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## **Participative Management**

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**Abstract:** At the level of Romanian public institutions, strongly centralized and conservatively from the managerial point of view, the participation of public sector employees in the decision-making process through various forms imposed by the institution was formal and without content, due to an over-regulated and totally centralized ideology. Thus, the lack of participative experience and practice, backed up by an exercise undertaken in public organizations in the early 1990s, led to a reconstruction of the collective mentality. The paper is concerned with the analysis of participative management at AFDJ (Lower Danube River Administration) Galati.

**Keywords:** management; performance; human resources

### **1. Introduction**

Participative management can be seen as a tool for improving the efficiency of enterprises and for establishing harmonious union relations; as a device for the development of social education; for solidarity, between the work community and for valuing latent human resources; as a means of achieving industrial peace and harmony leading to greater productivity and increased production; as a humanitarian act to give the worker an acceptable status within the work community and a sense of purpose in activity; and as an ideological device for the development of self-management in industry.

The general objectives and functions of participative management are the following: promoting cordial relations between management and workers; creating relationships of understanding and trust between them; making a substantial increase in production; providing better welfare and other facilities for workers; training workers to understand and share management responsibilities; promoting increased productivity for the overall benefit of the institution; providing a better understanding of their role in the institution's activity and in the execution process; satisfying employees' urge for self-expression, thus leading to institutional harmony, better relationships and increased cooperation; preventing exploitation of employees by either bosses or top managers; ensuring the growth of the economy as a whole, through democratic processes and regulations; facilitating teamwork; motivating employees to dedicate themselves to the goals by promoting their creativity; reducing absenteeism; providing an atmosphere of acceptance of change; ensuring greater job satisfaction; contribution to the full development of the human personality;

The need for participative management lies in the following: participation as a right in contrast to other approaches that emphasize the instrumental nature of participative protection, of position market of

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work; the participation as a means to improve engagement and performance at work; the participation as a means for a better coordination and control of activity of the institution.

It was noticed that the reasons for participation can be very different to a certain extent, the goals can coexist and support each other. But there are also some goals that are incompatible. There is a conflict between the opinion to those who see the participative management as a means of acquiring acceptance of the goals of the organization and those who see the participative management, as a counterbalancing power management. The participation can be formal or informal. The formal type of participation is ensured by bodies formed by agreement or under legal obligation that follow a clearly established procedure. There may be formal organizational structures such as base committees, working committees, joint management boards, workers' representatives on the management board, etc. Formal participation is institutionalized, that is, it has a formal institutional basis.

On the other hand, regarding the informal type of participative management, it has gained relevance and importance in the recent years. Employees and volunteers voluntarily form various committees and meet regularly. Even a “consultation scheme” in which a supervisor or foreman consults a worker on day-to-day operations is a style of informal participation.

## **2. Research Method**

We used important methodological aspects and highlighted three essential elements for the success of the undertaken actions in order to establish a participatory, functional climate at the level of the public organization. These elements can be rendered as follows:

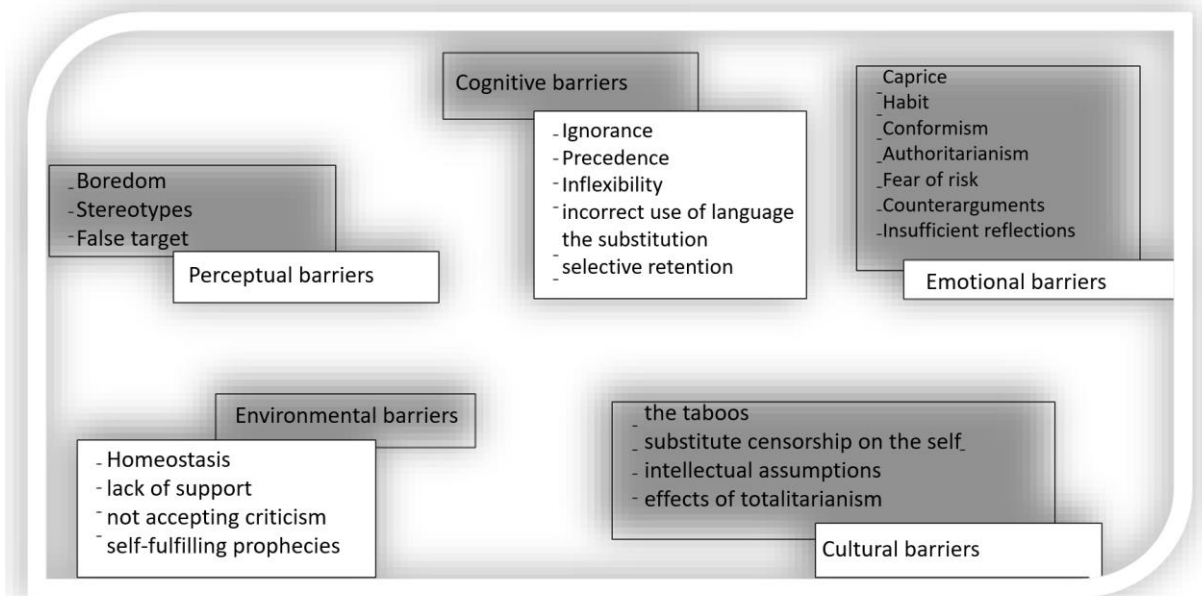
- the concepts of involvement and participation are correctly operationalized;
- in order to generate a participative climate, the synchronization between objective and subjective should be evident;
- personal relationships redefined so as to fold over a participative public organization.

## **3. Results**

The existence of a participatory climate on a large scale at the level of public organizations in Romania must consider several different aspects in terms of content, but also in a close relationship of interdependence. At the level of Romanian public institutions, strongly centralized and conservatively managed, participation was very limited: the participation of public sector employees in the decision-making process through various forms imposed by the institution was formal and without content, due to an over-regulated and totally centralized ideology. It has been demonstrated that at the level of public institutions, both employees and bosses are content/satisfied if they are allowed to take part in the life of the institution in which they work and in the decisions that are related to the organization, knowing that a non-participation and a refusal of cognitive or action autonomy generates dissatisfaction or even indifference towards the organization. The absence of an appropriate and horizontal motivational climate makes the participation of the members of the public organization in decision-making just a speech meant to attract attention. Therefore, it is necessary to have an

adequate motivational climate, centered on the identification and support of the real needs of the members of the public organization, of those motivational, concrete and situational factors that contribute to the definition and characterization of the field of forces with a stimulating role for performance, both of the individual, as well as the collective involved in the organization.

The performance of a public organization is conditioned by the quality of the change strategy. In these organizations, employees develop a multitude of barriers (Figure no. 1) that prevent change. They are perceptual, cognitive, emotional, cultural and environmental barriers.



**Figure 1. Barriers to change**

Source: (<http://www.gnac.ro/wp>)

The change of attitudes and behaviors at the level of the members of the organization, the change of the managerial system and the change at the level of the system of values and attitudes of the members lead to an organizational transformation, which aims at the renewal of the organization.

The Galati Autonomous Region “Lower Danube River Administration” is established for the purpose of achieving optimal navigation conditions on inland waterways, where it fulfills the role of waterways authority. The management is organized to ensure a decision-making chain, an informational flow and an efficient coordination of activities and increase the profitability of the work process. Management of the Directorate is provided by the Board of Directors and the general director, appointed by Order of the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Telecommunications. The board of directors consists of seven members appointed by the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Telecommunications (as the tutelary authority) and the Ministry of Public Finance (in the case of the representative of this institution), in accordance with the legislation in force. The organizational structure of the Directorate is approved by the Administrative Council of A.F.D.J. Galati (Lower Danube River

Administration), at the proposal of the general director in order to achieve the objectives in conditions of efficiency, effectiveness and economy.

The main objectives in the field of human resources aimed, in particular:

- Annual planning and management of human resources within the Directorate;
- Ensuring the recruitment and retention of competent personnel within the Directorate;
- Ensuring the annual professional training for the Directorate's employees.

The distribution of the number of posts at the level of the “Lower Danube River Administration” of Galati during 2020-2022, according to the organizational structure, is shown in the table below.

**Table 1. The number of vacancies at Lower Danube River Administration of Galati level**

unit	Number of vacancies		
	2020	2021	2022
Sulina Waterways Section	172	171	171
Giurgiu Waterways Section	93	93	107
Brăila Waterways Agency	43	43	50
Călărași Waterways Agency	32	32	34
Dr. Turnu Severin Waterways Agency	28	28	31
Central Apparatus - Galati	294	333	353
<b>TOTAL AFDJ – Galati RA</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>746</b>

Source: [www.afdj.ro/ro/content/rapoarte-si-studii](http://www.afdj.ro/ro/content/rapoarte-si-studii)

The personnel policy adopted during the analyzed period had in mind the provision of the necessary staff depending on the volume of activity to achieve the proposed objectives. Thus, AFDJ fell within the average number of positions provided for and approved by the income and spending budget. In 2022, the organizational structure was supplemented with 46 positions (navigation personnel), justified by the purchase of new ships within the projects carried out at the level of RA AFDJ (Lower Danube River Administration) of Galati.

The managerial process involves the exercise of an authority to achieve what its function requires. Involvement should not be seen as a form of anarchy, it presupposes a certain degree of willingness on the part of the manager to share the competences related to the decision-making process. Thus, the involvement and participation have an institutionalized feature in the form of advisory commissions, work and information groups, which bring together both managerial staff and employees. In participative management, appointed heads/managers are responsible and accountable for decision-making, with directly involved employees, actively participating in providing feedback, analysis, suggestions and recommending solutions in the decision-making process. These are just a few managerial lines necessary to establish a new service or an organization. We carried out the case study through three models:

- The employee accountability model;
- Monitoring and guidance model in participative management;
- Management team interaction model.

The first participative management model, the *Employee Empowerment Model*, can lead to organizational success. It advocates a flat organizational structure. The model of monitoring and guidance in participative management describes how the members of the management team become responsible in the execution of the functions held by the institution. In this model, members of the management team delegate authority to staff or other committees. The third model, the Management Team Interaction Model, complements the other two models by focusing on interactions within the management team. This model reveals the interaction of the management team with central staff and associates. This interaction leads to the formulation of a participatory management policy. When the policy is formulated, the parties get involved in the decision-making process. After the decision is made, it is implemented. It should be noted that there is a collective agreement regarding the decision taken. After the implementation of the decision follows the evaluation as a way of monitoring and ensuring the agreed decision. This participatory model offers the possibility of creating a participatory management policy that can constitute a framework for all participative initiatives. The model ensures that process evaluation shows us that we are on the right track, but it is essential that there are checks in all participative management activities.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The most valuable asset of a good manager is the people. If people are cooperative, loyal, willing to put in their efforts and work even overtime, trust the leaders who lead them, feel safe at work, then they will know results and see the effectiveness of their work increasing the capacity of the organization. The more extensive the decision-making and delegation of responsibilities is, the more the employees' trust and loyalty to the boss/manager will increase. The leader is the one who can generate strategies in order to implement quality participative management.

The use of these guidelines can be guidelines for creating your own participative management improvement program, a program that meets the needs of each institution. Annual reporting, job description changes and updates are important, balanced ways of participative monitoring. Given that there are many and rapid changes within the institution, the job description needs to be updated whenever these changes are made. Drafting the job description, reviewing it regularly and signing it as a form of acceptance by the mentor manager and employee to reflect changing realities and conditions, reflects an important element of participative management. The annual balance or better said the annual report represents an important mechanism for channeling the participation of employees in the managerial decision-making process. In this report, the employees' observations and analyzes are recorded as a contribution to the institutional monitoring and evaluation process, and what the employees suggest and recommend constitutes their major contribution to the planning process. The implementation of the work report for the coming year will follow the annual work plan which reflects the employee contributions generated in the annual evaluation report.

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