strictly human-oriented)	17.8
2.	flat (horizontal) organisational structure, effective communication	16.1
3.	examples and patterns to learn from, benchmarking	13.8
4.	simple, clear and effective procedures	12.5
5.	organisational culture (preference for openness, participation, tolerance, cooperation)	11.5
6.	limited scope and frequency of control	11.5
7.	trust level	11.5
8.	respect for established principles and values	2.7
9.	external guidance (advisory, auditing)	1.8
10.	others, such as preference for teamwork	0.8

The collected responses suggest that the most important factor to facilitate the release of positive energy in organisations under study is the personnel policy in its broadest sense, i.e. the whole range of activities directly addressed to employees. The approach to these activities is perceived as an indicator of pro-human, individualised management of human resources which directly impacts the release of employee energy (by stimulating, hampering or, in some cases, blocking the energy flow).

The next factor in the ranking of responses was the organisational structure as basis for organisational architecture that facilitates cooperation within the organisation. Company structure should facilitate the effective flow of information without affecting the length of decision-making paths (long-drawn-out decisions have the effect of dispersing employee energy). Another important factor is the provision of models and patterns for employees to follow (mainly in the context of attitudes and behaviours).

Clarity and simplicity of procedures (and processes) are also believed to stimulate the release of energy and the focus on the most important tasks (overcomplicated and unclear procedures tend to dissipate employee energy). The responses show lesser significance attributed to such factors as open organisational culture, limitation of control (with self-control as a substitute) and cooperation based on mutual trust – with similar percentages of responses. The provision, acceptance and respect for established principles was reported as supportive (although relatively less frequently). The remaining

factors, such as external guidance from advisory, certification or auditing companies, were reported as being of marginal significance for the release of positive energy in organisations.

Another problem addressed in the study was the recognition of active management of human energy in organisations. Activities listed by the respondents were ranked based on the number of responses - see Table 4.

Table 4. Management of human energy in organisations

No.	Activities in support of rational management of human energy in organisations	Number of responses
1	Solutions within the motivation system, relating wages to productivity and effectiveness	15
2	Attractive and rich training programmes	11
3	Integration and team-building activities	10
4	Simplification of procedures (shortening of the decision-making paths)	9
5	Open HR (communicating with employees, coaching)	9
6	Development programs, promotion paths	8
7	Individualised system of awards for employees	7
8	Sports and recreation programs addressed to employees	7
9	Regular meetings with top management representatives	6
10	Preference for teamwork	3
11	Rational holiday policy	3
12	Inclusion of medical insurance in the structure of the motivation system	3
13	Building favourable organisational culture based on openness and tolerance	3
14	Flexible working hours	3
15	Broadening the scope of employee participation in decision-making	3
16	Effective system of employee evaluation	2
17	Provision of aesthetic and ergonomic working conditions	2
18	Celebrating company successes, emphasis on company PR	2
19	Social services and benefits	2

Analysis of the responses presented in Table 4 suggests that companies under study were quite schematic in their approach to managing human energy. The collected responses typically reported well-established practices of the motivation system, training function and shaping of interpersonal relations, as well as activities of a more organisational character, aimed at limiting the energy wastage.

It is worth noting that those activities, by and large, are focused on energy release, with relatively weak representation of activities aimed at regenerating and replenishing human energy (this aspect is generally managed by employees themselves, as part of their spare time activities).

There is a decided lack of a holistic approach among companies under study; activities are widely dispersed, inconsistent and rather provisional. Some of them are enforced by pending legislation, others are undertaken by companies on a voluntary basis. In general, the majority of respondents report that the aspect of proper management of human energy as an instrument utilised in company operation was a relatively new addition, one that still requires formulation of certain principles, structuring of activities, and provision of new instruments.

In their evaluation of the position and the tasks realised by Human Resource services in the context of employee expectations with respect to energy management, only the representatives of two of companies under study believed that their organisations were advanced in their realisation of the Human Energy Management concept. Further 13 companies were evaluated as successful in implementing the concept only in selected aspects/activities. The remaining 10 companies (in the opinion of survey respondents) were regarded as decidedly lacking in their realisation of the Human Energy Management concept.

Conclusions and implications

The study emphasises the need for wider dissemination of the problem of organisational energy, particularly with respect to the energy of individual employees. While the respondents were generally in favour of the view that organisational energy is a major determinant of company effectiveness and development, including the ability to meet specific operational and strategic objectives, it must be noted that energy, as a factor of influence, is still under-represented in scientific studies. The general view is that energy is an obvious element of company operation, one that needs no systematic studies on theoretical and practical level.

One of the obvious reasons is the difficulty in ontological anchoring of the concept and in specifying its conceptual framework, also with respect to its correlations with other concepts in circulation, such as potential, motivation, involvement, emotions or 'the flow' as defined by Ciskszentmihalyi (1990) - this area is still fairly unrecognised and under-represented in professional research.

In addition, the concept of organisational energy necessitates a more detailed recognition and structuring of the fundamental concept of synergistic effect – another challenge for future research.

Analyses of present conditions of organisational operation, particularly the pace of changes and the resulting implications, suggests that the need for introducing measures to rationalise the management of human energy in organisations is quite pronounced. This should not be reduced to routine activities aimed at reducing energy wastage, but should also include measures to counteract such effects as the resistance to change, the strategic reorientation due to energy shortage or the negative/destructive impact of human energy.

In the light of the largely depleted potential to improve operational effectiveness and development based on the use of material and quantitative factors under the so-called 'hard' (analytical) approach to management, the need is strong to pursue new sources of effectiveness, with soft (qualitative, immaterial) factors being a viable alternative for the purpose. These include factors directly related to human dimension, i.e. human abilities, skills, behaviours, attitudes and energy. Such an approach, however, requires a set of specific instruments for effective management of energy in organisations, including:
- instruments for diagnosing (measuring) of organisational energy,
- instruments for releasing the energy and managing its flow (in response to specific needs related to the realisation of objectives and tasks),
- solutions to prevent or limit the extent of energy wastage,
- ways to replenish the energy or measures to substitute the energy requirements in organisations.
Further concerted effort and wider research is needed, supported by projects and practical applications, to meet the above challenges and to crystallise the new imperative of human energy management.

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