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Hope of success in non-standard forms of employment

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Hope of success in non-standard forms of employment / Niestandardowe formy zatrudnienia nadzieją na sukces

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ABSTRACT

Article presents a review of the literature associated with the hope of success and the results of the author's research among employees with flexible forms of employment. A specific distribution of results on the scale of hope for success, both for social-and-demographic correlations and the distribution of the variable itself can be justified by characteristics of conditions typical for a given form of employment that are beneficial or non-beneficial for experiencing hope for success.

KEY WORDS: hope of success, non-standard forms of employment

INTRODUCTION

It seems justified to ask if flexible employees think of their own professional success while engaging in non-typical forms of employment, whether it is possible at all to have professional success in flexible forms of employment, commonly regarded as worse, evaluated in a negative way, believed to be “junk” ones? It seems that everyone to a greater or lesser extent hopes for success in both the private and professional sphere of one's life. Of course, this thesis applies to people meeting certain standard who are mentally healthy. By analysing a rapid development of flexible solutions and highly qualified staff hired under flexible employment contracts, experts, persons in senior positions, it seems almost obvious, that while working they shall experience the same dilemmas, concerns and difficulties on the one hand, and gratuities on the other. Analysis of hope of success, which contributes to a strong will, effectiveness in difficult situations, pursuance of goals, seeking solutions and faith in the success, results from looking for psychological variables that help solve professional problems, and when it comes to flexible forms of employment apart from a personal flexi-

bility and styles of coping with stress, which shall be analysed further on in this paper, hope of success appears to play a key role for overall success in flexible forms of employment.

THEORETICAL FORMULATION OF HOPE FOR SUCCESS

Theory of hope was initiated in this version by Snyder in the 80's. The author understands hope, and defines it accordingly, as a positive motivational state related to experiencing two interrelated beliefs: belief in myself as a performer, which is a belief in a possibility to complete a plan made, to initiate goal pursuance following a certain and pre-chosen path and perseverance in pursuit of the goal, in spite of encountered obstacles. These are beliefs of the power of one's own will, energy manifesting itself in particular in the face of doubts, obstacles and fatigue (Snyder et al. 1997; Snyder et al. 2000). The first component is a belief of having a strong will (in short—strong will). The second component is a perception of oneself as resourceful and clever person, someone able to reach one's goal, to come up with solutions that will allow for implementation of one's plan, conviction of one's knowledge and competences, hence the name: conviction of ability to find solutions (in

short: ability to find solutions). Hope understood in such a way, consisting of these two components is defined as hope for success, due to its reference to positive effects of one's own actions (Trzebiński, Zięba 2003). In such an approach, hope is not an emotional state, but a cognitive motivational process associated with the process of thinking. Emotions play an important role as well, but they are secondary in relation to cognitive processes (Shorey, Snyder 2002; after: Łaguna et al. 2005: 7-8).

Hope understood in such a way is to some extent faith in one's own success with referral to expected and positive results of measures taken, while at the same time experiencing enthusiasm for engagement in these measures (Trzebiński, Finch 2003). Snyder (2002) defines hope of success as a conviction and thought process in a decision making situation related to a specific action. Convictions are applied in the form of specific thoughts focused on a situation and a specific goal. Hope manifests itself in the form of thoughts accompanying action. These thoughts are focused on oneself, being a person who, first of all, is able to pursue one's own resolutions, and second of all invent and find out solutions for various difficulties.

Hope as disposition, or alternatively, stable belief system activated in specific situations and affecting behaviour is acquired by experience. It is a learned matrix of thinking, which shapes the way of interpretation of a situation and assessment of chances for success of one's own activities, and refers to the way of perceiving oneself (Trzebiński, Zięba 2004).

Hope and optimism are psychologically similar dimensions (cf. Peterson 2000). The difference, however, is the highlighting personal involvement in action, which is the key issue in the presented theory (cf. Carver, Scheier 2002), apart from this from the empirical point of view optimism and hope are two independent factors (Magaletta, Oliver 1999). Before identification of an aim, a person analyses achievable target. This assessment of the value of the result is primary in relation to the measures taken. If this assessment is positive, pursue of the aim begins. People with high hopes for success are characterised by a high assessment of probability of reaching an aim. They treat aims as challenges, they assess them in the categories of success rather than failure. People with high hopes for success will generate more goals, and when they turn out to be impossible to achieve, they create new ones easily (Snyder 1994; Snyder, 2002, Snyder et al. 1999; after: Łaguna 2006: 423).

Hope of success promotes a positive assessment of an aim understood here as a possibility to make a career in flexible forms of employment and making a decision on pursuing such the path of life.

At this point it is difficult to ignore the issue of basic hope, which, according to Trzebiński and Zięba (2003, 2004) is in general associated with one's vision of the world than is ordered, logical, reasonable, with a structure favourable for human beings. This is the basis for interpretation of every event, in particular it applies to anticipation and assessment of one's own chances. This is the basic hope of men. This is a process that manifests itself when we take up new activities, and also when the old ones do not work any more and we must look for new ways and solutions. The former situation is conducive to challenges, searching for new order of events, new opportunities, the latter is a loss of the old order in favour of a new one. The authors (2003) believe that these two constructs of hope – basic one and hope for success are the two convictions with independent characters. In the case of failures, while maintaining an order, conviction of one's own efficiency (Bandura 1986) and capabilities to achieve an aim (Snyder 2002) become important. When, on the other hand, the order is disturbed, the basic hope may be the factor, which allows one to restore the order. It promotes openness to new experience, seeking new opportunities and positive attitude towards them (Trzebiński, Zięba 2004). One can assume that basic hope is helpful in coping with a situation of lack of work and making a decision to take a chance of starting own business (all after: Łaguna 2006: 424) and working within flexible forms of employment.

Stefańska-Klar (1998) has carried out a synthesis of the issue of hope, stating that it may be treated as emotion associated with involvement and coping (Smith, Lazarus 1990), and as waiting for the result of pursuing one's own aims and desires (Mądrzycki 1996), or as the appearance of a specific state of affairs, a personal comparison and assessment of a situation (Folger 1985). When it comes to hope, the related notions are optimism or its absence (Seligman 1996). The author draws our attention to prominence of negative aspect of hope in human existence – the situation of loss or a permanent absence, deficit of exceptional remedial or emergency features, particularly for people experiencing crisis or being in crisis per say (Atkinson, 1995: 75-76). In the research the author (1995: 78-79) verified private theories of hope on n=615 unemployed persons. In the qualitative analysis she has identified the following defining ways: as a psychological state – emotion and waiting, faith in something; as a psychological process – dream of a meeting, thinking about the subject of hope; as a permanent psychological inclination – as personality trait, optimistic attitude; as a behavioural trend, manifested in behaviour, making efforts and actions; as a psychological regulatory system with situational or global reach – internal apparatus of regaining balance allowing one to recover from crises.

She presents hope as a psychological mechanism in the two variations (Atkinson 1995: 79-80) hope as a general psychological mechanism, specifying a functioning style of an individual in longer periods of time and hope as a mechanism shaped on ongoing basis and taking forms depending on a structure of a situation. In the case of the first mechanism we can differentiate between passive hope – a tendency to dream, to have trusting attitude towards a given course of events; active hope – source of motivation and a basic existential hope understood as a will of life and existential desire, motivation to cope with events and searching for meaning in them. The second mechanism is to have hope because of something – a positive value, or in spite of something – negative value. Hope may involve both changes in the status quo or one's own situation, as well as remaining in this situation. Depending on the situation it performs different regulatory functions both with respect to the choice of specific remedial strategies, and in general to functioning in life situations, people prefer different restoration and rebuilding styles; they are also aware of their own hope (Atkinson 1995: 86).

Snyder (2002) juxtaposed his theory with descriptions of positive psychology. In his description of optimism Seligman (1993) emphasises the way of thinking of reasons of events, the way failure and success is explained and interpreted. An optimistic style does not constitute external and stable attributions of negative results. Theory of hope deals with reaching positive goals taking into account the role of cognitive processes and the energy of actions. Optimism as understood by Scheier and Carver (1985, 1992) is a generalized expectations for future positive events, stressing assessments relating to the action, or the effect, whereas in hope it is pursuing goals that is important. A difference between the theories is also the role assigned to perceived and personal action of a man – confidence in reaching the objectives, not the personal commitment to action itself. Trust and confidence in one's own efficiency (Bandura 1986) relating to a conviction of one's own skills is also something else. We are not talking here about specific actions, envisaged result, specific situation and measures or purpose. Hope applies rather to more generalised beliefs that one shall be defective in general (Jerusalem, Schwartz 1992). Conviction of one's own efficiency applies to a perception of one's capability to act in a given situation – capability to act. Also, hope is a conviction, that one initiates an action focused on an objective, which is reflected in the intention of actions (Łaguna et al. 2005: 9-10).

Research by Łaguna (2006) in hope for success related to setting up own business allowed to draw the following conclusion: higher level of hope for success, the basic hope

and optimism promotes the intention of setting up own businesses, especially the conviction of an ability to find solutions. Research has been carried out among the unemployed during a training in business start-ups, entrepreneurs, who declared their willingness to take on the role of an entrepreneurs (the number of the respondents n=332). Measurement of hope of success was carried out using Hope for Success Questionnaire, developed by Snyder and his colleagues (1991), in the Polish version adapted by Łaguna, Trzebiński and Zięba (2005). The scale includes 12 statements, including 8 diagnostic ones. It is described in detail in the next section.

The author (Łaguna 2006: 435-436) sums the research up stating, that as a whole it confirms the theoretical concepts. A conviction that thanks to own efforts and actions one can achieve success is linked with higher assessment of chances of success and an intention to start up a business confirms Snyder's theses (2002) according to which hope promotes expecting results assessed as positive and enthusiasm and positive emotions can foster action as well. The conviction of capability to find ways to reach goals was related to high assessment of their importance and readiness to make effort, whereas a conviction of a strong will and energy was linked with higher assessment of chances of success in a start-up. Reversely: low level of hope for success and optimism involves low assessment of chances for success of measures taken and low willingness to take initiatives related to a start-up, which also supports giving the whole idea up, which does not necessarily mean, that resignation is of a failure character, but an alternative aim may be chosen.

Throughout years of research, it has been confirmed that force, understood as a conviction of having competence allowing for success has an impact on efficiency of actions, overcoming difficulties and perseverance in reaching aims, adaptation capacities, positive emotional and physiological functioning. Also, independence of this construct from optimism and the related factors has been established. Commonly hope means expectation that things shall develop in a specific direction and all potential issues shall be solved. Hope of success is linked to a conviction that success shall be reached and shall be related to one's own competences. Erikson (1997, 2002) claims, that hope is a conviction concerning characteristics of the world that surrounds us and which is people-friendly, trust in goodness of nature, etc., what had already been called the basic hope (Łaguna et al. 2005: 5-6).

Porzak and Sagan (2013) in their research reaffirmed the substantial link between entrepreneurial orientation and hope for success among people employed in business-re-

lated institutions. A conviction of a capability to cope with various demands is a basis for active operations and effective goal-reaching, for it is built with belief in a capability to initiate actions and perseverance in spite of obstacles. A conviction of a strong will is particularly strong in this respect. Entrepreneurship is a special flexible form of employment. One can expect that the results obtained for this form of earning money shall be similar to those obtainable in other forms of flexible employment.

WAYS TO MEASURE HOPE FOR SUCCESS

A research tool that has been used in the research part of this paper has been adapted by Łaguna, Trzebiński and Zięba (2005) and is used for testing hope as a comparatively stable disposal. The Hope for Success Questionnaire is made up of 12 statements (including eight diagnostic ones). It contains four items relating to convictions concerning a strong will, four items relating to convictions concerning capabilities to find solutions and four buffer items. A tested person concerned is asked to imagine him/herself in different situational contexts and at different times (as opposed to the scale measuring hope as condition, in which the test describes convictions of the tested at the present moment). The interviewed indicate their answers on 8 grade scale, where 1 means, that a given claim is clearly false, and 8-that a given claim is definitely true.

The result is the sum of the scores representing the general level of hope for success. A possible range of results is from 8 to 64 points. The higher the score, the greater hope of success is. Apart from the general result, the questionnaire allows for measurement of two components of hope: ability to find hope (4 statements): 1, 4, 6, 8; possible results are within the range of 4 to 32 points; willpower (4 statements): 2, 9, 10, 12; possible results are within the range of 4 to 32 points (Łaguna et al. 2005: 15-18).

Cronbach's alpha – the internal compliance rate of the Polish version of the Hope for Success Questionnaire – is 0.82. In various tests carried out from 2002 to 2004 it ranged from 0.76 to 0.86. Internal compliance indicators for the both subscales have been estimated as well. In the case of a conviction of ability to find solutions it was 0.72 (from 0.62 to 0.76 in specific tests). In the case of a conviction of a strong will the rate was 0.74 (from 0.68 to 0.80). This questionnaire is based on the studies of Snyder and associates. Other available methods developed by them are as follows: The Hope Scale (Snyder et al. 1991; Snyder et al. 1997), the Adult trait Hope Scale (Snyder et al. 1999), the trait Hope Scale (Snyder 2002), the Adult Hope Scale (Bryant, Cven-gros 2004). These are the tools for measuring hope as condition. They examine children, the young or adults. There is also Basic Hope Questionnaire (BHI – 12) by Trzebiński

and Zięba (2003). This scale contains 12 statements, including nine diagnostic ones, reliability – Cronbach's alpha is 0.70. The scale of hope for success measures well the power of conviction of one's own capabilities to reach aims and success, diagnosing a part of the picture of "myself", playing an important role in decision-making process, formulating plans of action, in the face of failures (all after: Łaguna et al. 2005: 31).

PRESENTATION OF THE AUTHOR'S RESEARCH

The variable of hope of success was examined by the questionnaire described in the previous section among a group of 2118 persons employed in flexible forms of employment: among employees with flexible forms of employment including: teleworking, replacement (substitute) work, temporary work, seasonal work, employment under civil law agreements, commercial contracts for a specified period of time, part-time work, in the social economy, self-employment. It is correlated significantly with two social-and-demographic variables: gender and age. Women have higher results in this scale, as well as the elder and more mature persons. With the other variables, such as: education, occupation, sector, industry, years in operation, number of employers, duration of contracts, a place of residence, marital status, number of children, no dependency can be found.

Analysis of the relation performed by U Mann-Withney test has shown that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and the results on the scale of hope for success: $U=484430.5$; $p<0.001$. Women have slightly higher results ($M=65.56$; $SD=11.546$) than men ($M=63.83$; $SD=10.774$). The results on the scale of hope for success are statistically affected by age as well (the relation confirmed by the Kruskal-Wallis test: χ^2 (df 2)=38.220; $p<0.001$). The older a given age group is, the higher score on the analysed scale is found: in the group 18-30 years the median=64; in the group 31-40 years median=65, and the group 41-65 years median=67.

The average score on the scale of hope for success in the analysed group of flexible employees was 64.60 with the variable scope ranging from 12 to 96. The median was 65, which means that half of the analysed scores below 65 points. Skewness becomes negative - distribution is hardly diagonal - too many high results. Kurtosis is positive, which points at the fact, that the distribution is highly slender – there is too much values centred around the average.

To analyse a relationship between the variable hope for success and a form of employment an analysis of variance could not be used, as its assumptions were not satisfied (homogeneity of variance and normality of distribution in the

sub-groups). Therefore a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was applied. Analysis of the relationship by Kruskal-Wallis test has shown, that a form of employment significantly differentiates the test results on the scale of hope for success: χ^2 (df 8)=48.829; $p<0.001$). Median test confirms this conclusion: χ^2 (df 8)=40.376; $p<0.001$). In all the groups the median values are located in the upper stems according to accepted standards, which means that employees achieve in general high scores on the said scales. It can be concluded, therefore, that the tested population is characterised by hope for success. This result is interesting enough, since as the nation we have tendency for more pessimistic attitudes. The highest value of the median has been observed among the groups with part-time jobs and the self-employed. The lowest value has been observed among the substitute employees. Such a characteristic distribution of results can be justified by characteristics of conditions typical for a given form of employment that are either favourable or unfavourable for the sense of hope for success.

The scale of hope for success is composed of two subscales. The first one is the scale of conviction of a strong will. The average score on the scale of conviction of a strong will among flexible employees was 23.18 with the variable scope ranging from 4 to 32. The median was 24, which means that half of the analysed scores below 24 points. Skewness becomes negative – distribution is hardly diagonal – too

many high results. Kurtosis is positive, which points at the fact, that the distribution is highly slender – there is too much values centred around the average.

The second subscale is a scale of a conviction of capabilities to find solutions. The average score on the scale of a conviction of capabilities to find solutions in the analysed group of flexible employees was 23.91 with the variable scope ranging from 4 to 32. The median was 24, which means that half of the analysed scores below 24 points. Skewness becomes negative – distribution is hardly diagonal – too many high results. Kurtosis is positive, which points at the fact, that the distribution is slender – there is too much values centred around the average.

CONCLUSION

Flexible forms of employment analysed in this paper, such as teleworking, replacement work, temporary work, seasonal work, employment under commercial contracts, contracts for a specified period of time, part-time jobs, employment in social economy and self-employment form such irregular portfolio of forms of earning money, that due to their characteristics, and what follows, conditions of employment, create a unique profile of experienced hope for success. Therefore it is impossible to analyse this psychological variable with respect to flexible employees in general.

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