

APPRECIATIVE INTELLIGENCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ROMANIAN MANAGERS' BEHAVIOUR

**MIRELA BUCUREAN,
MĂDĂLINA-ADRIANA COSTIN ***

ABSTRACT: *Appreciative intelligence is a process that allows successful managers to realize their innovative and creative ideas, achieving realistic goals by using the ability to identify the positive potential of actions and take advantage of them. The main characteristic of a manager, in order to obtain organizational welfare is to have the ability to discover the hidden aspects of any situation and to share them with his employees, investors, partners and colleagues. In this paper we will present the result of a questionnaire that we applied on a number of ten Romanian managers, five from Bihor County and five from Cluj County, in order to find out if they heard about appreciative intelligence and if they consider it important for the organizational development.*

KEY WORDS: *appreciative intelligence, managers, organization, positive, qualities*

JEL CLASIFICATION: *M 14*

1. INTRODUCTION

Appreciative intelligence is an inspiring and practical account of how to develop the capacity to see potential within the present and to develop this capacity within oneself and in others. Appreciative intelligence is a concept that opens new possibilities for seeing how people and organizations create value and achieve success.

Putting it in a simple way, appreciative intelligence is the ability to see the mighty oak in the acorn. Is the ability to see a revolutionary product, a top talent or a solution that will be valuable in future, although they are now all hidden by their current situation. Appreciative intelligence offers another perspective of what it means to be smart and intelligent.

* Senior Lecturer Ph.D., University of Oradea, Romania, mbucurean@uoradea.ro
Assist. Prof., University of Oradea, Romania, mcostin@uoradea.ro

Managers with a high level of appreciative intelligence are able to recognize the role of external factors and the environments in their daily activities, and also they can immediately see how present actions connect directly to the future. They have the unique ability to see how positive aspects of the current state could be directly applied in order to achieve goals in the best way.

2. THE COMPONENTS OF APPRECIATIVE INTELLIGENCE

There are three important components of appreciative intelligence that Romanian managers can use in order to promote creativity and innovation within their companies:

- Reframing the organizational assessment
- Taking into consideration the positive elements of any situation
- Seeing the way in which future will be affected starting from the present

Reframing the organizational assessment

The first component of appreciative intelligence refers to the way in which managers can perceive, see, interpret and evaluate the current organizational situation. Reframing represents the process by which a manager intentionally sees a certain part of a situation, object, person, context or scenario. By doing this, a manager is faced with several options. They may tend to pay more attention to a stimulus and at least for some moments, ignore the others.

Using appreciative intelligence, the manager, consciously or unconsciously redefines the problem currently facing, thereby passing a new vision of reality, which will lead to a new product.

Taking into consideration the positive elements of any situation

Successful managers have a conscious or unconscious ability to see the reality of everyday events, situations, obstacles, products and people in a favorable way. Because they redefine everything to see only the positive, they often find talents or potential that others might overlook.

Seeing the way in which future will be affected starting from the present

Managers with a high level of appreciative intelligence make connections between generative aspects of the present and desired final goal, seeing how this evolves in the future. Many managers have the ability to redefine problems and to appreciate the positive. However, if they can't see the concrete ways in which present possibilities could be used, they have no chance to develop their appreciative intelligence.

3. THE POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF APPRECIATIVE INTELLIGENCE ON ORGANIZATIONS

3.1 The influence of appreciative intelligence on managers and their actions

When a manager is able to see how present situations can influence the future, they will definitely know how to change the future in their benefit. The process of seeing problems differently, by appreciating only the positive aspects consistently led to the following four qualities:

- Persistence
- Conviction that one's action matter
- Tolerance for uncertainty
- The ability to recover in difficult situations

Graphically, the four qualities generated by a high level of appreciative intelligence can be presented in the following way:

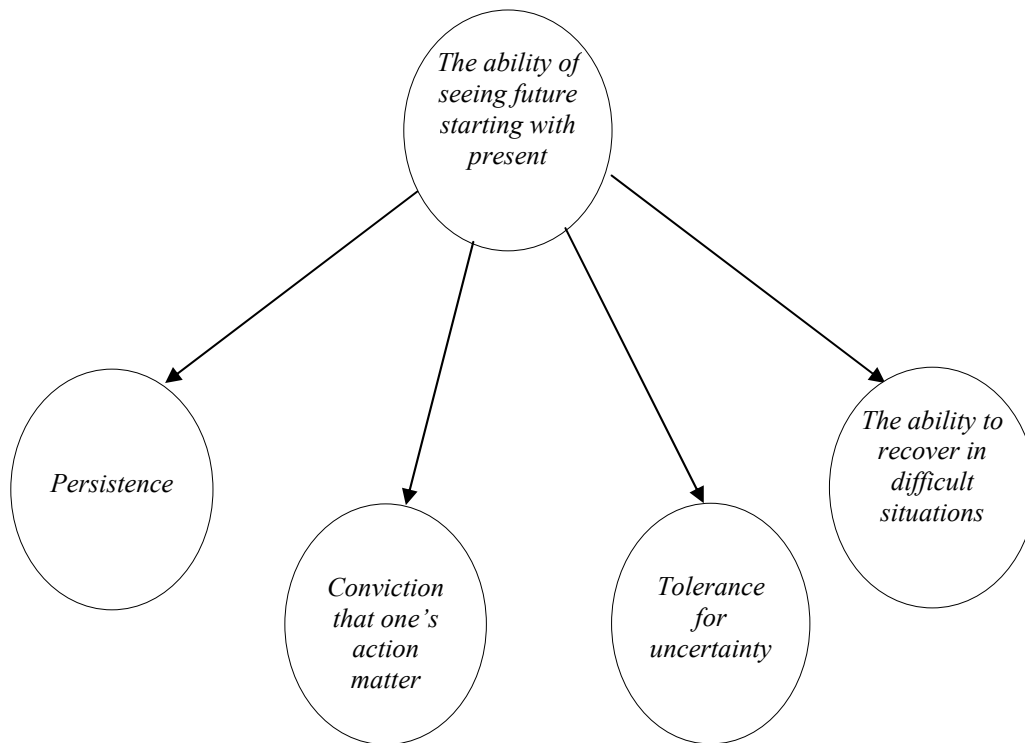


Figure 1. The four qualities generated by appreciative intelligence

Persistence

Persistence is influenced by the self-esteem of managers. That's why, managers with high self-esteem have a greater tendency to persist in the face of failure and obstacles. They're also more likely to see the presence of alternatives, even when faced with failure and they know when to quit and look for alternatives.

Conviction that one's action matter

Managers believe that all their actions, proposals and decisions will take them to a successful result because of their ability of seeing the end goal. That's why they take on more challenging tasks and recover quickly after unexpected failure. When managers with strong conviction in their abilities fail due to their insufficient knowledge they try harder after acquiring the knowledge they believe is necessary for success.

Tolerance for uncertainty

The capacity of tolerating uncertainty can be an important aid for managers in order to cope with new and risky situations. But it is not enough that only managers tolerate uncertain situations. For the organization's benefit, they need to help their employees to do the same, by redefining the situation in a way that they can take into consideration only the positive aspects and see how the future unfolds from the present.

The ability to recover in difficult situations

Managers with high level of appreciative intelligence perceive that a positive consequence could be built even from the most drastic or devastating circumstances. Managers who have the ability to recover when facing with difficult situations are perceptive, intuitive and opened to new experiences. These are factors that allow those with appreciative intelligence to find and pursue solutions that have not been tried before them.

3.2 Appreciative intelligence's influence on Romanian organizations

We applied a questionnaire on ten Romanian managers in order to find out if they heard about appreciative intelligence, if they use appreciative intelligence in their daily work and if they consider it an important skill for any person. In the questionnaire, managers had to answer some questions by choosing "yes" or "no". After processing the data, we can present the following results:

No.	Question	Number of managers who responded "YES"	Number of managers who responded "NO"
1.	Do you consider that appreciative intelligence represents a real help in manager's daily activity?	9	1
2.	Do you use appreciative intelligence when confronting with difficult situations?	9	1
3.	Do you know consider that self perception and intuition are components of appreciative intelligence?	8	2
4.	Do you find yourself in at least one of the qualities generate by a high level of appreciative intelligence?	10	0

5.	Do you try to create a favourable appreciative intelligence climate for your employees?	10	0
6.	Do you allow your employees to express their own ideas regarding the organizational activities?	10	0
7.	Do you take into consideration their proposals?	10	0
8.	Have you ever thought that because of an employee's appreciative intelligence the organization can become more successful?	3	7
9.	Do you consider that only managers can have a high level of appreciative intelligence in an organization?	3	7
10.	Do you think that appreciative intelligence can change the future in a good way?	10	0
11.	In your opinion, appreciative intelligence can be learned?	5	5
12.	Do you promote practices or programs to discover hidden talents and skills of your employees?	9	1
13.	Did you ever face a difficult situation that seemed to be impossible to cope with, but after reframing the context transformed into a simple one?	10	0
14.	Do you share with your employees the difficult organizational problems?	9	1
15.	After finding out what appreciative intelligence means do you consider that organizational success depends on appreciative intelligence?	10	0
16.	Would you like to attend some special courses in order to develop your appreciative intelligence?	10	0
17.	Did you ever read/hear about the advantages of using appreciative intelligence within organizations?	3	7
18.	Do you consider that you have a high level of appreciative intelligence?	3	7
19.	Do you consider that a manager with a high level of appreciative intelligence can influence the employees to act or think in the same way that he/she does?	10	0
20.	Do you agree that all managers use, consciously or unconsciously appreciative intelligence?	10	0
21.	Is there a relation between emotional intelligence and appreciative intelligence in your opinion?	10	0
22.	Do you know exactly how and when to use appreciative intelligence?	9	1
23.	Is appreciative intelligence useful when you want to implement a change?	10	0
24.	Did you try to influence your employee's attitude concerning change by using appreciative intelligence?	9	1
25.	Do you agree that about fifty percent of a company's success is due to the manager's behaviour, attitudes and decisions?	10	0

As we can see, most of the Romanian managers heard about the concept of “appreciative intelligence and they mentioned that they use it almost every time, consciously or unconsciously.

Five of the Romanian managers considered that appreciative intelligence is something that you born with. It is true that some managers seem to be born with a lot of appreciative intelligence and started to enjoy the benefits of their power to invent, to innovate, create and succeed at an early age. All people have appreciative intelligence, but one can have it more highly developed, others develop it gradually, through various practices without even realizing. Identification, cultivation and growth of appreciative intelligence at a personal level, and its use in practice, can lead to a great advantage. Characteristics, values, concepts such as creativity, knowledge and credibility are intangible, but they influence our lives, organizations and environment in which we live.

Although appreciative intelligence is an individual skill, it substantially affects groups and organizations because they are composed of individuals. Within organizations, implementation of appreciative intelligence can lead to competitive advantage: creative solutions, new products, ability to achieve its objectives, a better working environment, which enables people in the organization, be more productive and better organized. All these issues affect the organization's financial results.

By their behaviour, managers create an organizational climate, which in turn, encourage others to consider similar initiatives and actions. These behaviours become norms over time, common people's beliefs about behaviour, values and attitudes. Once these rules have been developed and employees began to adopt a behaviour according to them, resulting styles of action are those of organizational culture. Through this process, managers build, intentionally or not, a culture that will transmit their appreciative intelligence to others.

Appreciative intelligence can be expressed by a positive inducement that can be helpful in moments of doubt or when the progress must highlighted, especially when employees begin to have difficulty or doubt concerning their own work capacities.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Once managers understand the organizational profile, know how it has to evolve in the future, they may initiate a change in the organization, helping the employees to raise the level of appreciative intelligence and changing organizational culture. Appreciative intelligence does not develop overnight, and influencing the behaviour of other people requires time and effort. Managers can help others to create their own expectations by sharing their own positive vision of things and by focusing on their potential. By using appreciative intelligence in their work, organizations are able to build a culture which will enhance and perpetuate the cases of success and innovation.

In order to use and promote appreciative intelligence within the organization, Romanian managers should:

- Teach their employees to appreciate only the positive aspects of any situation;
- Think that in every difficult situation there is always something good;
- Think that only with persistence they will obtain success;
- Now in what way their decisions, acts, proposals will affect the future;
- Talk and share with other managers all the experiences they went through and where appreciative intelligence had an important role;
- Take challenges in order to demonstrate their ambition;
- Give feedback to employees when they have any kind of proposals regarding organizational activities;
- Discuss with their employees about all the difficult problems that the organization is forced to face with and consider their opinion;
- Create a favourable organizational climate;
- Attend some special courses for continuous development of their appreciative intelligence.

Increasing the level of appreciative intelligence doesn't bring permanent happiness or prevent managers to commit errors or failures. What appreciative intelligence can do is to help discovering new solutions starting from these mistakes, to redefine situations and allow a better view of the future.

Our advice for organizations is to create new sets of questions when selecting employees, when funding innovators and hire only managers who are able to configure and future that they want. The most efficient and successful managers show the ability to perceive reality in a way that reveals positive potential.

Managers with high appreciative intelligence are able to realize that unfolding the future from the present is an important step. They are able to recognize the role of environment or external factors in this process, and they have a unique ability to see how the generative potential of the present connects directly to the future.

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