

THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL RELEVANCE IN A GROUP THROUGH THE VALUE CONTAMINATION PROCESS

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Abstract

When seeking personal or company's goals a need occurs to share values in order to ensure an appropriate formation of a group. Values identified by an individual and a group help to fine-tune employee personal and professional goals as well as to emphasize career priorities. Values determine inner views to the most important things as they can express a relation and interaction between an individual and a group. Company managers who aim for the individual and group contamination should not only take into consideration abilities and experience of a candidate but also identify the values. The objective of this article is to identify the individual relevancy inside a working group using the process of the value contamination. Quantitative research was completed at the furniture production company. The following elements of individual and group values were identified: company strategy, company reputation, motivation system, work organisation, working environment, team work, and personal liability. The most important values inside the groups are related to the company strategy and reputation while the team work and personal liability are the values that are least important. After the identification of the individual and group values a manager may form a suitable (effective) group which would be aiming to achieve company goals.

Key words: values, an individual, a group, contamination, a production company.

Classification JEL: M12 – Personnel Management.

1. Introduction

Company efficiency as well as its profitability depends very much on the results of the working groups. Therefore, it is very important to correctly select members for the working groups during the group-formation and when the structure of such groups changes due to a large employee turnover. It is a very complicated process requiring deep knowledge and much experience. System of the organisational values becomes more and more important stimulus and regulator of an employee's activity; therefore they consequently impact information selection, formation of social relationships, communication style etc. The latter system ensures the integrity and uniqueness of the business organisation as well as identifies the necessary degree and outlining of order.

The dynamics of the person's identification process express a need to create and maintain a situation in which an individual identifies himself/herself in pursuit of stability and is able to feel that he/she belongs to the group (*Valackienė, 2003*). Members of various groups understand values and recognise their importance differently. With the increasing pace of life workers are less focused on their value identification; each group member is primarily impacted by its own personal values and on other hand by the value-based provisions of the working group. Working groups that constantly impact employee's actions and behaviour have influenced not only the narrow area of the individual rational thinking but the whole personality, i.e. emotional experiences, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes.

Favourable assessment of the manager provides the group member with a higher status and prestige which in turn increases self-esteem and performance. Likewise, adverse assessment reduces self-esteem. Individual career understanding is determined by his/her values and world- views. In order to achieve maximum results in the group, actions of each group member in the working process must be understood and coordinated with the actions of the other members. (*Robbins, 2003; Seilius, 2004; Diskienė & Marčinskas, 2007; Staniulienė, 2008; Giedraitis & Petkevičiūtė, 2011*). The existing value pluralism preconditions individual and group selections of the value-based guides on which their activity is based. However, not all new values are clearly defined (*Pruskus, 2013*). Values describe the inner attitudes as the

most important things, as they can express individual's relationship and interaction with other group employees; also they can be a criterion and a measure when trying to achieve the goals (*Dromantas & Merkys, 2004; Vveinhardt & Gulbovaitė, 2012*).

Value-based orientations form behavioral models which in turn regulate everyday of the group members. Group values are those which because of their fundamentality and inevitability are considered as compulsory for all group members. Organisational alternation depends on the interneccine adaptation of the group members, the adjustment process and the value scale of each group member and the value system in the group itself should be taken into the consideration. Personal value system is relatively stable and is subject to slow fluctuation. Therefore, personal values contrary to group's values may be outside the requirements for all the group members. Whether the group will reach its goals mostly depends on an individual knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to achieve that goal. Also individual values which determine individual productivity and effectiveness of the member's interneccine collaboration have great significance. It should be noted that values of various nature and content exist in an individual sense in any given moment.

Research problem: lack of detailed research on how to identify the individual relevance in a working group. *Research subject:* individual relevance in a working group at the furniture production company. *Purpose:* to identify the individual relevance in a working group using the process of value contamination. *Tasks:* define the individual relevance in the group using the process of value contamination in theoretic aspect as well as identify the individual relevance in the groups in a production company.

Date and place of the research. A survey was performed in October, 2014 at the furniture production company in Klaipėda region. *Research Type – qualitative and descriptive.* *Research Methods:* analysis of scientific literature and written questionnaire. Received results were processed using program packet SPSS 15.

2. The process of a working group's value contamination

According to A. Vasiliauskas (2004), values are priorities defined by empathies, convictions, and experience which are being followed throughout the lifetime. L. Šimanskienė (2001) states that values are main concepts of an organization which form a base basis of a culture and which many members of the organisation must accept. Values are long-term goals provided as main principles of human life (*Berson et al., 2005*). Values are criteria determining what is good or bad, correct or incorrect. They are developed from individual culture and determine its behaviour, evidence in behaviour of an individual or their groups (*Čiburienė & Guščinskienė, 2007*). Freedom, goal selection, creativity, desire to know and independence depend on the appropriate values (*Peterson & Park, 2006*). In psychological literature values are understood as a thing, process or phenomenon to which a person gives greatest significance, a relation with which personal ego is important and which determines a uniqueness of person's activity (*Suslavičius, 2006*).

One of the most important objectives of the value system in the company is to define to the group members its identity (*Monkevičienė et al., 2009*). Briefly, the system may be described as a group of correlated elements, acting together in order to achieve foreseen goal (*Norvaišas, 2007*). System of company's values gives singleness to goals of the activity, politics and strategies. Many company values are universal and an individual as well as the company have similar *typical* characteristics (*Sezgin, 2006; Edwards & Cable, 2009*). Values must be integrated into the business organization's processes, politics, and the business activity principles. Therefore, selection, adjustment and cherishing of the appropriate values have great influence on the companies' profit indexes and even on its survival (*Goman, 2007*). Company value are inspected by time, are stable and what the company considers as a standard of behaviour (*Monkevičienė & Liugailaitė-Radzickienė, 2009*).

Individuals and organisations follow the values which are typical to the socio-culture on the grounds of which relations between separate systems are constructed. Values relevancy is one of the most important features when selecting employees for the groups (*Verplanken, 2004; Kvedaravičius, 2009*). Values in the company must be defined, understood and accepted accurately. If personal (individual) values are close to the organization ideas then common agreements are being standardized; and honesty, quality, and integrity is increasing (*Lusthaus et al., 2002*). Also employees' abilities, knowledge and transfer of skills, professional duty and responsibility are developed. After realising trends of improvement and integration of activities as well as possibilities of development, employees will start appreciating the change impulses and will be able to grow and later to use increased professional potential.

In summary, thoughts of the above referenced authors allow to draw a conclusion that some authors emphasize that employee value-based relation is determined by his/her needs, and others state that employee behavior depends on the goals to be implemented, while yet another group states that such the relation is determined by the interests. It should be noted, that values simply determine limits of vital activity of the individuals, groups and systems. The more poor value scale the more permission and less limitations exist. It is important to mention that distinguished values would not contradict with one another but would be acceptable and adjusted in the various levels of the organisation: personal, groups, subdivisions, company etc. On the other hand, it would create inner conflicts in the production company. If the group members do not trust each other, do not understand each other's individuality, it is very difficult to implement agreement and perform successfully at work. Values would remain unimplemented and forgotten if one would not try to consolidate them, i.e. institutionalise. Values are the principles, standards or qualities which a person or a group appreciates the most.

Company managers have the greatest responsibility in the process of the values formation and spread. Compatibility of the strategies is substantially impossible without management support and understanding that values can contribute to the preparation and implementation of the business strategy (*Seilius, 2004; Šimanskienė & Seilius, 2009; Vveinhardt & Gulbovaitė, 2012*). Group managers should not only be able to determine appropriate employees in the groups and maintain them but also properly motivate and allow education of respective conditions. Qualifications are acceptable to all group employees but values are individual matter of each employee. All employees who worked in a group take their qualifications and values with them when they leave. A new employee may not have values which a former employee had. Therefore it is desirable that new employee would correspond to determined requirements, would be loyal for long time, as change of employees has a negative effect on work of the same group and ultimately overall results of the company. Properly selected employee gives a possibility to reach organisation goals and improve values in such areas which are relevant for the group. It stimulates the companies to have employees reserve.

Main direction of a business is to develop those powers which would allow employees to find purpose and self-expression at work. An individual wishes to distinguish in order to satisfy need of attention in a group. His/her purpose is to be useful as usefulness is compulsory condition of belonging to the group. Participation of individuals in the group also becomes a measure to reach common goals. Individual and group values are based on subjective and objective *similarities* (*Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005; Šimanskienė & Seilius, 2009; Giedraitis & Petkevičiūtė, 2011*). Values develop from the individual culture and determine as well as express individual and group behaviour (*Čiburienė & Guščinskienė, 2007*). The development of production staff and improvement of qualification also should be oriented to the needs of an individual and production company. When an employee defines himself/herself as a group member he/she is inclined to emphasize

and to give prominence to differences between members of the group and their differences from other group members. Resource coordination and division of work empowers the group to do more than separate members would do. In order for the group manager to form an effectively working group it is necessary to satisfy interests and needs of employees which would allow them develop themselves into free and creative individuals.

When dealing with unplanned (or planned) changes of the employees, one should seek the individual relevancy and group values of the new employees. It could be reached with the help of the value *contamination* (mixing, amalgamation), (Figure 1).

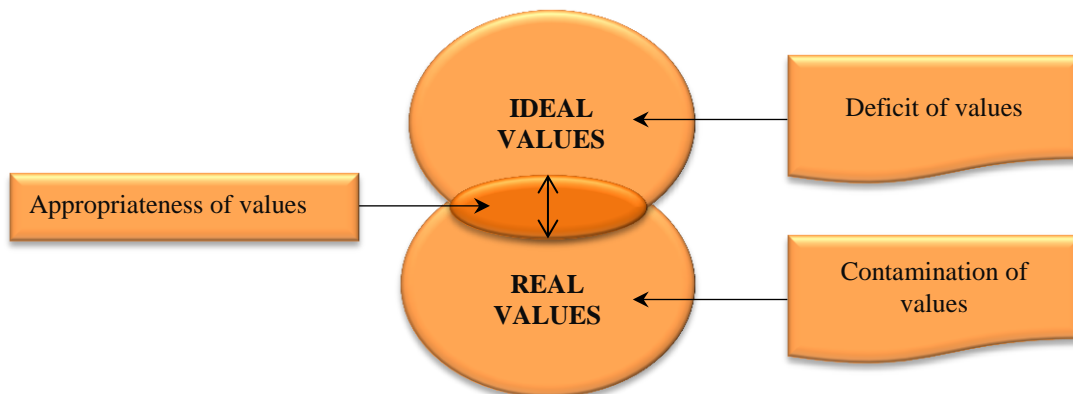


Figure 1. Relation between the ideal and real values (own study)

Value relevance is a whole set of individual values in the group defined by their suitability and possibilities to occupy particular position with a responsibility. *Ideal values* are theoretic construction of the values when specific values are attributed to a particular group. 'Paper' ideal values reflect the essence of the group's activity as well as the whole set of group goals and attitudes. *Real values* are created by many employees (individuals) of the company on the grounds of the recognised values. Real values change in the group when its members 'take away' or 'bring in' own values during change, do not accept all values attributed to the group, behave extraordinarily, stereotypically, etc. During the organisational restructuring in the group value contamination should not be left by chute. Therefore, when seeking for the *contamination* of individual and group values, a manager should primarily consider candidate abilities and experience and later identify the values.

In order to come near to ideal version, we should offer to use significant identification of values of potential candidate at the beginning of candidate selection of for a particular position in a working group.

Individual dependence to the group may be determined according to the identification model of the values relevance. Group selection at the same time means value selection. Therefore, group selection may be treated as first action of an individual as a group member that is almost influenced by the values of the group members. The more a group is useful to an individual, the more an individual is useful to a group. It should be noted that first of all each group manager must understand stages and benefits of the human resource management, advantages and disadvantages of wage forms and the necessity of employees' motivation in the company, so that it could determine the most effective wage system in own group, following presumption, that organizational goals must coincide with the employee goals. When an employee is not especially loyal to the group and the agreement is not long-term, the employee will remain in the group only if it will be able to offer him/her interesting,

attractive, personally satisfying work allowing improving his/her qualification. It could be defined as behaviour determined by a group norm.

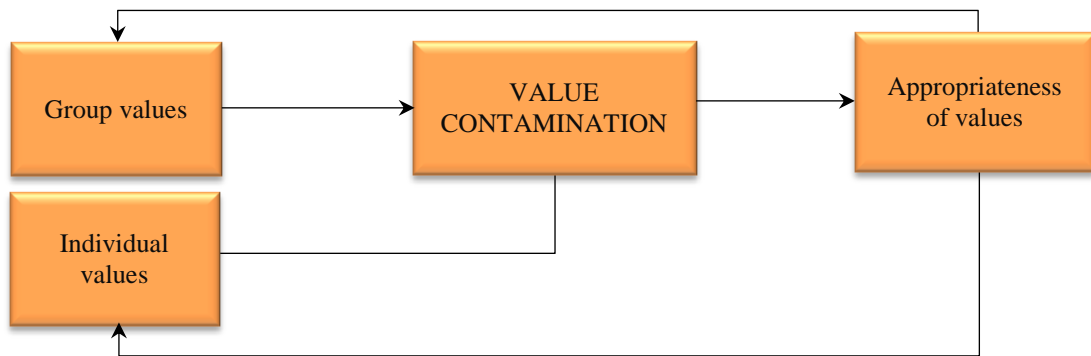


Figure 2. Model of identification of the value relevance (own study)

In summary, it could be stated that individual values in working groups should enable us to define problem-based areas of the group. That is, it should help ascertain why tasks in the group are performed wrong, which requirements are not followed and so on. It should improve the group management process. Regular and effective activity and reciprocity of the entire group is necessary for this. Objectives of forming a group are the following: ability of an individual to work, clear personal goals, clear system of group values, need and ability to constantly improve as an individual, ability to improve together with working group, ability to have influence on colleagues, to learn and exercise, ability to solve problems by performing working tasks, creativity and ability to accept innovations, up-to-date knowledge (professional, etc.). This identification helps an individual to understand performance aspects, to realise or even transform existing values, represent them corresponding to roles of the group and to form as well as convey information of subjective assessment.

3. Research technique

Purpose of this research is to identify individual and group values relevance in the furniture production company. Questionnaire, created by C. A. O'Reilly, J. Chatman and D. F. Caldwell (1991) and improved by J. C. Sarros, J. Gray, I. L. Densten and B. Cooper (2005), was applied for the assessment of individual values in the group. The questionnaire consists of demographic part and seven improved question groups (each consisting of 5 questions), where respondents were asked to assess their group values (in the furniture production company), according to five level Likert scale (from 1 – totally unimportant, to 5 – very important).

Assessment of reliability of questionnaire. SPSS 15.0 version of statistical analysis and data processing program was used for the data processing received during research.

Reliability of questionnaire is determined by estimating Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Defined Cronbach's alpha meanings for assessment of questionnaire's reliability are: strategy of the company 0.882; company's reputation 0.855; team work 0.828; personal liability 0.767; motivation system 0.778; work organisation 0.739; working environment 0.797. When comparing investigative groups, scale is enough reliable, when Cronbach's alpha > 0.7 and very reliable – when Cronbach's alpha > 0.8. Since received meanings of Cronbach's alpha are significantly larger than 0.8, so the questionnaire may be considered as reliable (Vaitkevičius & Saudargienė, 2006).

Research sample. Considering the research goal and objectives, a *non-probable* method of investigative groups is foreseen as *objective conclusion of groups* (Kardelis, 2007). Here

the researcher includes persons in the group who, according to him, are typical from the point of investigative point of view, who are easy to find and who are close by Tydikis (2003). In small researches, investigative groups are often formed by not fully keeping to contingency principle. Undoubtedly, in groups formed in such a way would not represent a population fully. But results of such researches may be reliable enough, if only the researcher has no intentions to extrapolate them to all population that is transform outside investigative group. Often groups are selected in such way for the exploratory (preliminary) research purpose (Kardelis, 2007). Forty respondents participated in the research.

Respondents. Managers of four groups and 9 principals in each group.

Group managers (the lowest level managers manage principals (employees) directly, who perform particular solution implementation works (group chiefs, production bar chief, foremen, brigadiers etc.), solve operative tasks and perfectly dig technology, production organisation and psychology.

Principals are employees, whose discretion in some areas is regulated by the lower level managers.

Groups and respondents are coded using letters and numbers, in the following way:

- **‘S group’** – group manager ‘VS1’ and 9 principles from ‘S11’ to ‘S19’.
- **‘A group’** – group manager ‘VA1’ and 9 principles from ‘A11’ to ‘A19’.
- **‘K group’** – group manager ‘VK1’ and 9 principles from ‘K11’ to ‘K19’.
- **‘U group’** – group manager ‘VU1’ and 9 principles from ‘U11’ to ‘U19’.

4. Research results

The goal of this research was to identify relevant employee values in the groups: **‘S group’**; **‘A group’**; **‘K group’**; **‘U group’**.

The research performed in **‘S group’** revealed that main attention of the production company (through value-based provisions) is directed to company’s strategic questions (42.70) and company’s reputation (33.55), (Figure 3).

It could be assumed that strategic goals in **‘S group’** (42.70) first of all determine employee values and form future goals. Company employees observe in which segment company’s activity is the best, what are its capacities, wherewith it distinguished from contestants, what is company’s specialisation. As in company strategy, the whole of solutions defines the most important goals of the company in future and actions as well as measures to reach them. In these areas you can see how the most effective materials, new production methods, innovative technologies and so on are used. Attitude of the group into importance of company’s reputation (33.55) is not accidental. Constantly variable staff of the group is the weaker link when creating positive reputation of the company. As there are many people, who suffered from bankrupts of companies, i.e. wages were not paid.

Teamwork is least appreciated in **‘S group’** (26.15). It is unbecoming for the success of significant role in the organisation because of the work specifics, as each employee of the group is provided with different working tasks and responsibility. Still it is necessary to know that if group teamwork will be not effective it could arouse more damage than one incompetent employee.

Comparing assessment of respondents in **‘S group’**, different attitude of the respondent S14 is mostly apparent different: from 1.25 point for motivation system to 4.25 point for company’s strategy. Values related to working environment (1.5) are also not important for the respondent S14. And working environment is very relevant to the respondent S19, as it shows, that arranged working environment shall help to seek for good working result.

In this **‘S group’** success is mostly determined by appropriateness of personal values of its members, as manager of the group VS1 assess the values very differently from 3.25 point to 4.50 point. It is supposed, that this manager must compose atmosphere of openness in

work, strengthen interneine reliance of members of the group, emphasize constant support and share information. It is important, that the manager would also have an authority.

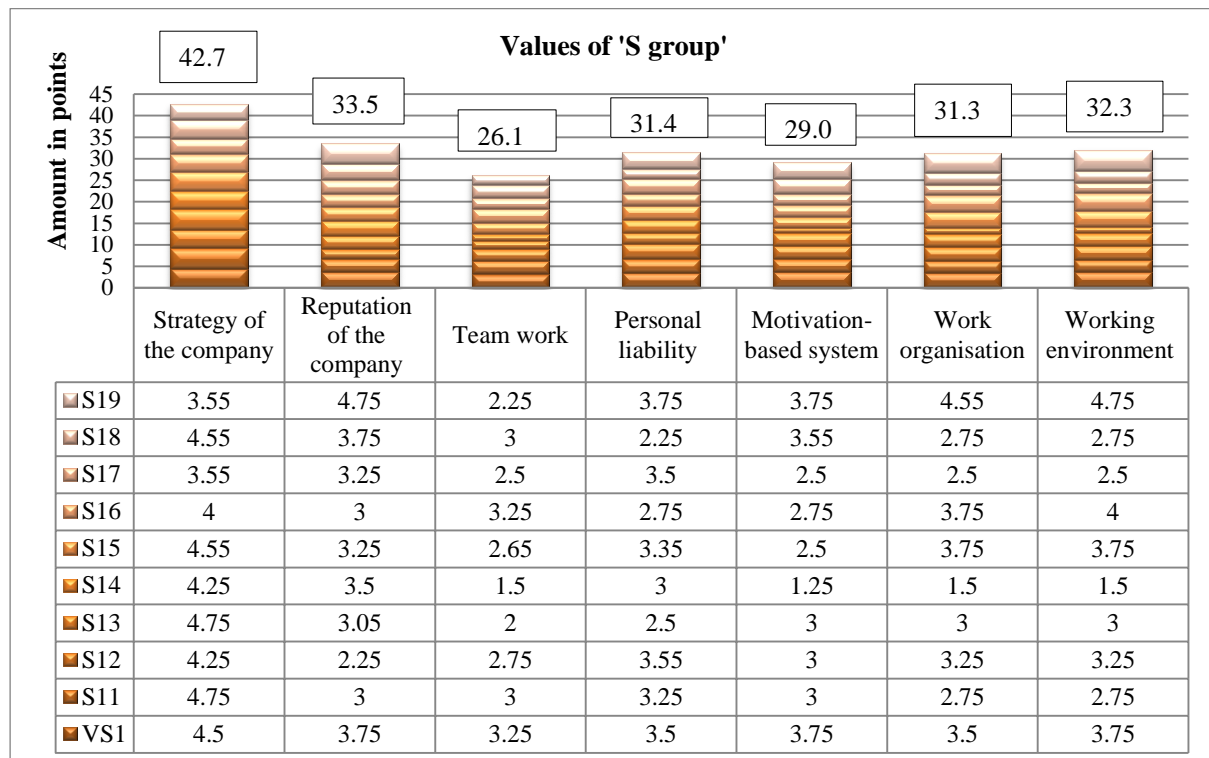


Figure 3. Results of the identification of value relevance in "S group" (own study)

Results of questionnaire showed, that in 'A group' main attention is paid to the strategy of the company (44.50), reputation (38.25) and to working environment (37.80), (Figure 4).

This 'A group', which aims to round up harmonious collective and more friendly working environment, should take more care for peculiarities of employees' personalities. Working environment shall determine for this group optimal functioning of employees, efficiency, quality of working results and satisfaction of work. It is the process of interaction between employees and working environment.

For some employees, i.e. respondent A11 (2.50 point) and respondent A12 (2.55 point), teamwork is not important, as teamwork not for all allows to emphasize their personal achievements. During working group formation into team, internal and external relations of the team are created as well as qualitatively new interneine process of interaction. Teamwork (from 2.50 point to 4.75 point) in the groups differs according to in what ways one interacts with another in the group which part of the group is the main one. Peculiarities of work organisation are not important to respondent A16 (3.00 point). This result shows that mistrust of team work exists, when activity of the group is organised unduly. It could be explained by wrong understanding of tasks and inability to apply own knowledge and abilities for performance of work.

Personal liability is less important for respondent A14 (3.00 point). It is not good variant to take responsibility for own activity, by covering team solutions. For this purpose, professional activity must be reasoned by personal liability for consequences of solutions or results of activity, possible benefit and damage, short-term and long-term consequences.

Respondent VA1, manager of 'A group', assesses working environment only as important (4.00). He/she, using his/her influence, shall have the right give tasks for employees: decide on measures for performing this task, for time and place, where the work

must be performed. But he/she does not do so. We can state, that activity of manager of this group is not adjusted properly and hardly understandable by members of the group.

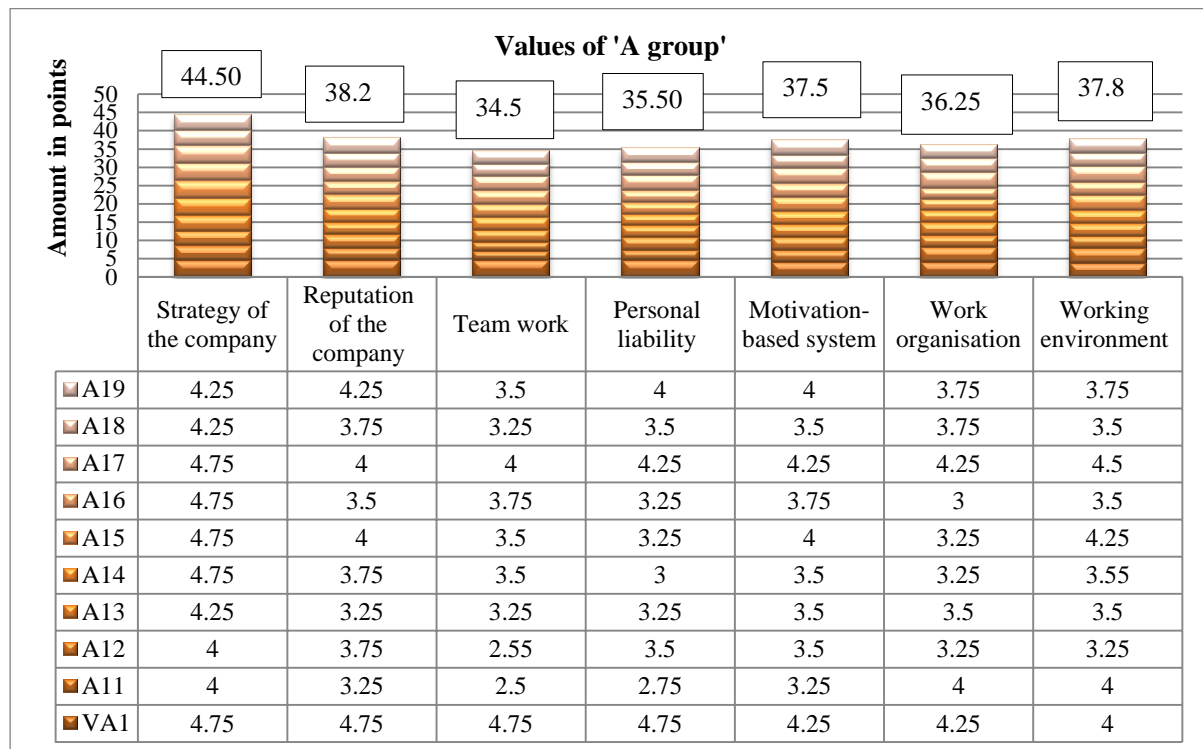


Figure 4. Results of identification of value relevance in "A group" (own study)

Results of the research in '**K group**' revealed, that main attention in the group is paid to strategy of the company (43.50) and motivation system (41.25), (Figure 5).

Attention in '**K group**' is paid to wish to help accurately select motivation measures when creating motivation system. Payment for work system in the company must have stimulating role, must be correct, impartial, consistent and clear. Since motivation is not constant condition, it must be supplemented periodically. As when working in such way, personal achievements of each employee of the group shall be emphasized. Therefore, as results of the research show, teamwork (33.40) and personal liability (38.00) are not relevant in the group. These uncertainties may disappear when a group seeks to work in a team, established common goals and starts to work together. Consequently, employees of the group must be included into common solution of group's problems. Their self-reliance would be greater as well.

In '**K group**' respondent K12 indicated, that strategy of the company (2.00) and reputation of the company (2.00) are not important. It shall be supposed, that this case is exceptional and it would not be necessary to deeply analyse for opinion, formed by separate employee. But the respondent K14 states that teamwork (2.50) and personal liability (2.25) are not very important. It could be corrected by identification of working relations and by determination of employees' dependence on company's rules and procedures. Therefore, in order work of this group would be productive and effective, it must be organised duly, i.e. according to certain rules.

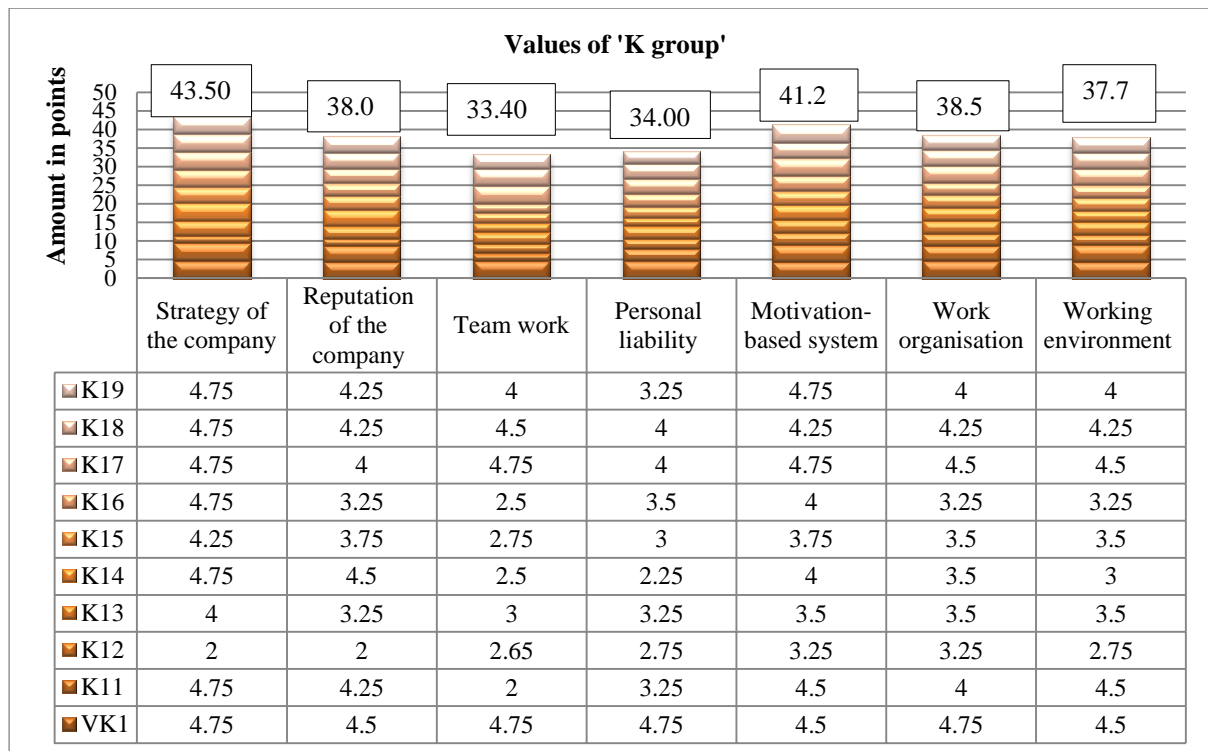


Figure 5. Results of identification of value relevance in “K group” (own study)

All things (from 4.25 to 4.75) are very important for respondent U19. But the attention is paid to respondent U12. According to his/her assessment, only company strategy (4.75) is important. The following values are not important: company reputation (2.50); teamwork (2.50); personal liability (2.50); motivation system (2.50); work organisation (2.50); working environment (2.75). Therefore this result shows inappropriateness of this employee in ‘U group’.

Respondent VK1, in ‘K group’, looks into the values very seriously. His/her assessments do not differ very much and reach from 4.50 point to 4.75 point. In this group, the manager must raise clear goals for the group, divide compulsory roles for each employee of the group, encourage its employees for personal achievements, create working environment, where only the strongest and whose, who can easily reorient to team work, will remain. High working results may be reached by encouraging employees individually and as a group, and by allowing employees of the group express themselves more meaningfully and involve into organisational working interactions.

Research results revealed that company strategy (46.00), company reputation (40.25); motivation system (40.25) are very important.

Teamwork (32.75) and personal liability (33.00) are less important. So it could be stated that work of this group is organised according to certain rules or tasks.

It is important to notice, that respondent VU1 (group manager) distinguishes values, which are related to teamwork (3.75), personal liability (3.50) and work organisation (3.50) as not very important. Company strategy (4.75), reputation (4.75) and motivation system (4.75) designates as important. Research results for this group show aspects of certainty and uncertainty and perfectly reflect system of individual reliability and reliability in organisation. It is necessary to highlight liability of all in ‘U group’, i.e. to commit take responsibility both for individual employee and total group.

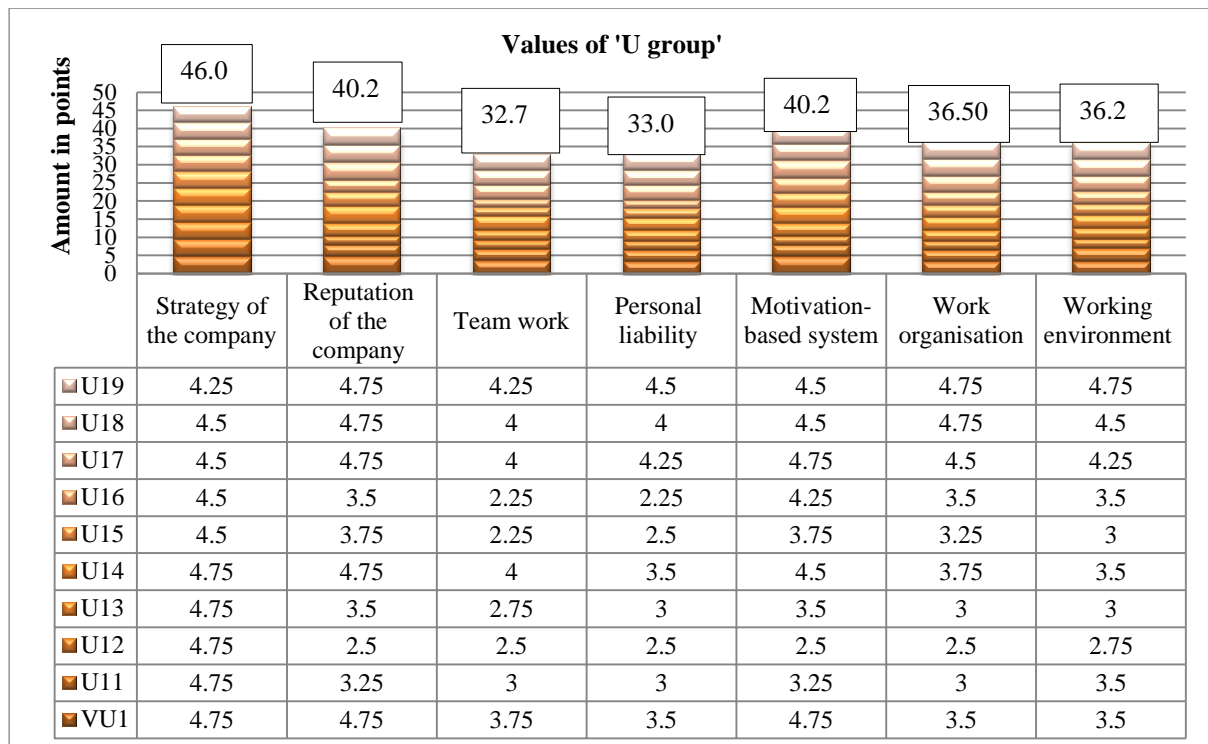


Figure 6. Results of identification of appropriateness of values in “U group” (own study)

Respondent VU1 (group manager) defines company strategy (4.75), company reputation (4.75) and motivation system (4.75) as very important. And team work (3.75), personal liability (3.50), work organisation (3.50), and working environment (3.50) as not very important. It indicates that manager performance is directed to the company objectives and not to consolidation of the group performance. It is necessary to require from the manager various knowledge, ability to realistically assess existing situation, see development perspective, but the most important, so that he/she would be able to persuade employees of the group, would be able to foresee goals and reach for effectiveness. Arranged team work in ‘U group’ (from 2.25 point to 4.25 point) may give satisfaction and enrich members of the group, as development of socialisation and friendly relations is related to work under performance. The more members of the group know each other, the more conveniently and quietly they can feel.

Research results show significant relation of all explored values. Therefore assessment of the relation of values of the company strategy, company reputation and motivation system is significant. Employees are looking for such environment, where they could be able to express their attitude and values as well as to assume corresponding roles in the group. Employees (individuals) in the group appreciate those aspects of activity, which are related to work results, to ability act in an autonomous way and to production environment quality as well as safety.

In summary, research results indicate that group employees are not keen to work in the company where work results indicate anticipated future strategic changes within the company. Organisational reforms will not take place and will not be implemented if the company performance is effective and does not require special changes. Changes in the company may involve not only change of working conditions but also may require changes of employment contracts. It depends on particular situation and substantiality of changes. Working together and seeking for the same goal, group members must clear obstacles by creating interdependence, reliability and certainty. It should be stated that group managers know the best what

encourages the employees to work; they can apply work tasks and wage so that to subject employees seek company. Published information about motivation in the company as well as improvement of correct wage system shall connect resources of the company into process of good relations. It helps to cherish both individual and group-based work components in the group. As a result, identification of individual relevance in the group and process of value contamination are used to improve relations between the group members, to improve understanding of the group goals, to expand the level of employee authority and respect.

5. Conclusion

Internece relevance of the company's employees seeking personal and company goals promote the value sharing values guaranteeing the group formation. Values identified by an individual and a group help to fine-tune employee personal and professional goals as well as to emphasize career priorities. Values determine inner views to the most important things in life as they can express a relation and interaction between an individual and a group. They also can be a criterion and a measure when aiming to achieve a goal. In the group an individual seeks for a balance between benefit received from the membership in the group and own contribution. So an individual may attract attention using such values, which would be positively assessed by other group members. It's important that an individual would use these values so that he/she would become useful for other group members as the other group members use the same values to reach their own goals.

Company managers who seek for the individual and group contamination should not only take into consideration candidate abilities and experience but also identify the values. The following elements of individual and group values were identified: company strategy, company reputation, motivation system, work organisation, working environment, team work, and personal liability.

The most important values are related to company's strategy and reputation. Its publication to employee allows them think more analytically about the company and its environment, various possibilities and career perspectives.

Changes in the group motivation system are not very important system changes, as they do not impact employees and cannot be influenced by them. Motivation determined by the group selection will have influence on further individual performance in the group.

Work organisation and working environment in groups are not important elements of values, as modern system of organisational technical measures was implemented in the company, helping purposefully use labour force, working time and because proper working conditions were created.

Least important values for the group are values related to teamwork and personal liability, as there is weak internece relation between group members acting in the different work areas. That way more personal needs are satisfied; one seeks different goals and does not take personal liability for results of the group performance. Additional work is required with these employees in groups in order to consolidate them in the group and so that members of the group would be suitable.

After identification of individual and group values the manager may form suitable (effective) group, seeking for company goals.

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