

ASSESSING THE DEGREE OF BALANCE BETWEEN STAFF DISPOSITIONS AND THEIR JOB POSITIONS USING FUZZY LOGIC

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Abstract: *Management of many Czech enterprises, especially SMEs, is able to respond flexibly to the current changes in their surroundings while using mainly the quality of its employees to gain a competitive advantage. Ever increasing is thus the importance of personal dispositions, skills and knowledge of employees that affect their work performance. It is undisputed that staff of the enterprise strongly influences all business operations, however, the measurement of these impacts is problematic, as they are mostly the so called soft factors. In terms of supporting the overall economic results of the company as well as in terms of ensuring employee satisfaction, it is, inter alia, very important to ensure the balance between the dispositions of a worker and his/her job function. This need not occur only in employee recruitment but also in job redeployment or in determining the cause of unsatisfactory work performance. This paper describes and makes use of an indicator, which in mathematical terms allows companies to evaluate the level of balance between staff dispositions and their job functions, not only by assessing an individual, but also by assessing individuals in relation to a group of workers and a group of jobs. The aim is to achieve an optimal balance between the skills of employees and their job functions. The indicator Degree of balance between the staff dispositions and job positions was constructed using fuzzy logic. Its use is shown in a real example that draws on the practice of a small enterprise engaged in assembling and servicing of hardware devices.*

Keywords: *Balance between staff dispositions and their jobs, Skills of staff, Job performance, Fuzzy sets, Management of human resources, Personnel economics.*

JEL Classification: *M51, M12, C630.*

Introduction

Evaluation of employees, their work behaviour and job performance is covered by many authors, both economists and psychologists (see e.g. [4], [3]; [2], [6], [5], [10]), because these are important aspects affecting the success of businesses. Job performance is affected by subjective dispositions of people (e.g. physical and mental qualities and abilities of a person in relation to the job, qualifications of the person, volitional qualities of the person) as well as objective prerequisites of job performance, thus external circumstances in which it takes place [13].

Evaluation of employees and their performance is closely tied to the specification of job tasks, formulation of evaluation criteria and their differentiation in relation to the type of activity. According to Palán [16], the performance of an individual, group or organization can be measured extensively (volume of production and services over a certain period), but it is preferable to use the intensive measurement method (the indicator of labour productivity, the appreciation rate of inputs, etc.).

Job performance thus includes not only the quantity and quality of work but also the willingness, attitude to work, work behaviour, employee turnover, absenteeism, attendance and other characteristics. Regarded as important are dispositions of an employee for work performed because the optimal utilization of employee personal dispositions gives rise to manufacturing flexibility (MF), and promotion of effective utilization of corporate resources. [14]

In connection with the evaluation of workers and their dispositions, a need emerges to define skills utilisation [17], because the evidence base on skills utilisation is relatively sparse [8].

In examining personality, various forms of structured interviews are used (see e.g. [22]). Slaughter et al. [21], Lievens and Sackett [12], Schmitt and Chan [20] recommended, in evaluating employees, to use situational judgment tests (SJTs) as a means to assess a number of job-related knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs), however, at the same time they mention certain limitations thereof in identifying interpersonal skills. Also, Dayan et al. [7], Goffin et al. [9] emphasize that when evaluating employee we may experience problems due to poorly set parameters or improper assessment thereof. Vetráková, Potkány and Hitka [23] recommended in the evaluation of employees also using the services of specialized organizations outsourcing.

The error rate of evaluation can be mitigated by the application of psychology [6] as well as by the use of meta-analyses [11]. In connection with the requirements for employees, Arthur and Villado [1] use predictors while defining a predictor as “*a specific behavioural domain, information about which is sampled via a specific method*”. The behavioural domain of predictors (i.e. what is measured) can be defined through theories of psychological constructs (e.g. knowledge, skills and abilities), theories of work situations/requirements, or even some combinations thereof. This statement corresponds with the indicator Degree of balance between the staff dispositions and their job positions, which was constructed using fuzzy logic and is described and applied in the context of this article.

1 Defining the bases for monitoring balance between the staff dispositions and their job functions

1.1 Determinants of employees' conduct and job performance dispositions

Rules for the interaction of people can be defined by three fundamental concepts: cooperation, effort, performance [18]. Cooperation is necessary to enable the group to act as a single entity, effort affects the worker's abilities and skills and the performance of the whole team depends on how the allocation of work roles to individuals respects their employment status.

The conduct and behaviour of employees can be considered from several aspects, for example:

- how people accept objective influences in their surroundings (rational point of view),
- how psychological personality traits are manifested (emotional point of view),
- how people's behaviour is influenced by social factors.

In evaluating an employee's dispositions and his/her abilities to perform certain activities, it is necessary to distinguish the impact of external factors from personal dispositions.

To identify the impact of external factors on employee conduct are applied, for example, in terms of consensus (Do other workers behave in the same situation in the same way?), consistency (Does the worker behave in this situation in the same way as on other occasions?), and diversity (Does the worker behave in other situations in a different way?).

1.2 Determinants of job performance

A person's job performance is dependent on his/her dispositions, motivation and working conditions. A person can realize performance on condition that he/she has adequate professional training and willingness.

The level of job performance is then the result of psychological reactions of the employee.

There are many job performance evaluation criteria and they can be direct indicators (the amount of work over time, quality of work for a certain period of time, timeliness of performance, etc.) as well as indirect indicators (e.g. the stability of performance over time, how long a person keeps a performance standard, changes in human mental processes during the performance, the occurrence and frequency of wrongful conduct). Employee performance evaluation must focus not only on the results of the work, but also on working and social behaviour, abilities, and other characteristics of the individual.

Work performance can therefore be assessed also with respect to the employees' dispositions and their willingness to devote themselves fully to their job. It also follows that job performance is affected by factors stemming from individual employee's goals and his/her value system, but also from interpersonal relationships.

To achieve optimum performance, the employer has to create suitable working conditions and also clearly define the requirements associated with a concrete job position.

An unsatisfactory work performance may be caused by a wrong choice of employee for a specific position when taking up the job or when being transferred to another type of work performed. It is therefore necessary both to improve the decision making process in recruitment or redeployment of the existing staff, and to specify the characteristics of job positions and seek the optimum combination [19].

1.3 Job description, specification and quantification of work

Before starting the process of filling vacant positions it is necessary to define requirements as precisely as possible that will be imposed on the candidates. This implies the need to create a description of jobs (in the literature also referred to as positions) describing its purpose, tasks, powers and responsibilities, including prerequisites of eligible candidates. The job description should also include objectives and criteria (staffing requirements) associated with this position. At the same time, it is necessary to update the description at specified intervals, based on an analysis of the job. The analysis of jobs must also provide information about their mutual relations. It is necessary not only to specify the required work, but also to quantify it.

1.4 Defining requirements for employees in connection to jobs

To ensure a high-quality selection process, it is necessary to define, along with a description of the job (the position), requirements to be met by the candidates (workers).

These requirements are divided into several basic categories, which include: vocational, language and other special skills and abilities (including required education), motivational requirements, personal flexibility, responsibility and loyalty, management skills and experience, personal qualities and social skills, work experience, health.

With these characteristics, it is necessary to determine which are necessary and which are desired (and may be obtained, for example, during job training or may be replaced with other requirements). Usually, it is not a problem to define professional, technical and language requirements, but the problem is setting requirements in the area of personal and social characteristics of the candidates. Usually, the following are regarded as the most important:

- Loyalty,
- responsibility,
- positive work attitudes,
- employment stability,
- ability and willingness of work drive,
- intrinsic employee motivation (related to the accordance of their personal goals with their work).

2 Using the indicator Degree of balance between the staff dispositions and job functions (DB_{SDJF})

The emergence of this indicator is a result of a causal analysis of a deductive character. If we define the worker's unsatisfactory performance as a known consequence, this analysis aimed to determine the causal chain that begins as the consequence under consideration and ends with identification of the primary cause of the problem. In this case, the deductive causal analysis was focused on finding the causes of the unsatisfactory performance in the field of personnel management.

The causal chain was expressed as follows:

Unsatisfactory job performance → inadequate skills and qualifications for the job → error in assigning the job → incorrect evaluation of the employee when being assigned with the job.

The DB_{SDJF} indicator was designed to allow or rather facilitate finding the best possible match between the employee (and the work he/she performs) and his/her job position [15]. The basic prerequisite for using this indicator is that each position under consideration has the most accurate description. If this condition is met, we can:

- a. define partial demands and their importance in relation to a specified job position,
- b. evaluate each candidate (or the existing staff) with regard to the requirements defined.

3 Applying fuzzy logic in the evaluation of staff dispositions with regard to the job position

3.1 Evaluation of the degree of balance between the staff dispositions and job positions using the A o B composition

The basic prerequisite for the construction and use of the proposed indicator is that the job description, requirements and ensuing assessment of the worker in each required field (qualification, skills, abilities) shall be expressed in numerical terms in the interval $\langle 0;1 \rangle$, where:

- 0 corresponds to "totally unacceptable", 1 to "totally satisfactory" in evaluating employee dispositions with regard to the requirements imposed,
- 0 corresponds to "not required", 1 to "is necessary" in determining if the disposition is required as a criterion in the respective job position.

The more accurately (more detailed definition) and responsibly the evaluation is carried out, the higher the information value is of the proposed indicator.

If these conditions are met, it is possible to find an optimum staffing level with workers who are available, using indicators of the balance between staff dispositions and job position DB_{SDJF} as follows.

Each worker is assigned an identification variable x_i for $i \in \langle 1, 2, ..m \rangle$, wherein m corresponds to the number of employees.

Specified desired characteristics (required knowledge and skills of workers) are expressed with a variable y_i for $i \in \langle 1, 2, ..n \rangle$, wherein n is the total number of defined requirements (partial characteristics).

Job positions are described by variables z_i for $i \in \langle 1, 2, ..m \rangle$, wherein m is the total number of job positions.

The importance of meeting the requirements specified y_i with regard to the job position is numerically evaluated in the interval $\langle 0;1 \rangle$. Based on the evaluation of candidates in the recruitment process, it is possible to quantify (again, in the interval $\langle 0;1 \rangle$) the extent to which the applicant meets the requirements arising from the job position.

The fuzzy relation A in (X,Y) expresses the evaluation of partial dispositions of individual employees with respect to the requirements imposed, the fuzzy relation B in (Y, Z) expresses the bare minimum of the fulfilment of requirements for the respective job position.

The indicator of the Degree of balance between the staff dispositions and job positions (DB_{SDJF}) is expressed as a composition $B \circ A$, thus:

$$DB_{SDJF} = f_{B \circ A} (X, Z) = \max (\min f_A (x,y) , f_B (y,z)) \text{ for } y \in Y.$$

x_i – identification variables of employees,

$i \in \langle 1, 2, .. m \rangle$, m = the number of employees,

y_i – required performance characteristics (knowledge and skills),

$i \in \langle 1, 2, .. n \rangle$, n = the number of characteristics,

z_i – job position,

$i \in \langle 1, 2, \dots, m \rangle$, m = the number of job positions.

The procedure used for calculation of $B \circ A$:

1. Compare a couple of components (x_1, y_i) and (y_i, z_i) and others. Consequential selection of lower component = $\min f_A(x, y), f_B(y, z)$.
2. Select a maximum value for construction of $B \circ A$.

3.2 Evaluation of the degree of balance between the staff dispositions and job positions – application in business practice (analysis of the problem)

The application of the DB_{SDJF} indicator is presented on an actual example of practice of a small business whose management solved a problem of the need to find a manager and a technician-dealer among six persons of the existing staff employed in the service centre. According to the owner, there was no considerable difference among their dispositions, and therefore an opportunity presented itself to assess their skills and abilities against the requirements of the respective jobs using the DB_{SDJF} indicator. At the same time, an opportunity presented itself to clarify the requirements as well as the job positions of service engineers and find out how existing employees comply with the requirements for this position.

Each employee was assigned an identification variable x_i for $i \in \langle 1, 2, \dots, 6 \rangle$, and also the required knowledge and skills of employees were specified and expressed through a variable y_i for $i \in \langle 1, 2, \dots, 7 \rangle$.

Given that these are long-time and responsible workers who have high loyalty to their employer, it is not necessary to include all basic categories of requirements in the evaluation (see above). Partial characteristics were therefore chosen after consultation with the owner of the company as follows:

- y_1 – technical expertise,
- y_2 – economic knowledge,
- y_3 – communication skills,
- y_4 – the ability to give reasons and evaluate,
- y_5 – willingness to learn
- y_6 – independence and ability to lead and make decisions,
- y_7 – willingness to work flexible hours (e.g. due to family circumstances).

The job positions are described with variables z_i for $i \in \langle 1, 2, \dots, 6 \rangle$. The job positions z_1 through z_4 were defined for service engineers, therefore, these were existing positions, while the position z_5 was newly created for the head of the service department, and so was the position z_6 for the technician-dealer.

The fuzzy relation A in (X, Y) contains the evaluation performed by the managing director and assesses the level of fulfilment of each partial dispositions of the employees against the defined requirements (Table 1). The fuzzy relation B in (Y, Z) gives the bare minimum for meeting the requirements specified for the particular job position (Table 2).

Tab. 1: Comparison of partial dispositions of the employees against the requirements defined for each job positions

A	y ₁	y ₂	y ₃	y ₄	y ₅	y ₆	y ₇
x ₁	0.9	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.85	0.6
x ₂	0.85	0.1	0.75	0.75	0.8	0.75	0.8
x ₃	0.7	0.35	0.65	0.65	0.75	0.7	0.9
x ₄	0.75	0.65	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.55	0.7
x ₅	0.65	0.55	0.8	0.6	0.65	0.65	0.75
x ₆	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.75	0.8	0.7	0.8

Source: [author]

Tab. 2: Bare minimum for meeting the requirements specified for the particular job position

B	z ₁	z ₂	z ₃	z ₄	z ₅	z ₆
y ₁	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.7
y ₂	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.8
y ₃	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.8
y ₄	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.9
y ₅	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.9
y ₆	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	1
y ₇	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0.8

Source: [author]

The other tables (Table 3 and Table 4) present methods for calculating the composition B o A.

Tab. 3: The calculation of B o A

x ₁ , z _i	0.90	0.20	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.90	0.20	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.90	0.20	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.90	0.20	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.90	0.20	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.70	0.60
	0.70	0.20	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.85	0.60
x ₂ , z _i	0.85	0.10	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.85	0.10	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.85	0.10	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.85	0.10	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50

	0.85	0.10	0.75	0.60	0.80	0.70	0.80
	0.70	0.10	0.75	0.75	0.80	0.75	0.80
X₃,Z_i	0.70	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.70	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.70	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.70	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.70	0.35	0.65	0.60	0.75	0.70	0.90
	0.70	0.35	0.65	0.65	0.75	0.70	0.80
X₄,Z_i	0.75	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.75	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.75	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.75	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.75	0.60	0.70	0.60	0.70	0.55	0.70
	0.70	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.55	0.70
X₅,Z_i	0.65	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.65	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.65	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.65	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.65	0.55	0.80	0.60	0.65	0.65	0.75
	0.65	0.55	0.80	0.60	0.65	0.65	0.75
X₆,Z_i	0.70	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.70	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.70	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.70	0.30	0.50	0.30	0.60	0.30	0.50
	0.70	0.60	0.70	0.60	0.80	0.70	0.80
	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.75	0.80	0.70	0.80

Source: [author]

The final values of the indicator are stated in Table 4.

Tab. 4: $DB_{SDJF} = f_{B o A}(X, Z)$

	z_1	z_2	z_3	z_4	z_5	z_6
x_1	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.85
x_2	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.8
x_3	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.8
x_4	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.7
x_5	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.75	0.8
x_6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8

Source: [author]

4 Discussion

Based on the calculation of values of the DB_{SDJF} indicator, best suited for the position of the head of the service centre is the employee X_1 , who, however, it is also an eligible candidate for the position of the technician-dealer. In terms of the criteria under consideration, this is the best employee in the observed group. Similar results in relation to the newly created job positions were also achieved by the employee x_3 , however, his assessment for the position of the head is slightly worse. It can therefore be recommended that the job position of the head of the service centre be filled by the employee x_1 and the job position of the technician-dealer by the employee x_3 .

The results show that the indicator made it possible to find suitable workers for the newly created positions in connection with the final evaluation of all employees of the service centre. At the same time, however, we can also evaluate the fulfilment of the requirements in the remaining positions of service workers by the other employees (the rankings of the employees in relation to the degree of fulfilment of the specified requirements: x_2, x_4, x_6, x_5). The results were forwarded to the managing director of the company where the evaluation of dispositions of employees took place.

Conclusion

Proper evaluation of staff dispositions for a job position is one of the prerequisites not only for achieving his/her expected work performance, but also for ensuring his/her satisfaction with the work performed. The better you define criteria resulting from the analysis of the job position, the more precisely you can define requirements for applicants for this job, and then determine to what extent they meet these requirements. In this sense, it is also the creators of criteria and evaluators, their experience and objectivity that play an important role.

Based on the defined characteristics of the job position, the DB_{SDJF} indicator allows assessing the suitability of a worker for the position, in relation to other workers or candidates. The advantage of the DB_{SDJF} indicator is that it does not evaluate just one worker in relation to a job position, but it allows comparing a set of workers (and their quality) and a set of jobs (and requirements based thereon). This allows us to find an optimal staffing procedure to appoint the most suitable staff to the positions, since the DB_{SDJF} indicator finds the best match of abilities of the workers and the requirements that resulted from the analysis of these positions.

As has been shown, this indicator can also be used in comparing the degree of staff dispositions in the same positions (in the example given, these were positions of service engineers). Given the possibility to supplement and change the requirements for the staff on the basis of new experience and knowledge (or at regular intervals), the evaluation of staff dispositions using the DB_{SDJF} indicator can be further elaborated.

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