

IMPROVING THE AUTHORITY OF STAFF AS AN INDICATOR OF CONTINUOUS GROWTH IN ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

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Abstract

Organizational performance is, and will remain, a priority on the agenda of each manager within the different hierarchy and structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the provision of a modern and professional human resources management based on maintaining a high level of probity and professional integrity for the staff and an increase level of authority in the community, will always be a useful indicator for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of institutional mid level and top management. The conduct of specific activities directly and closely to the civilian population, the difficulty of permanently assessing the risks associated with police interventions and the existence of various situations that can unpredictably degenerate into actions of destabilizing social order, the deployment of police activity in high risk criminal areas, all associated with insufficient human and logistic resources, may be factors that in most cases influence the authority of the personnel in the public order and safety system, thus affecting both citizens and the ones charged with ensuring, maintaining and restoring public order. The surveys carried out in the past at the level of the specialized centers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs highlighted very clearly the determinants that lead to the diminution of the authority of the personnel. The perception of respondents, both policemen, border guards, gendarmes, was almost the same, being expressed by the fact that the diminution of authority reached a critical level and will continue to inevitably lead to negative effects which will not be easily controlled by the organization and by the state in the medium and long term. The survey conducted last year confirmed the results of the previous ones, the most significant effects occurring, as the interviewees noted, were the constant diminution of the image and credit granted to the institution and its representatives by the different categories of beneficiaries of the public services provided respectively citizens, the civil society, other partner public organizations, aspects translated into a crisis of legitimacy, increasingly negative not only in the public discourse or in the media, but also in the self-image of the employees.

Keywords: organizational performance, organizational behavior, illegal behavior and the enforcement of law, institutions and growth, human resources, human development, labor management, safety law, labor law.

1. INTRODUCTION

Performance refers to those higher quality indicators that indicate the optimal level of achievement of the strategic objectives, the best results achieved by an individual or organization, exceptional progress in a particular field, better results than those previously obtained, and last but not least, to the maximum efficiency and effectiveness of an activity.

Some authors characterize performance in terms of both capability and strategic development (Lebas, 1995), and in another approaches, performance represents the achievement of organizational goals regardless of their nature and variety, the concrete content of the performance being dependent on strategic objectives (Brudan, 2010).

Organizational performance is the most important way to measure the success of an organization through a set of indicators that reflect the results of different work processes. From the managerial point of view, performance measurement is an absolutely useful and necessary tool to highlight the way the organization's objectives have been achieved and to provide the necessary information to improve the organization's various activities (Neely et al, 1995). Performance indicators are those variables used to quantify efficiency and effectiveness, which can be expressed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Performance measurement may also be defined as the process of quantifying the efficiency or effectiveness of an action, while a performance measure is the metric used in the quantification process (Neely et al, 1995).

Overall, performance measurement has the role of monitoring the institution's progress, controlling deviations, identifying opportunities for welfare, providing information for decision-making, and facilitating internal and external communication, as well as motivating employees and encouraging continuous improvement of work and organizational health.

In both the private and public sectors, performance measurement is considered a necessary component of good management.

2. PARTICULARITIES OF PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT IN POLICE ACTIVITY

Regarding police organizations, performance basically means how well the things that the police have responsibility for are being delivered. 'Performance' does not automatically imply 'performance indicators', although simple crime statistics are often mistakenly taken on face value as how the police are performing. Performance indicators simply help us to check what performance actually is, and may not cover all areas of policing. Performance indicators can be very useful but they can also be misleading.

To obtain the benefits from indicator analysis, while avoiding the pitfalls, it is helpful to make a distinction between apparent and actual performance.

A performance indicator should be seen as indicating apparent performance because it can be influenced by a range of circumstance, ranging from recording practices, the actions of other agencies, even environmental change and so on.

Regarding the last element, road traffic collisions are an excellent example because results can be influenced by the weather. This year's figures may be lower than last year's, but if last year's were unusually high because of longer periods of severe weather, this positive performance indicator does not necessarily mean that police performance has improved. So, a judgement of actual performance relates directly to the activities carried out by the organisation. Instead, apparent performance can be measured numerically through the performance indicators but actual performance is a qualitative one, an evaluation of the results of the performance indicators.

In an environment of limited resources, it becomes very important to measure the performance of policing activities in order to ensure these are in line with the objectives set out for them.

Literature review indicates that there are a lot of studies on how police performance can be measured using polling, such as self-reported victimization or questions on confidence in the police, but there are many significant gaps in how to make a refined analysis of this type of data.

Other performance indicators, such as the views of the civil society on the performance of the police, are often not present in the police performance frameworks.

Measurement of police performance has been attempted since the establishment of the institution of modern policing in the mid-nineteenth century with the intent of tracking on how well the institution was performing the duties assigned to it (Maguire and Uchida, 2000). The measures were done on a local community or municipal level, and focused strictly on the inputs and outputs of police work (Maguire, 2003).

The initial measurements of police performance involved direct measures like crime rates, number of arrests and fines, clearance rates, response times and it was not until the late 1930's during the so-called 'professionalization of policing' that the importance of citizens' views on police performance was also undertaken in the USA.

Traditionally, police performance has been measured by crime rates and, more recently, by the satisfaction of the community, but those two traditional indicators are admittedly insufficient to create a reliable measure of police performance (Dadds and Scheide, 2000).

Having recognized the broad spectrum of tasks assigned to the police, it is important to understand that police performance measurement is a complicated task with multiple dimensions and there is no single measure that will be even remotely close to measuring the performance of everything the police do (Coleman, 2012; Leckie, 2012; Kiedrowski et al, 2013; Maguire, 2003).

The most traditional measures of the success of police work involves crime rates, the number of arrests and fines issued, clearance rates, call for service response times, surveys, direct observations of social behavior, situational studies such as independent integrity testing on police misconduct.

Some academics suggest that police performance should be measured by multiple indicators, ranging from the individual victims' accounts (Neyroud, 2008) to more formalized public satisfaction surveys.

There had been identified seven dimensions of police work: reduce crime and victimization, call offenders to account, reduce fear and enhance personal security, ensure civility in public spaces, the use of force and authority fairly, efficiently and effectively, use financial resources fairly, efficiently, and effectively, quality services and customer satisfaction (Moore and Braga, 2003).

Four measurable concepts of the dimension of use of force and authority were also identified (Moore and Braga, 2003).

First, the concept of equitable distribution of police protection efforts among all citizens, based on necessity and not on favourability, can be measured by a rigorous examination of how the police allocate their resources.

Secondly, the degree of distribution of the inconvenience caused by efforts to combat crime can be measured by reviewing police services policy in terms of fair sharing of efforts and mechanisms for receiving citizens' complaints about police.

Thirdly, the extent to which police can effectively avoid excessive use of force can be measured by civil society complaints about excessive use of force, as well as court trials that have been successful or not against the police. Moreover, polls on citizens who have had contact with the police could deceive citizens' experiences of levels of use of force and authority.

Fourthly, the concept of general police legitimacy and community support for police can be measured by polls where people are asked about their general police support, as well as about perceptions about the fairness and legitimacy of the police in certain situations. This approach is more useful when appropriate controls are included in the analysis, such as whether the respondent previously had contact with the police or was the victim of a crime.

In addition, the police could record the degree of violence of the suspects and the police's response to them during the interaction between the two entities. Such information could be compared with police policies on the use of force, operational data or public complaints against the police. While this data could provide valuable information on police performance in terms of use of force, there is a constant risk of inconsistent recording on police data on use of force due to the subjective nature of the problem, which would introduces potential bias in the analysis.

3. BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES THAT LOWER POLICE AUTHORITY

The short study presented in this paper proposes to test new types of measurement indicators of police performance, referring to those who target the level of authority perceived by the institution's employees.

In order to identify the causes that favor or decrease the authority of the personnel in the public order structures, a survey was applied at the level of the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs, the main issues of its analysis referring to the perception regarding the satisfaction with the professional situation, the appreciation of the authority level in the last year, identifying possible causes that lead to lower authority and the main issues that negatively influence police authority.

Respondents are part of the structures of the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs operating in the public order structures, the volume of the investigated sample being 1.331, a representative sample with an error margin of $\pm 2.7\%$ and a confidence level of 95%. By category of personnel, the highest frequency was recorded in the police category, respectively 53.7%, then the gendarmerie, with 24.7% and the border police with 21.6%.

Concerning the possible causes of the decrease of authority in relation to the civil population, a scale with fourteen indicators was used as a measuring instrument, the first ten items analyzed having a share of over 25% of the total category.

Thus, with regard to the category of policemen, they raised as possible factors the negative advertising in the media (60.5%), the lack of technical equipment (60%), the fear of using fire arms in legal conditions due to repercussions (46.9%), the interference of politicians in the sphere of activity (42%), the lack of firmness of law enforcement officers (40%), the lack of information campaigns of the population on their obligations towards police officers (37.4%), the lack of training (37.4%), staffing from external sources (33.1%), lack of strategies to counteract negative publicity from management (30.3%) and poor education and training (24.1%). Indicators on corruption and the risk of job loss were scored by lower values, respectively by 20.9% and 8.3%.

In contrast, an important indicator was the indicator showing the lack of support from managers to resolve tense situations (23%).

Concerning border guards, the most important causes of their decrease in their authority are the negative advertising of the media (64.8%), the poor technical endowment (48.7%), the fear of using fire arms in legal conditions due to repercussions (44.2%), the lack of firmness in the application of the law (44.2%), the lack of training in tense situations (43.2%), the lack of information campaigns of the population on their legal obligations towards border guards (43.2%), political interference in the

functioning of the organization (42.1%), corruption (32.4%), staffing from external sources (29.9%) and lack of support from managers in their activity (25%).

Indicators on poor training and the risk of job loss were scored by 20.5% and 11.4%.

At the level of the Gendarmerie staff, the employees of this institution pointed out as causes that lead to the decrease of authority, negative advertising of mass-media (60.7%), poor technical equipment (48.7%), staffing from external sources (48.3%), lack of technical equipment (47.7%), fear of using the equipment under legal conditions due to repercussions (42.5%), lack of training in managing stressed situations (36.7%), lack of firmness in the implementation process the law (36.4%), political interference in the functioning of the organization (34%), the lack of strategies for combating negative publicity from the management (26.1%) and corruption (25.2%). Indicators concerning the lack of support from managers and the risk of job losses were marked by lower values, respectively by 18.5% and 12.4%.

The interpretation of data shows that for all categories of staff the most important causes capable of generating the decrease of authority are the negative media advertising, poor technical endowment and fear of using the equipment or fire arms in legal conditions due to repercussions, the risk of losing the job being ranked on the last position, indicating the persistence of the professional option.

In the context of introducing the variable 'job/work position', the data provided by the applied questionnaire indicates the majority of the assessments that characterize the direction towards which the organization is directed is 'good', namely 52.3% in the Police, 62.4% in the Border Police and 74.8% in the Gendarmerie. Appraisals that favor the feeling that things go in the wrong direction appear to be particularly characteristic of police personnel (36.8%) and border police staff (24.7%).

Another important indicator that was taken into account was the data on personnel fluctuation and staff shortage. Thus, the acute personnel crisis of recent times is a crucial issue from the perspective of the high negative perception of the respondents. Regarding this indicator, 96.5% of policemen, 93.7% of border guards and 88.1% of gendarmes said that the organization is facing a serious shortage of personnel.

Comparing this issue directly with the nature, volume and complexity of police activities, high percentages of personnel (71% - policemen, 64.5% - border guards) reported that staff shortages are largely and very largely responsible for delaying the solving of problems raised by citizens, leading to a decrease of authority in relation to civil society. Employees of the Gendarmerie show a higher degree of optimism, with only 31.6% viewing staff shortages as an impediment to job performance.

Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which some inappropriate behavior of colleagues affected their authority regarding the civilian population. In this case, more than 40% of policemen and

border guards respondents have estimated that the main types of inappropriate behavior that lead to lower authority are inappropriate language, negligent wearing of the uniform, abusive behavior and lack of concern over citizens' problems. Thus, the police respondents considered that the way of addressing, the lack of concern for the citizens' problems and the abusive behavior, affects their authority in large and very large extent of 47.8%, 47.1% and 44.8%.

For border guards, for the same set of indicators in the the above order, the percentages were of 45.1%, 41.1% and 46.6%.

With a more optimistic approach, the Gendarmerie employees were at the opposite pole, appreciating by more than 40% that the issues I have written about affect their authority to a small extent or not at all. Finally, in order to identify how employees relate to some economic issues that could influence the decline of authority but also to determine their place in a data hierarchy, the respondents were asked to choose three items, at the level of perceived personal concern.

Thus, the problems that should be given to the managers 'attention and which have a very high level of concern were the poor technical endowment, namely over 88% of respondents' answers, inadequate remuneration in relation to the risk of the profession, respectively 78% and reducing the number of car patrols due to fuel shortages for more than 45%.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In the last two years, the number of the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs staff has decreased in all sectors of activity and, with the increase in the staff shortage, the dynamics of the criminal phenomenon continues to pose a threat not only to the safety of the citizen, the number one priority of the police organization, but also to those called to protect it, the policemen.

Although the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs is striving both to strengthen the operational capability of its units and to increase the authority of police personnel through an organizational-managerial, logistic, financial and public relations approach, police officers, border guards and gendarmes continue to be concerned that the top level management doesn't provide the adequate legal instruments for intervention and doesn't sufficiently address the urgent need to put in place both legal and physical safeguards for them.

The multitude of anti-social actions faced by law enforcement agencies generates social discomfort, diminishes the capacity of state intervention, bringing serious prejudice to the image and public confidence in law enforcement.

The values to which the employees of the Romanian Police, the Border Police and the Romanian Gendarmerie adhere, the ideals that they design as important and which deserve to be pursued, play an essential role when we discuss about the individual will to boost the activities within organization. The extent to which workplace responds to the aspirations and personal values of an employee is equally a determining factor for professional satisfaction and attachment to the institution as well as a real indicator of the institution's performance on retaining employees.

Just like the authority indicator, the persistence of the option of continuing to work within the organization, if it had the option or opportunity to choose another lucrative activity, may be an indicator as useful in assessing performance in the organization.

However, despite the optimism of the respondents, projected by the indicators analyzed, the majority of employees will continue to have serious concerns about the causes capable of generating a decline in their authority to civil society.

For managers, the use of such indicators, as well as their correlations, can prove to be a useful way of organizational diagnosis that highlights both the strengths of the functioning of the police organization and the issues that require immediate intervention.

Another conclusion resulting from the analysis of the answers given is that there is a direct relationship, depending on the performance of the organization and its state of health, respectively the way it works and performs is closely related to the state of physical and mental health of its employees.

However, in relation to the set of indicators and responses received, the findings of the research could only have a prospective character, just a micro-translation to provide the possibility of nuanced means of diagnosis, that could lead to the identification of those dysfunctionally more subtle elements at the level of each unit and the conducting of actions to combat their effects, tailored to the specificities of law enforcement activities.

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