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QUALITY OPERATION OF HEALTH RESORTS AND SPAS IN SLOVENIA

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Abstract

The health resorts and spas that wish to be successful must also measure and improve their organisational energy in order to achieve this success and the satisfaction of their employees and the users of their services. The energy of health resorts and spas is reflected in the strength and enthusiasm of their employees, and in the level of innovativeness, work intensity and the skill of adapting to change. Managers and executives can apply the results of the measurements of organisational energy to developing strategies for quality leadership and better management of the energy of employees, thus creating the conditions for successful operation, growth and competitiveness. The paper presents the opinions of presidents and members of management boards, general managers and executives on the energy that is predominant in their health resorts and spas. It has been established that productive energy is predominant in their working environment. They are aware that good organisational energy does not necessarily result in a job well done, but that a job well done undoubtedly generates good team energy and that quality leadership, strategic orientations, belief in success, commitment and cooperation can have a critical effect on the generation of positive organisational energy.

Keywords: *managers, executives, organisational energy, health resorts, spas*

Introduction

The quality of health resorts and spas is measured not only by the number of employees, the number of users of their services and a diverse offer for a relaxing getaway or a successful recovery for health reasons, but also by

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the management of individual health resorts and spas, and by the type of energy they possess, both of which enable their operation. By energy we are referring to the energy coming from the employees and which is "generated" by employees in the processes of creating and achieving objectives and mutual cooperation at all levels. It is an organisational energy, which is reflected in the strength and enthusiasm with which an individual health resort or spa is operating.

Organisational energy is the result of interactions among the emotional, perceptual and psychological state of the employees, and is identified through the behaviour and mode of conduct of employees and through their reactions to various situations and events. It is difficult to directly observe or measure it; however, diagnosing it is of great importance for a health resort or spa as it increases the intensity, speed and persistence of the work of employees. It must be emphasised that employees are influenced by various factors which are an integral part of their individual traits, such as e.g. values, needs, desires, goals, and, that which is most important for creating organisational energy, emotions. This affects the way an individual feels in the organisation where he/she is employed; whether he/she is satisfied and wishes to pursue the objectives of the organisation; or whether he/she is unhappy and will simply give up on the work and the goals he/she has set for himself/herself when taking the job in the health resort or spa.

Organisational energy

Organisational energy is described as a force which the company operates with. It is shown in the power and dedication with which a certain organisation is operating (Brečko, 2007, p. 56). Namely, it portrays the degree in which the company uses its own emotional, cognitive and behavioural potential, with the intent of achieving the set objectives (Breznik, 2009, p. 19). It represents the organisation's emotional charge, since it is transmitted within departments, working units and the whole organisation. Therefore, it can be described as a type of contagiousness, in which the enthusiasm, will, intentional activities and passion are transferred among employees (Carter, 1999, p. 237).

When employees are overwhelmed by enthusiasm and a shared sense of urgency, it leads to contemplation on their shared success, resulting in an accumulated organisational energy (Breznik, 2009, p. 20). Organisational energy is invisible, but we can feel it working (Bruch, 2006, p. 6). It is

created in a company by cooperation between employees and team members and cooperation between the employees and the management of the organisation (Brečko, 2012b, p. 7). It is demonstrated in the power and enthusiasm of the employees, in their innovativeness, vitality, and the speed of all three - work, innovation processes and processes of change (Bruch and Ghoshal, 2004, p. 199).

Cardon (2008, p. 78) describes organisational energy as energy systems which create and influence the physical essence. The flow of energy is circular, thus helping the management or the human resources officers to focus on human relations more thoroughly. Carter (1999, p. 233) speaks of an organisation's primal energy, which is said to be released in an environment where energy is being exchanged among participants in the business process, in which individuals that are willing to commit to an organisation with all of their being and abilities hold a prominent role.

Cottrell (2008, p. 9) clarifies organisational energy employing an example from physics using Einstein's equation $E=mc^2$, in which E stands for organisational energy, m stands for employees and c^2 stands for the energy of executives, their management style and impact on staff. The author also argues that, based on variables, we can see that, in the everyday environment, each organisation has a multitude of employees, who are important for its growth, support and development.

Bruch (2012, p. 10) states that the quality of organisational energy describes how an organisation is using its energy – in which degree its emotional, cognitive and behavioural forces are constructively coordinated with its common central objectives. We differentiate between positive and negative organisational energy.

The characteristics of positive organisational energy are a constructive use of the organisation's potential; people able to channel their emotions, to contemplate, to direct attention, effort and activities toward strengthening the objectives of their organisation. A negative organisational energy indicates a lack of a mutual orientation towards common business objectives and it causes a destructive use of the organisation's potential. When the energy is negative, the prevailing emotions expressed among employees in a company are fear, disappointment and dissatisfaction. Organisational energy is important for the success of an organisation. It depends on the energy of each individual and on the joint energy of all of the participants in the company.

Organisational energy is an extension into which an employee channels a specific type of emotion, such as enthusiasm, knowledge, and passion for work, depending on his/her level of responsibility within the company. Vogel (2011) stresses that good energy within a company does not necessarily result in a job well done, but that a job well done undoubtedly generates good team energy.

The concept of organisational energy is based on the hypothesis that companies (and individuals) differ from one another in the quality and intensity of their energy. The combination of these two dimensions determines the state of the energy within a company (Brečko, 2012c, p. 17).

The Four Organisational Energy Zones

Organisations differ by the intensity and quality of their energy. The combination of these two dimensions defines the state within the organisation, which can be categorised into one of the four categories or states of organisational energy (Bruch and Ghoshal, 2004, pp. 141-151; Bruch and Vogel, 2007, pp. 6-7; Vogel, 2011; St. Gallen, 2011; Brečko, 2012, p. 4):

- In the state of comfortable inertia energy (comfortable energy/comfort zone/conservative energy) organisations are characterised by little liveliness and a relatively high level of satisfaction. With employees exhibiting weak, but positive emotions, such as calmness and satisfaction, these organisations lack the vivacity, alertness and emotional tension necessary for making substantial changes and achieving objectives. Opportunities are passing them by, unnoticed. They are satisfied with what they are doing and creating, which is enough for them. The presence of comfortable energy is most often due to past successes, when the organisation was recognised, successful, and accepted by the environment. Being blinded by the glow of the past successes, the organisation does not realise how consistent and shrivelled it has become. Processes are slow, novelties are introduced to a lesser extent, and the employees do not feel a need for innovations and initiatives. Employees are polite, avoid problems and work at a steady pace.
- The indifferent inertia energy (resigned inertia/resignation zone) is reflected in weak negative emotions of employees, such as indifference, disappointment and regret. The absence of thought, disinterest or emotional deviation from the organisational goals, even

widespread numbness is something which usually characterises the majority of such organisations. Despite the advanced technology and visibility of their brands, they are less productive and operate with limited capacity. There is no interest in what is happening in the organisation; activity has been significantly reduced; cooperation and communication among employees is poor; the prevailing negative emotions are dissatisfaction, disappointment, lack of interest and frustration. The most common cause of this type of energy often lies in consecutive unsuccessful attempts to revive the organisation, introduce innovation and change. On the one hand, due to constant changes, the organisation burns out and because of the exhaustion, especially the emotional exhaustion of employees, reduces its capacity. The source of indifference could also be longer periods of failure and stagnation in the organisation's development. Employees who have already gone through many changes, which they could not influence, think that they are unable to contribute anything, so they lose their focus on the main objectives and orientation. They are indifferent, do not trust in their own competencies, and no longer do they have any hope for a better future.

- A company which is in a state of corrosion (corrosive energy/corrosion zone) has negative internal tension. It is because of this tension that employees are driven by their competitive spirit, which is reflected in very active, alert and intense involvement in the functioning of the company. Thus, the forces of the company are being used in two ways - positively for solving common problems, and destructively within the organisation itself. The employees negatively direct an abundance of energy towards internal problems, such as conflicts, gossiping, rumours and speculations, or other destructive activities, all of which is depriving the organisation of its life force and endurance. In such organisations an aggressive policy is present, effort is being directed towards defeating all of their competitors, relations are governed by the aggressiveness of the executives and employees, only people who love competition are being employed, etc. All of this, however, leads to competitiveness among the employees, and, consequently, the competition among departments within the organisation becomes more severe, which results in a negative response, because their emotions are converted into a destructive energy.
- Companies with a high productive energy (productive energy/productive zone) show strong positive feelings, a high level of attentiveness and activity, focus on the key objectives, a culture of

cooperative searching for solutions, great commitment of employees, enthusiasm and pride in their work. The potentials of these organisations are directed toward the common organisational goals. Organisations are accepting decisive information; they are willing to cooperate; communication and work processes are significantly faster; the common objectives of the organisation become a challenge for its employees, taken on with the utmost vigour and force. Due to the personal excitement at work, they do not lack determination and action, despite great efforts. Their effort is often so immense that employees even exceed the limits of their own competences; however, they do not have a problem with that. Challenges and efforts are dealt with very rapidly and successfully. Organisations are focused on themselves, on their creativity, their products or services and innovation. They do not pay attention to the actions and position of their competitors, because they trust in their own ability and success on the market.

Factors which Create Organisational Energy

For management and executives in the organisation, it is essential that they are familiar with factors which create organisational energy, and with those which are able to destroy it. Qualitative and quantitative empirical research carried out by Bruch and Vogel at the Institute for Leadership and Human Resource Management at the University of St. Gallen, using the Organisational Energy Questionnaire (OEQ) – an instrument for measuring and analysing the energy state in an organisation and the main impact factors, such as leadership abilities and strategic orientation – has shown that the following five factors have the largest impact on organisational energy (Bruch and Vogel, 2007, pp. 7-8):

- Quality leadership: The key to activating organisational energy is quality management at all levels within a company. Managers must be able to motivate employees to invest extraordinary effort by serving as role models, inspiring them, promoting creativity and the strategic development of individuals. Productive energy is highly influenced by the behaviour with which an executive promotes the job performance of a company and its employees, their innovativeness and connectedness.
- Strategic orientation: The next key factor for activating productive energy is a clear strategic orientation of the organisation. A promising long-term vision – a clear image of the common objectives – generates a great deal of power and results in creative tension.

However, the key in promoting a company with a vision is to spread this vision throughout the company. This vision will only achieve its purpose of connecting and activating when the critical mass of employees begins to strive towards it.

- **Belief in success:** The belief of employees in the success of the company and in their ability to cope with challenges, such as changes and transformation, is the deepest reason behind productive energy. If employees do not trust in their ability to successfully deal with changes, either due to a lack of skill or a bad experience, their energy will not be channelled into an initiative for change. On the other hand, if they have a firm belief in their abilities (if they have a strong sense of efficacy), there is a greater probability that they will develop persistence and will be willing to invest effort in the achievement of more demanding objectives over a longer period of time.
- **Commitment:** The next powerful driver of productive organisational energy is collective commitment, i.e. a strong internal sense of duty to achieve common objectives, present in all members of the organisation. They are therefore willing to strive for the achievement of the company's demanding objectives even when problems and delays occur. Collective commitment channels the activated energy into the key efforts of the entire company.
- **Cooperation:** When promoting productive organisational energy, the level of cooperation among units in a company is also important. If employees have a strong sense of connectedness and belonging to the organisation, they are willing to help one another and place their interests second, after the pursuit of the company's common objectives. Thus all of the organisation's forces are directed towards achieving its basic objectives.

Measuring Organisational Energy

Organisational energy is measured by a questionnaire, which consists of various claims (12 - 36 claims), with each of them possessing the characteristics of one of the four states of organisational energy. It has been developed at the Institute for Leadership and Human Resource Management at the University of St. Gallen, where the energy states were converted into a number using the index of organisational energy. This index indicates how strongly the potential of companies has been activated and where the inactivated potential runs out. Highly energetic companies have an index of organisational energy of up to 80. This means that they exploit almost 80 percent of their energy potential.

Organisations with less than 50% of constructive power are usually in one of the three unproductive states (Bruch and Vogel, 2007, p. 7).

All four states of energy are present in a company simultaneously; in order to introduce the necessary changes, a correct proportion must be established among them. To better understand the measurements of organisational energy, Brečko (2012a, p. 6) gives a few directions for interpreting the index of organisational energy:

- The percentage of productive energy should amount to 75 percent or more; ideally to 80 percent.
- Comfortable inertia energy should not be dominant. A percentage of up to 70 percent is very good; however, only if productive energy is at least as high.
- Indifferent inertia energy should not exceed 25 percent. If it does, the organisation has good cause for concern and must thoroughly examine the forces which make people indifferent.
- Corrosive energy should not exceed 20 to 25 percent; if it does, it is time to take a careful look at the organisation's destructive forces.

The index of organisational energy therefore gives a clear signal to organisations regarding when and how to act, and if the time has come to use select measures, which are an integral part of the measurement of organisational energy, to promote the productive energy of the organisation and eliminate elements which lead to other types of energy. All four energy states are intertwined in a company, within every department; their proportions change in a short term as well, since an organisation is always a living organism (Brečko, 2012a, p. 6).

Methodology

Research Purpose

The purpose of the research is to measure and study the prevailing organisational energy in health resorts and spas in Slovenia.

Research Methods and Techniques

Descriptive statistics has been used. A questionnaire on the measurement of organisational energy was prepared as the instrument, using the results of the research on organisational energy in Slovenian organisations, conducted by Brečko (2007, pp. 57-58) and Simenčič (2007, p. 52), since

the Organisational Energy Questionnaire (OEQ) by authors Bruch and Vogel (2007) is not publicly accessible. 24 claims have been developed, each of them containing the characteristics of one of the four states of organisational energy. These claims derive from the descriptions of individual categories of organisational energy: productive energy, comfortable inertia energy, indifferent inertia energy and corrosive energy. The questions were prepared following the model of the Likert-type attitude scale. The scale levels have been arranged from 1 to 5 in a logical continuum ranging from minimum to maximum agreement on attitudes. The data were processed using the SPSS 19.0 statistical software package. The reliability of the attitude scale has been confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha, with the value of 0.841.

Sample

The basic population of the sample consists of 107 presidents and members of management boards, general managers and executives with published e-mail addresses on the websites of 22 health resorts and spas in Slovenia. 48 respondents took part in the research, of which 75% were male and 25% were female. Of these, 6% were presidents of management boards, 8% were members of management boards, 34% were general managers and 52% were executives. 50% were aged from 41 to 50, 25% from 31 to 40, while 13% were either under 30 or from 51 to 60. 62% have been occupying an executive position for under 10 years, 19% from 11 to 20 years, 13% from 21 to 30 years, and 6% from 31 to 40 years. 37% have a bachelor's degree, 19% have a master's degree, specialisation or college degree, and 6% have a short-cycle college degree. 68% of the respondents work from 9 to 10 hours per day, 19% from 11 to 12 hours, and 13% up to 8 hours.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection took place at the end of February and in the first half of March 2016 with an anonymous online questionnaire.

Results and discussion

Based on 24 claims, each containing the characteristics of one of the four states of organisational energy, we measured the organisational energy which the management believed to be predominant in the health resorts and spas in which they are employed. For each individual category of

organisational energy (productive energy, comfortable inertia energy, indifferent inertia energy and corrosive energy) we offered the respondents six claims, which they rated from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning I strongly disagree, 2 I disagree, 3 Undecided, 4 I agree, and 5 I strongly agree.

Table 1: Results of the Measurement of Organisational Energy (OE)

Claims	Answers					OE STATES
	1	2	3	4	5	
In our company we solve problems.	6%	13%	0%	56%	25%	PRODUCTIVE ENERGY
We solve problems as a team and adopt measures for solving problems.	6%	13%	6%	44%	31%	
The majority of employees identify themselves with our company.	6%	19%	25%	44%	6%	
I clearly inform the employees of our objectives.	6%	0%	0%	69%	25%	
I always excite and motivate the employees.	0%	0%	19%	63%	19%	
I support/demand innovations.	0%	0%	13%	44%	44%	
The relationships among co-workers are very relaxed.	6%	19%	13%	56%	6%	COMFORTABLE INERTIA ENERGY
We do not carry out any measures that would lead towards changes.	44%	31%	6%	13%	6%	
I have noticed that all of the employees are satisfied with the current state and reject changes.	0%	50%	25%	25%	0%	
We do easy work at a slow pace.	38%	50%	6%	6%	0%	
In our company, work is carried out according to the established patterns.	19%	13%	19%	38%	13%	
The employees are overly satisfied with their current assignments.	13%	50%	19%	19%	0%	
There is a lack of motivation to work among co-workers.	19%	25%	25%	25%	6%	INDIFFERENT INERTIA ENERGY
Efficiency is our most important objective.	0%	6%	13%	50%	31%	
There is poor communication among co-workers.	13%	50%	19%	13%	6%	
I notice many frustrations.	0%	44%	25%	19%	13%	
Employees believe that their current job does not hold any future for them.	27%	33%	33%	0%	7%	
Employees are depressed and dissatisfied with the work they do.	13%	56%	13%	6%	13%	
A destructive organisational climate is present among co-workers.	47%	27%	20%	7%	0%	CORROSIVE ENERGY
We are individualists.	31%	31%	13%	25%	0%	
Employees lose themselves in too many work activities.	0%	44%	31%	19%	6%	
Employees often feel exhausted.	0%	25%	25%	44%	6%	
There is a lot of complaining and negativism.	25%	38%	19%	13%	6%	
Rumours often circulate in our company.	6%	19%	6%	44%	25%	

The results of the research, whose claims define productive energy, show that the management controls its executive function relatively well, since an important element for building productive energy is their ability to identify and solve problems. 81% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they solve problems and 75% of them (strongly) agree that in their health resort/spa they solve problems as a team and adopt measures for solving problems. 82% of the respondents feel that they always excite and motivate the employees, and demand innovations from them, supporting them in the process (88%). 94% of them claim that they inform the employees of their objectives. The results also show that half of the respondents (50%) believe that their employees identify themselves with the organisation in which they are employed. However, as many as one fourth (25%) strongly disagree or disagree with this claim.

Among the claims defining the comfortable inertia energy we can point out the result that well over a half of them (62%) feel that the relationships between them and their co-workers are relaxed. This indicates a relatively good organisational climate and good interrelationships, which are a condition for quality results. Only 19% of the respondents think that their company carries out measures which direct towards changes and notice that one fourth (25%) of the employees is satisfied with the current state and rejects changes. 63% disagree with the claim that the employees are overly satisfied with their current assignments. Likewise, 88% strongly disagree or disagree that they do easy work at a slow pace.

The results of the research, whose claims define indifferent inertia energy, show that less than half of the respondents (44%) disagree or strongly disagree with the claim that there is a lack of motivation to work among co-workers, while less than one third of them (31%) have noticed a lack of motivation to work. They have also established that communication among them is not poor (63%), while 32% think that frustrations do not occur among them. Only 7% of the respondents think that their current job holds future for them; nevertheless, 19% claim that two less desirable features are predominant: dissatisfaction with work and depression among co-workers, which can lead to corrosive energy.

As regards the claims defining corrosive energy, the research shows that a destructive organisational climate is not predominant, since 74% of the respondents categorically deny it or (strongly) disagree with it. They have also stated that they are not individualists (62%); that they are not losing themselves in too many work activities (44%); that there is not much

complaining and negativism present (63%); unfortunately, rumours circulate more often, which has been established by well over two thirds (69%), which may be a sign that comfortable inertia has taken hold. 50% often feel exhausted while working, which can lead to corrosive energy, just as dissatisfaction with work and depression.

82% of the respondents think that good organisational energy does not necessarily result in a job well done, but that a job well done undoubtedly generates good team energy; 88% believe that quality leadership, strategic orientations, belief in success, commitment and cooperation can have a decisive effect on the generation of positive organisational energy. The results indicate that the polled presidents and members of management boards, general managers and executives are aware of the impact of a job well done on their satisfaction and that they are the ones who play an important role in building productive organisational energy, and that likewise important are their ability to lead, motivate, support and devote sufficient attention to the strategic orientations of an individual health resort/spa.

Since the purpose of the research is to measure and study the predominant type of organisational energy in health resorts and spas in Slovenia, the percentages of affirmative answers (I agree and I strongly agree) for each individual category of organisational energy are added up to calculate the organisational energy.

Table 2: Organisational Energy (OE) Index and Shares of OE States in Health Resorts and Spas

OE STATES	OE index (I agree + I strongly agree)	Share of OE states in health resorts and spas* (proportional distribution)
Productive energy	78.30	46.25
Comfortable inertia energy	30.33	17.92
Indifferent inertia energy	31.50	18.61
Corrosive energy	29.16	17.22
Total	169.29	100.00

Source: $OE\ index/169.29 \times 100$

As Table 2 shows, the predominant energy in health resorts and spas is productive energy (46.25%), followed by indifferent inertia energy (18.61%), comfortable inertia energy (17.92%) and corrosive energy (17.22%). Despite the fact that productive energy is predominant in

comparison with other energy levels, the percentage of this energy is low, since it should amount to at least 75%. This means that health resorts and spas are using only 46% of their energy potential. Indifferent inertia energy is too high, even though it does not exceed 25%; it already indicates the need for the administration and management of health resorts and spas to examine all of the factors which make the employees indifferent (lack of motivation, presence of frustrations and dissatisfaction with work). Corrosive energy is not too high, as it does not exceed 25%, which means that there are no distinctly destructive forces in health resorts and spas that would have to be eliminated in order to prevent the employees from negatively directing an abundance of energy towards internal problems (rumours) or other destructive activities (exhaustion), which deprive them of their life force and endurance. The administration and management of health resorts and spas must promote productive organisational energy directed towards the key objectives, and eliminate factors which lead to other types of energy, if it wishes to exhibit strong positive emotions, a high level of attentiveness and activity. This can be achieved with transformational leadership and organisational culture, which will release the potential of the employees, encourage innovativeness, the possibility to choose, and think and work freely.

Conclusion

Organisational energy is not the same as the commitment of employees; however, their commitment is a good indicator. Committed individuals influence the positive energy in a company. Uncommitted individuals, on the other hand, influence the negative organisational energy. When a positive organisational energy is present in a company, it also has an impact on commitment. If the manager and executive are successful, they are able to establish a constructive process of interaction in a company, where the cause and consequence of the commitment of employees, organisational energy and success of the organisation intertwine (Dobravec Verbič, 2008, p. 72).

The task of managers and executives is to preserve an organisational energy that can cope with all of the ups and downs of an organisation, and to create conditions for increasing positive energies. Energy is used and not used up. In order to achieve this, flexible management systems must be established, which are able to adapt to change. Business strategies must be directed towards preserving creative and productive energy.

It is very important that managers and executives are aware of the significance of human resource management, as it provides a competitive advantage to health resorts and spas (Šarotar Žižek, 2008, p. 42), which will in the future be based on (1) employees, managers and executives, who endeavour to maximise the talents of individuals to the utmost, and on (2) how successful they are in developing the correct proportion among all four types of organisational energy in order to achieve change, innovations, progress and satisfaction of employees.

Of key importance for the success of managers is their identification with the organisation in which they are employed. Such successful managers satisfy their own needs and objectives, and, simultaneously, the needs and objectives of the organisation. A successful manager must have a strong need for power (for power that is controlled and directed towards the prosperity of the organisation), i.e. the need to influence people (leave an impression, be powerful and influential).

If the management wishes to develop the knowledge and skills of the employees in health resorts and spas, it will have to work with them in future by motivating them, providing opportunities for developing all of their potential, gaining their trust, and generating an interest in realising their common strategic objectives. It must be aware of the fact that only highly competent employees, who feel well in their workplace, who are satisfied and have the opportunity to develop personally and professionally, would enable the development of productive energy and, consequently, an increase in the quality of the operation of an individual health resort and spa, which is of crucial importance for the satisfaction of their guests.

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