

DIGNITY MANAGEMENT AS A NEW APPROACH TO HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Nowadays the special role in the process of building organizations' competitiveness is played by employees. Therefore the wise, trust-based management of employees, with the respect for their dignity, has a major impact on the success of organizations. However, in the knowledge-based economy traditional methods of human resources management have stopped working, so the necessity to develop new methods of employee management has appeared: methods that meet the requirements of modern organizations and are accepted by both managers and subordinates. Therefore it was concluded that the issue of a dignity management as a new approach to HRM characterized by its high motivational potential is worth the scientific effort. The main objective of the paper is deepening and systematizing the knowledge related to the concept of dignity management in organizations. In the theoretical part of the paper, the issue of values which as the basis of dignity management is discussed – different definitions of this notion are quoted, and the most important characteristics of values justifying their importance to individuals, organizations and entire societies are identified. Further part of the paper focuses on the concept of dignity management. Particularly, terms *dignity* and *dignity values* are explained, as well as human needs that are expected to be satisfied at work and motives driving people at work are identified. Phenomena of dignity consonance and dissonance as well as consequences they have for individuals and organizations are also analyzed. Then attention is paid to discussing symbolic rewards and punishments as a basic tools of dignity management as well as conditions of their application. The results of the survey devoted to the dignity management in organizations are also presented. Thanks to this study it was possible, among others, to determine the importance of dignity in the workplace, to specify how often situations of dignity violation occur in organizations as well as to identify consequences of violating employees' dignity. The final part of the paper includes findings resulting from the research and theoretical consideration.

Key words: values, dignity, employees, dignity management.

Classification JEL: M12 – Personnel Management.

1. Introduction

In the knowledge-based economy the importance of human resources for success of organizations' functioning in modern, turbulent markets is unquestionable. Without their extensive knowledge, full and voluntary commitment as well as loyalty organizations are not able to meet the challenges of the widely understood social, political, technological and economic environment. That is why the wise management of employees is becoming increasingly important for any organization focused on building its own competitiveness on the market.

Nowadays traditional human resources management methods based on rewarding, punishing and systematic control, do not bring expected results, especially in the long-term. Therefore to make a full use of the potential of employees for the benefit of themselves, organizations which they work in and the economy as a whole, new concepts of employee management need to be explored and used. One of them is *dignity management* of employees, which is a very interesting, relatively new way of looking at human needs, motives of employees' activities in organizations and the role of organizations in satisfying human needs. Dignity management is based on dignity values, therefore clarifying the notion of value is the starting point for further considerations in presented paper.

2. Values as the basis of dignity management

Value as one of the basic philosophical categories is a subject of axiology research. This term is used not only in philosophy but also in theology, psychology, sociology, ethnology, theories of culture and law, and – more and more often – in management. In spite of this (or perhaps because of this) determination of values is not an easy task, as already pointed out by W. Tatarkiewicz (1978) who stated: “defining values is difficult if not impossible ... what looks like a definition of a value is rather a substitution of the word by another word of the same meaning or its discussion.”

S. H. Schwartz points that values are something what is important to people in their life. People hold numerous values (e.g., achievement, security, benevolence) with varying degrees of importance – a particular value may be very important to one person but unimportant to another. In his values theory, mentioned above author defines ten broad values according to the motivation that underlies each of them: self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, and universalism (Schwartz, 2012).

Value is also defined as “a guiding and motivating principle in which we have an emotional or cognitive investment that we find it important and preferable to adopt for personal, social or cultural reasons” (Childs, Gosling & Parkinson, 2013). Values then can be thought of as the elements of human identity that give people meaning, mission and purpose to their lives as well as energize and motivate them to action.

A. Stępień (2001) indicates that the term value can be used in indifferent meanings, such as follows:

- What is valuable;
- What is consistent with the nature;
- What people want;
- What is the purpose, subject matter (current or potential) of aspiration;
- What is a subject of desire;
- What meets the human needs, interests;
- What provides satisfaction, pleasure;
- What should be;
- What rather should be than not to be;
- What obliges, appeals to the recipient;
- What demands existence.

In turn, A. Szoltysek (2003) describes value as a pattern demanding realization in the human act. Values are also understood as “important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on a person’s behavior and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations” (*Business Dictionary*). In relation to the organization “values are beliefs in what is best or good for the organization and what should or ought to happen. The ‘value set’ of an organization may only be recognized at top level, or it may be shared throughout the business, in which case it could be described as value driven” (Armstrong, 2006). Values are translated into reality through norms and artefacts, and may be expressed through the organizational jargon, rituals, stories and myths.

The concept of value may be related to ideas, people, things, situations, phenomena, etc. or to their specific properties. It can exist independently or be a part of a larger system or hierarchy (*Encyklopedia WIEM*).

From a point of view of HRM it is important to distinguish declared values from those that actually motivate people to specific behaviors. And, as M. Armstrong (2006) stated, the stronger the values, the more they influence behavior. Values can be expressed (implicitly or

explicitly) in different areas, such as: performance, competence, competitiveness, innovation, quality, customer service, teamwork, care and consideration for people.

Interesting way of considering values present R. Childs, J. Gosling & M. Parkinson (2013) who make a distinction between essentially individual (personal) or group focused (interpersonal) values, and values that are concerned with sources of satisfaction or sources of meaning. Values leading to satisfaction are generally those that are more ‘visible’ in a work or social context (e.g. material reward, excitement). In contrast, those values that encompass meaning are more often to do with personal growth or mastery. Meaning is also derived from values that are related to the ‘common good’ (e.g. altruism) or with independence and individual expression (e.g. libertarianism).

Common values play a fundamental role in society as they sustain and strengthen the social order. Values are extremely important for each member of the community because people are judged by others and judged by themselves according to the values. And no man wants to feel unworthy or to be seen as unworthy by others. Most people esteem the same values but they may have different social ranges for different people (Blikle, 2014). The above mentioned definitions and descriptions of values are the basis for identifying their main, universal characteristics, which are presented in the Figure 1.

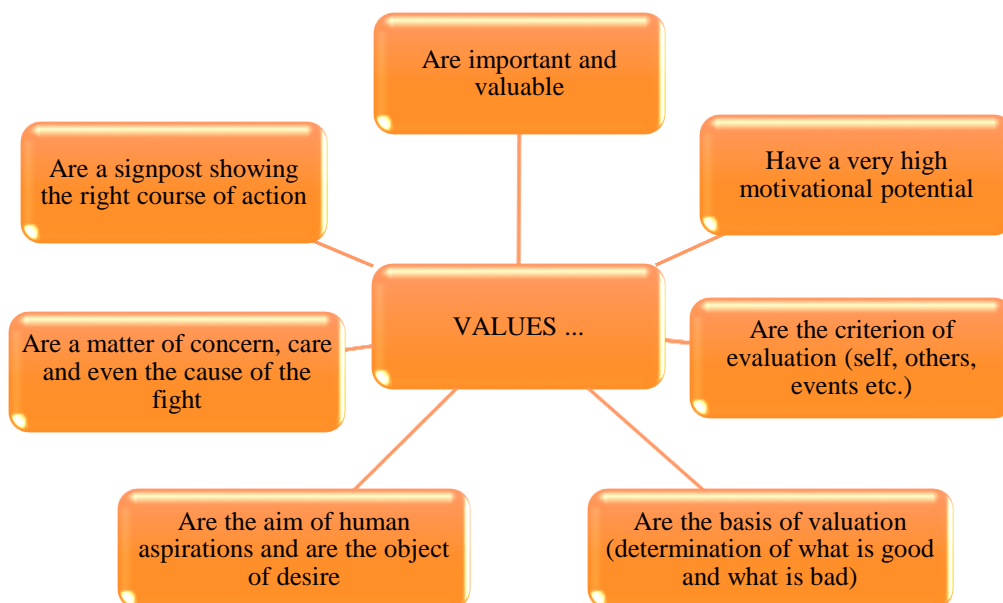


Figure 1. Characteristics of values (own study)

In general, values are an inherent and very important element of human life in both the private and the professional spheres. They help to determine what is good, rational, worth owning or doing and what is not, what is important and what does not matter. Values strongly motivate for action and are a kind of ‘compass’ according to which people should look for a path of life.

3. The essence of dignity management

The concept of dignity as a basis of dignity management is widely described in the literature (e.g. Jacelon, 2004; Jacelon, Connelly, Brown, Proulx & Vo, 2004; Pullman, 2004; Bolton, 2007; Sayer, 2007; Kosewki, 2008; Kosewski, 2012; Blikle, 2014; Pirson, 2017a; Pirson, 2017b; Kostera & Pirson, 2017; Bal, de Jong, 2017).

Dignity is understood as irreducible, non-gradable and worthy of self-esteem and respect of other people, human qualities inherent to every human being without exception (*Jedynak, 1994*). A. Sayer (*2007*) perceived dignity as a fundamentally social phenomenon that arises through interaction and therefore it depends on both independence and interdependence. Dignity involves recognition, trust, autonomy and self-mastery. M. Kostera & M. Pirson (*2017*) are of the opinion that dignity represents the apex of all human norms and values.

According M. Pirson (*2017b*), dignity is the main factor distinguishing humanistic management from traditional 'economistic' management. Mentioned author describes three relevant aspects of dignity:

- Dignity as a general category encompassing that which has no price;
- Human dignity as inherent and universal;
- Human dignity as conditional and earned.

In turn C. S. Jacelon and colleagues (*2004*) distinguish 3 attributes of dignity:

- An inherent human characteristic;
- A subjective sense of self or self-worth;
- A behavior toward others that demonstrates respect for self and others.

D. Pullman (*2004*) describes two types of dignity: basic dignity and personal dignity. Basic dignity is an intrinsic worth of all humanity and cannot be taken away by anyone in any situation. Personal dignity is a manner in which individuals wish to construct their lives of their own choosing within a shared understanding of dignity as an intrinsic worth of human beings.

Dignity is fundamental to well-being and to human and organizational thriving. And taking into consideration that many people spend a significant part of their life at work, work becomes a very important source of employees' dignity (*Valcour, 2014*).

The concept of dignity management refers to a specific group of values, namely dignity values, which are patterns of behavior that do not bring personal benefits but are the criterion of the overall evaluation of an individual as a worthy or unworthy person (*Kosewski, 2008; Blikle, 2014*). The starting point of the explanation of the concept of dignity management is commonly accepted assumption that people undertake various activities with the desire to satisfy their own widely understood needs. Although the literature brings many classifications of human needs, in the further part of the discussion the division into benefit needs and dignity needs is used (*Kosewski, 2008; Blikle, 2014*). The need for benefits includes (*Blikle, 2014*):

- The need for material benefits, satisfied by things and states of reality that people need to survive as well as luxury items giving people satisfaction with their possession;
- Ambition, satisfied by getting the positions, honors, titles, rewards, etc.;
- Social needs related to the functioning of the person in the social group, such as the need for love, friendship, acceptance etc. Satisfied by positive contacts with other people;
- The need for joy of action, satisfied by performing the desired activities.

The need for dignity is the need to be proud of oneself, satisfied by presenting such behaviors and making such choices that are consistent with universally recognized values.

Mentioned above needs set the motives driving people at work, such as (*Blikle, 2014*):

- Motive of personal benefits, resulting from the need to meet basic needs;
- Motive of self-esteem and dignity, resulting from EGO needs.

In the traditional human resources management it is assumed that the primary motive of employees' activities is the pursuit of material benefits. In the processes of HRM superiors use possessed power to punish (by using 'sticks') and to reward (by using 'carrots') employees. In this way managers can relatively quickly and easily force subordinates to follow orders, but

they cannot force them to like their work and to fully engage in it. In the long run, however, the use of the ‘carrot and stick’ method takes away employees’ natural, intrinsic motivation to act, destroys interpersonal relationships, and discourages effort and risk. It also leads to low quality of work resulting from the lack of self-control, formalization (associated with workers’ expectation of a strictly defined scope of responsibilities), as well as to demanding attitude which is expressed in demand for additional benefits in response to each change (Blikle, 2014).

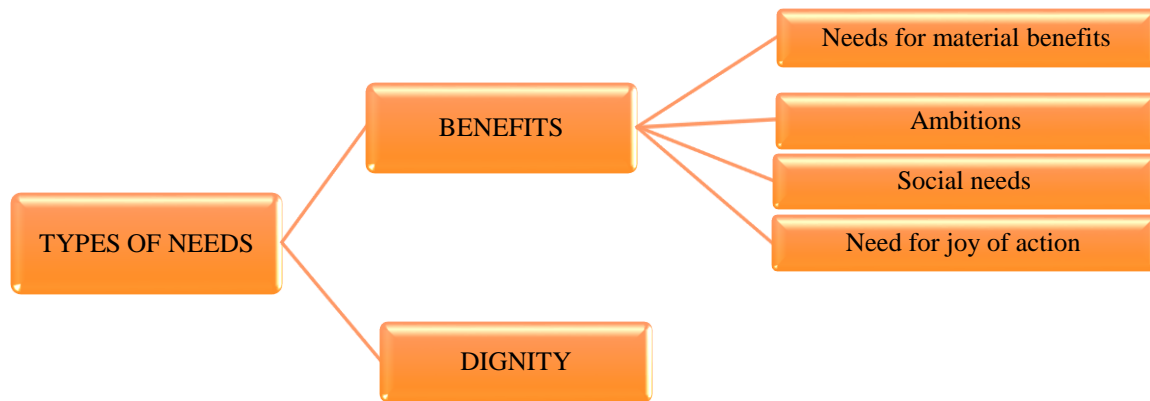


Figure 2. Types of human needs (Kosewski, M. 2008. *Values, Dignity and Power. Why Do Decent People Steal, and Thieves Behave Honorably?* [Polish], Warszawa: VIZJA Press & IT; Blikle, A. J. 2014. *Quality Doctrine. The Thing about Effective Management.* [Polish], Gliwice: Helion)

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Using rewards for actions increases the employee’s appetite for reward rather than for action. With time, to achieve a defined level of employees’ motivation, rewards must become more and more attractive. In turn, the use of punishments causes aversion to superiors and prompts employees to look for all possible ways to take revenge on them. Without seeing the reasons for loyalty to superiors and the organization which they work in, employees are looking for ways how not to do the job and avoid punishment (Blikle, 2014).

So the question arises – if not to use the ‘stick and carrot’ method, then how to manage and motivate employees? By using dignity management as suggest proponents of this management concept. In dignity management it is assumed that dignity is the most important need to be met in the work process. Blikle (2014) is of the opinion that the need for dignity can be even stronger than biological needs. The author gives examples of people who, in specific situations, defend their own dignity by undertaking activities which may have a negative effects on their health or even their lives (e.g. hunger strike). It is also confirmed by A. Valente, who stated that “being treated with dignity and respect in the workplace is often what employees request the most”

(Valente, 2015). According to assumptions of dignity management, it can be pointed out that (Blikle, 2014):

- The motive of the employee's own dignity can be controlled by the manager;
- Employee self-control is the result of wise management;
- Satisfying the need for dignity determines employees' job satisfaction.

The need for dignity is met by presenting behaviors consistent with values that are important for employees, such as: honesty, reliability, justice, courage, loyalty, solidarity, responsibility, goodness, truthfulness, magnanimity, patriotism, tolerance, impartiality, professionalism, independence, personal freedom, etc. Dignity values determine who an employee is and what values or expressions are acquired when a person gives something to someone. They are created by employees for themselves, so their giving and taking back is not possible. Concrete values appear independently of the other values, exchange value for value is not possible, and their evaluation in terms of profitability is not made. Sets of values for two different individuals tend to have a large common part, especially within a given cultural group. They are associated with striving for something, and achievement of values strongly motivates the employee to further efforts aimed at their achieving. External factors (concrete situation, received stimuli, etc.) do not cause the need for dignity, but only create and determine the possibility of satisfying this need (Kosewski, 2008; Blikle, 2014). A comparison of benefits and values is shown in the Table 1.

Table 1. Benefits and values (on the basis of: Blikle, A. J. 2014. *Quality Doctrine. The Thing about Effective Management*. [Polish], Gliwice: Helion)

Benefits	Statements	Values
What an employee has	They determine ...	Who an employee is
An employee gets and consumes something	They are obtained when ...	An employee gives something to someone
Is possible	Their giving and taking back ...	Is not possible
As a result of exchange: someone gives the employee some benefit for which he offers him another	They appear ...	Independently of the other values, exchange value for value is not possible
Is made	Their evaluation in terms of profitability ...	Is not made
Most often have a relatively small common part	Their sets for two different persons ...	Most often have a large common part, especially within a given cultural group
Satisfying the lack of something	They are connected with ...	Striving for something
Causes a state of satiation that demotivates an employee to further activity	Their achievement ...	Strongly motivate an employee to further efforts aimed at achieving them
Values for gaining benefits gives the employee a dignity dissonance, which is an 'internal punishment' and requires reduction	Resigning from ...	Benefits for gaining values gives the employee a dignity consonance, which is an 'internal reward' and rouse an employee to repeat an action

Commonly shared dignity values have a huge impact both on employee behavior and the quality of management. They increase loyalty of employees, integrate them into the organization, unite them around mission and goals, promote ethical behavior, cooperation and mutual benevolence, affect the increase in commitment to work, reduce stress at work, positively influence willingness to systematic learning and attract talented people (Lachowski, 2012).

In practice, however, the two previously identified motives directing people at work do not always go hand in hand. Sometimes, in some situations, they are in conflict and employees face situations of temptation. When facing the choice – to act inappropriately and achieve a benefit or to do the right thing and maintain own dignity – employees choose the benefit with a violation of dignity, a dignity dissonance appears. In this situation employees try to reduce this dissonance by creating justifications for their own conduct (such as: ‘everyone is doing so’, etc.). In order to remove the contradiction between who the man is and what the man does, mentioned above justifications must be credible. They gain credibility when they are rationalized by the employee himself or are agreed with other people (superiors, co-workers, subordinates, etc.) in a specific social process (Kosewski, 2008; Kosewski, 2011; Kosewski & Ambroziak, 2012).

When valued by individuals or groups values are generally not respected in the organization, a phenomenon of anomy is observed (Kosewski, 2008; Maj, 2012; Blikle, 2014).

Conversely, when employees’ actions are consistent with their values, which means that in the situation of temptation they choose appropriate behavior and maintain personal dignity, a consonance of dignity occurs and employees’ need for self-dignity is satisfied. Such employees are satisfied with their work, have good relations with superiors and co-workers, have a sense of belonging to the team and a sense of subjectivity at work, are loyal to the organization they work for, and do their best at work not because the superior so ordered, but because otherwise it does not work out (Kosewski, 2010).

Proper conduct brings the employee an intrinsic reward in the form of inner satisfaction which never becomes satiated. When people behave with dignity, they experience a strong feeling of joy and would like to experience this feeling again as soon as possible. As a result, the *ethos of employees* is built, which is a style of satisfying the need for dignity at work, shaped by the organizational culture of the company and imposed on people. Ethos of employees is a prerequisite for the emergence of their self-control. Individual and team self-control of employees is a prerequisite for following well-defined organizational procedures and standards of ‘good work’ by them. The high quality of work and its effects (products, services, etc.) is possible only if there is a sufficient level of employees’ self-control at every stage of the process of production (Ambroziak & Kosewski, 2012). A triad of dependency: Ethos – Self-control – Quality is presented in Figure 3.

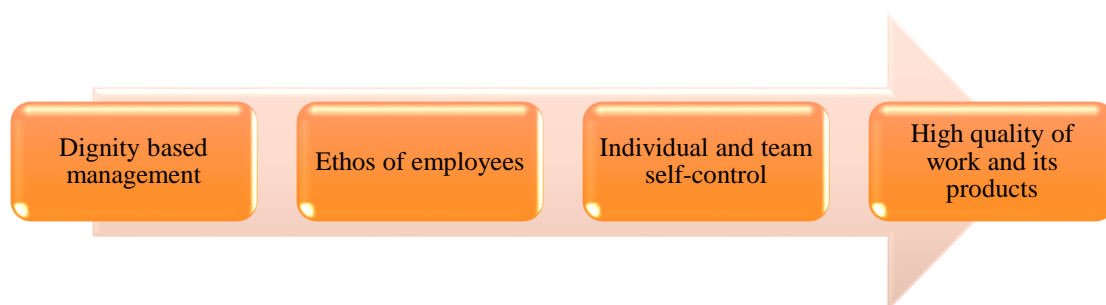


Figure 3. *Ethos – Self-control – Quality* (Ambroziak, D. & Kosewski, M. 2012. *Managing Teams by Their Own Dignity Motive* . [Polish], *PersonelPLUS* , 10: 86–91)

To properly understand the essence of dignity management, it is necessary to answer a very important question: Is striving for benefits by employees in conflict with assumptions of this concept of management? That is certainly not the case. As proponents of dignity management emphasize, there is nothing wrong with reaching for benefits provided that it does not violate dignity values. The problem is when a conflict arises between two motives: *striving for personal benefits and striving for self-dignity*.

Personal (material) benefits is the most common and the most important motive for choosing an employer. However, when people start working they change into ‘*paid volunteers*’: they are simply entitled to the wage agreed in the contract, and the motive of self-dignity becomes the most important regulator of their conduct (*Ambroziak & Kosewski, 2012*).

Considering validity of implementing dignity management in an organization, it is important to reflect on what is expected of employees – more work of poor quality (as it is in the case of using a ‘carrot and stick’ method in management) or an increase in the quality of work (that can be achieved by using dignity management), (*Blikle, 2014*).

4. Practical aspects of dignity management

In the concept of dignity management it is essential to create conditions for inspiring and sustaining the motive of employees’ dignity as a key factor motivating them to work. This can be achieved through the construction of an organizational culture that involves the work done with the generally accepted cultural norms of dignified behavior, in other words – with dignity values. When embedded in organizational culture, they start to be an important factor organizing and structuring relationships within the organization, becoming socially inherited behavioral patterns. To build an organizational culture supporting dignity management, three following aspects of the organization’s functioning should be synchronized (*Ambroziak & Kosewski, 2012*):

- Methods of dignity management of employees;
- Training activities and internal PR activities that build identification of employees with the organization as well as connect work done with dignity values;
- Organizational structure that facilitates and strengthens the process.

Widely understood working conditions should be created in such a way as to protect employees from situations of temptation. Punishments and external control of employees do not eliminate a phenomenon of anomy, but only abstain employees from manifestations of behavior that violate values. Both work organization and management should create dignity consonance in a daily work of employees, in their relationships with superiors and colleagues (*Kosewski, 2008*).

According to the concept of dignity management, employees’ motivation to work can be influenced by the use of symbolic rewards and punishments, which are a kind of natural consequences of the state of affairs or the course of events. They connect employee dignity to concrete actions and can take a form of (*Blikle, 2014*):

- Authentic appreciation (e.g. for the creative solution to the new problem);
- Promotion to a higher grade (when promoted person is more competent than other employees);
- Transfer to another position (when an employee cannot cope with the current post);
- Analysis of causes of a defeat (to avoid it in the future), etc.

The system of symbolic rewards and punishments must be: logically coherent, varied, fair, emotionally significant, hierarchically ordered, attributed to specific accomplishments and

tailored to the superior (*Blikle, 2014*). In order for dignity management to bring expected results, some principles should be obeyed as follows (*Kosewski, 2010*):

- It should be clearly specified when, for what and how employees are paid and rewarded, and when, for what and how they are rewarded symbolically.
- Additional material remuneration demotivates employees and is the source of conflicts at work, therefore it should be avoided.
- Money rewards should be used for the greater work in terms of quantity, it means for routine tasks commissioned by the organization over the accepted limits and necessary to do by employees in their free time.
- Promotion is a form of remuneration for decision-making and responsibility at work.
- Symbolic rewards should be used for better work in terms of quality that is for activities requiring self-control of employee, commitment to work and attitude that proves interest in work, creativity and ingenuity.
- Symbolic rewards should be: varied, hierarchically ordered and attributed to specific accomplishments.
- A material valuation of the value of symbolic rewards should not be done

Dignity management poses specific challenges for managers who need to build a team of subordinates based on respect for human dignity and treat each team member as a partner. Superiors who manage with the respect for employees' dignity (*Blikle, 2014*):

- Influence the behavior of the team members by referring to their need for dignity;
- Create rules for the use of material benefits and support team members in their acquisition;
- Seek to satisfy the material needs of the employees 'in advance' recognizing this as fulfillment of the terms of the contract;
- Do not allow to rivalry between employees;
- Do not divide employees into better and worse groups;
- Acknowledge the personal talent in each individual;
- Discover justifications agreed in teams of employees and deprive them of credibility.

To do that effectively, managers must demonstrate a specific professional competence, be able to identify employees' needs, know the concept and tools of dignity management as well as be able to apply them. They must also behave with dignity to ensure that their attitudes and behavior will not lend credibility to situations of temptation. Only a superior who wants and is able to enable employees to satisfy their needs for dignity at work deserves to be called a leader (*Kosewski, 2008; Blikle, 2014; Figurska, 2014*).

D. Ambroziak & M. Kosewski (2012) point to a very important issue by stating that first superiors must be a motivational experts, and only then specialists on what employees do. Promotion of top specialists for managerial positions not infrequently is a double mistake: deprives the organization of a good specialist and condemns the organization to use managerial services of managers-amateurs. Such superiors willingly reach for 'carrots' and 'sticks' because on the one hand these management tools give a fast (but short-lasting) effect in the form of changing employee behavior, and on the other hand – they usually do not know other methods of human resource management.

The question arises: How to implement dignity management in an organization in practice?

A. Valente (2015) describes 10 steps to deal with dignity in workplace:

- Write a dignity and workplace respect policy for the organization;
- Make the policy available to new employees, reinforce it throughout employees, create posters and leaflets;

- Take dignity and workplace respect policy seriously – not only tell and write about dignity but also treat employees with dignity;
- Live the values of dignity and respect every day, create an environment where people can raise concerns without fear of reprisals;
- Get great training to understand the *equality* which enables managers to deal more effectively with problems before they turn into something more serious;
- Provide managers with training in the area of softer skills like communication and how to handle difficult situations sensitively and effectively;
- Give managers access to all the information they need to know their roles and responsibilities when it comes to recognizing and addressing inappropriate behavior;
- Provide managers with training to handle inappropriate behavior at the earliest stage and to deal with complaints;
- Train all employees on what behaviors are and are not appropriate and how to react in case of dignity violation;
- Update policies regularly and keep all employees informed of changes.

However, in spite of the unquestionable advantages provided by dignity management, this concept is not commonly used in organizations. In almost 70% of Polish organizations ‘a farm’ management style with ‘sticks’ and ‘carrots’ remains in force (*Gumkowski, 2014*) while democratic style of management/leadership, involving employees in analysis of problems and decision-making is not commonly used in organizations (*Hryniewicz, 2007*). Why does it happen? It seems that the main barrier to the dignity management is the lack of knowledge about this concept, the lack of skills to its implementation and realization, and the fear of change associated with implementation of dignity management (*Figurska, 2014*).

5. Results of the survey on dignity management

To verify the theoretical assumptions of the concept of dignity management, a questionnaire survey was conducted in May 2017. The subject of the survey was dignity management in organizations, and the purpose of the study was to gain respondents opinion and knowledge about different aspects of this management concept. 129 working students (in an external form of study) of Pomeranian University in Slupsk, Poland, participated in the survey. Respondents studied various fields of study and they formed a diverse group in terms of demographic characteristics.

Respondents were asked a number of questions on various issues related to dignity values, dignity and dignity management. First of all it was decided to determine how the treatment with dignity in the workplace is important for employees. Respondents were asked to identify the level of importance by assigning points where 1 point meant: not important, and 10 points meant: very important. By giving 10 points, 80.6% of the respondents confirmed that treatment with dignity in the workplace is very important to them. None of the study participants found that treatment with dignity at work is of no importance (Table 2).

Treatment with dignity in the workplace has proved to be a very important need for the respondents. However, is this need of employees satisfied in their organizations? To state this, the respondents were asked whether they are treated with dignity in organizations they work for. In response to this question 64.6% of the study participants stated that they are always treated with dignity in the workplace, while 34.6% of them expressed that only sometimes. The rest of the respondent stated: rarely, and none of them answered: I have never been treated with dignity in the workplace (Table 2).

Subsequently, the respondents were asked whether they would change their job to a less paid in order to be treated with dignity. Distribution of answers to this question is also presented in Table 2. More than 2/5 of the respondents would definitely change the job to a less paid in

order to be treated with dignity in the workplace, and 43.4% would rather do so. One respondent in ten would rather not change a job in described circumstances, and 1.6% of the survey participants answered: definitely not. Other respondents (3.9%) were unable to give a clear answer to this question.

Respondents were also asked whether they observed situations of employees' dignity violation in their organizations. In response to this question 69% of the survey, participants confirmed that they have witnessed such situations (10.9% – very often, 42.6% – sometimes, 15.5% – rarely). Other respondents have never noticed violation of employees' dignity in organizations in which they work.

Table 2. Distribution of answers to the survey's questions (own study)

How important is treatment with dignity in the workplace to you? (1 – not important, 10 – very important)									
Points									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	2.3	7.0	8.5	80.6
Are you treated with dignity at work?									
Always		Sometimes			Rarely		Never		
64.6		34.6			0.8		0.0		
Would you change your job to a slightly less paid in order to be treated with dignity?									
Definitely yes		Rather yes		Rather not		Definitely not		I don't know	
41.1		43.4		10.1		1.6		3.9	
Have you observed situations when dignity of employees was violated in organizations?									
Very often		Sometimes			Rarely		Never		
10.9		42.6			15.5		31.0		
Who violated dignity of employees in the workplace?									
Superiors		Co-workers		Subordinates		Clients		Other persons	
39.1		33.9		1.7		21.8		3.5	
Did you observe behaviors of superiors or co-workers that were in conflict with your values?									
Very often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		I don't know	
26.3		32.6		27.9		5.4		7.8	

When asked about who violates a dignity of employees in organizations, the largest group of the respondents indicated to the superior (39.1%) and slightly fewer survey participants pointed to co-workers (33.9%). Subsequently, clients (21.7%), other persons (3.5%) and subordinates (1.7%) were mentioned as those who violate the personal dignity of employees.

Respondents were also asked about consequences of violating employees' dignity in organizations (Table 3).

According to respondents, violation of employee's dignity most often leads to: fear, helplessness, crying, leaving the job, disease, shyness, aggression, arguing, breaking rules, submission, and lie. Apart from those listed in the Table, respondents also pointed out the following consequences: neurosis, unwillingness and lower self-esteem.

Table 3. Consequences of violating employees' dignity in organizations (own study)

No	consequence	in %	No	consequence	in %	No	consequence	in %
1.	Fear	39.5	10.	Submission	21.7	19.	Resistance	12.4
2.	Helplessness	31.0	11.	Lie	20.9	20.	Ignoring	10.9
3.	Crying	30.2	12.	Silence	19.4	21.	Forming alliances	7.8
4.	Leaving the job	29.5	13.	Job resignation	19.4	22.	Revenge	7.0
5.	Disease	28.7	14.	Alcohol	16.3	23.	Cajoling	7.0
6.	Shyness	24.0	15.	Desire for revenge	15.5	24.	Overeating	4.7
7.	Aggression	24.0	16.	Fawning	14.7	25.	Drugs	3.9
8.	Arguing	23.3	17.	Rebellion	14.0	26.	Starvation	3.1
9.	Breaking rules	22.5	18.	Complaining	14.0			

It was also interesting to know the opinion of respondents about dignity values that are the most important for them. The results are presented in the Table 4. Such values as: honesty, justice, tolerance, professionalism, loyalty, responsibility and truthfulness were most often indicated by survey participants.

Table 4. Dignity values and their importance for employees (own study)

	Value	In %		Value	In %		Value	In %
1.	Honesty	79.8	7.	Truthfulness	31.0	13.	Courage	8.5
2.	Justice	67.4	8.	Personal freedom	24.8	14.	Independence	5.4
3.	Tolerance	44.2	9.	Reliability	24.8	15.	Magnanimity	4.7
4.	Professionalism	40.3	10.	Goodness	24.8	16.	Patriotism	2.3
5.	Loyalty	39.5	11.	Impartiality	24.0			
6.	Responsibility	33.3	12.	Solidarity	17.1			

Respondents were also asked to answer the question whether they observed behaviors of superiors or co-workers that were in conflict with their values. Almost 87% of the survey participants answer positively to this question stating: very often (26.3%), sometimes (32.6%) or rarely (27.9%). Only 5.4% of the surveyed have never observed behaviors incompatible with their values, and the rest of them (7.8%) were not able to give a clear answer to this question.

In other words, the results of the survey confirm that employees' personal dignity is a very important motive driving people at work. Unfortunately, as the respondents point out, many of them *are not always treated with dignity at work*. Not infrequently they observe situations of employee's personal dignity violation in their organizations (most often by superiors and co-workers) as well as such behaviors of others that are not in accordance with their dignity values. However, one should be aware that the lack of respect for human dignity in organizations leads to many negative consequences for a person experiencing such violation. Fear, helplessness, crying, leaving the job, disease, shyness, aggression, arguing and breaking rules are the most frequently observed effects of the violation of human dignity at work. As a result, efficiency of work of employees decreases which negatively affects the effectiveness of the whole organization. In other words, violating the dignity of employees is simply costly in the broad sense of the word.

7. Conclusion

Every human being has personal dignity and wants it to be respected also in the workplace. Therefore organizations functioning in the knowledge based economy which want to base their competitiveness on the employees' extensive knowledge, their full commitment, self-control and loyalty, cannot treat them as deprived of dignity individuals. Nowadays traditional human resources management methods and tools have stopped proving correct, especially with regard to knowledge workers. An alternative to the management of employees using inconvenient concept of 'carrots' and 'sticks' is a concept of dignity management, which is focused on exploiting the motivational potential of human dignity. The basic tools of this management concept are symbolic rewards and punishment. Dignity management does not exclude the use of material benefits but clearly defines when and for what employees should be paid, rewarded or promoted, and when and for what they should be rewarded or punished symbolically. In other words, not only the fact of rewarding or punishing is important in dignity management, but above all reasons for doing so.

The pursuit of benefits is justified and appropriate, provided that employees don't resign from dignity for them. Therefore, widely understood working conditions may not lead to a conflict of two motives: motive of benefits and motive of dignity.

The results of the survey conducted on a group of working students confirm the importance of dignity for employees and its great *motivational potential*. Incidents of violation employees' dignity are not uncommon and lead to many negative effects for employees (fear, helplessness, crying, etc.). Consequently, the loyalty of employees towards the organization and their commitment to work is decreasing. Therefore, considering the validity of the practical application of dignity management in organizations, it is necessary to reflect on what kind of employees the organization wants to have. Are stressed, helpless or aggressive, breaking the rules employees able to meet the challenges the organizations face today? Can employees whose dignity is violated be expected to be loyal towards the organization and fully engaged in work? The answer to both questions has to be no.

Contrary to using traditional human resource management methods and tools, dignity management does not require material investment. It requires, however, a *change in the approach* to human resources management, both from superiors and subordinates. It is not an easy process, but an appropriate organizational culture based on dignity values, engagement, mutual trust and loyalty, as well as clear rules for rewarding and punishing, facilitate the implementation and use of dignity management in organizations. This management concept on the one hand allows employees to meet organizations' expectations, and on other hand allows organizations to meet expectations of employees.

The analysis of the survey results was made with full awareness of the limitations resulting from the relatively small number of respondents. Thus, although the generalization based on this research is not possible, the results are important information for organizations and managers who are looking for new methods of managing people in the knowledge-based economy.

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