Abstract

The Flow theory (Csíkszentmihályi, 1975, 1988a, 1997), one of the most frequently studied and quoted constructs of Positive Psychology, has opened up a new era in motivational research. The studies on the Optimal Experience composed by positive cognitive, motivational, emotional dimensions of experience – such as e.g. deep concentration, intrinsic motivation, creativity, peak performance (cf.: Massimini & Carli, 1988; Lefevre, 1988; Wells, 1988; Csíkszentmihályi, 1975, 1988a, 1993) – have considerable contribution to the field of mental health and well-being research as well.

In the frames of this empirical research carried out with the participation of 4 profit-orientated and 4 non-profit organizations representing both the public and the private sectors of the Hungarian labour market, one of the study objectives was to confirm the thesis that Flow is the most optimal, negenthropic state of consciousness during work as well, associated with significantly higher positive cognitive, motivational, emotional and activational experience values than any of the anti-Flow states, such as Boredom, Anxiety or Apathy. It is of high relevance to study this topic, as Flow, being the most optimal mode of functioning for employees, can beneficially contribute to the health, well-being and development of individuals and communities. These results contribute to the knowledge about the „Paradox of Work” domain (Lefevre, 1988; Csíkszentmihályi & Lefevre, 1989) as well.

The main objective of my research is to identify the key organizational factors, and the personality components – such as temperament, character and value orientation dimensions –, that can potentially induce Flow, and also to identify special personality and organizational dimension combinations that result in more frequent Flow occurrence. The study of these special combinations will show which temperament, character and value orientation dimensions catalyze more frequent Flow states in a given organizational context. These results can contribute to filling the current gap in the literature. Owing to the exploratory nature of this part of my study, a research toolkit combining a range of quantitative and qualitative tools and methods has been developed both for data collection and analysis. The research methodology, including newly developed tools, is also a contribution to the field.

With the turn of the century, we entered the age of the 4th industrial revolution (cf.: Schwab, 2016) described as the „age of unprecedented volatility”, „uncertainty”, „exponential change” and „ambiguity”, also referred to as VUCA (cf.: Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). The 4th industrial revolution has a big impact on the world of work globally, which – according to the WHO (2010, 2016) – can be quantified by the significant increase of depression and other mental and psychosomatic illnesses. My hope is that these research findings can contribute to the creation of applications and interventions that help developing Flow conductive work environments which facilitate optimal conditions for mental health and psychological well-being.

Owing to the complex nature of the topic, both exploratory and confirmatory research approaches have been applied, including a range of qualitative and quantitative methods to fulfill my research objectives in a truly interdisciplinary fashion.