

## **A VIEW ON THE CONCEPT OF OBJECTIVE FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES: MANAGEMENT AND PSYCHOLOGY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The manager's apprehension of the objectives is mediated by their role and their professional formation. They tend to see the objectives from an organizational point of view, considering them a necessary instrument in order to maintain and to increase the organizational performance. The perception on the concept of Objective in management literature is subjectively deformed by this perspective. In a search for a different perspective, the objective of this article is to analyse and to highlight the differences and the similarities between the perspective on Objectives in the management literature and the perspective on Objectives in the psychology literature.*

*The results of this comparative analysis show that the most important assumptions about Objectives in the management literature are supported by findings in the psychology literature. Useful supplementary ideas for managers emerged from the psychology approach to the subject. The influences of the source of beliefs, the normative pressure and the perceived behavioural control on the objective formulation and acceptance are discussed.*

**KEYWORDS :** *behaviour, goal, management, objective, psychology*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION :** *M100 Business Administration: General*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The manager's apprehension of the objectives is mediated by their role and their professional formation. They tend to see the objectives from an organizational point of view, considering them a necessary instrument in order to maintain and to increase the organizational performance. They will personally have the initiatives of setting the objectives, selecting the appropriate actions and means, energising the whole team in order to meet the stated objectives, controlling the achievement of the objectives and implementing corrective actions. The employees without managerial roles don't have the company, division or departmental wide vision on the objectives, they don't feel the same level of initiative regarding the necessity of setting and following objectives, they don't have the same theoretical and practical knowledge about the use of objectives in organizations as managers do. Hence, their main representation about the objectives is different, and is based mainly on their subjective psychological and rational perception of the objectives. Analysing the fundamentals of the managers and the employee's representation of the objectives can be made only by entering the field of psychology.

The objective of this article is to analyse and to highlight the differences and the similarities between the perspective on *Objectives* in the management literature and the perspective on *Objectives* in the psychology literature.

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## 2. THE CONCEPT OF OBJECTIV IN MANAGEMENT

Starting from the definition of management, we can see that the concept of objective is tightly related with the existence of the organization. According to Heinz Wehrich and Harold Koontz (2007, p. 91) the management by objectives is "A comprehensive managerial system that integrates many key managerial activities in a systematic manner and that is consciously directed toward that effective and efficient achievement of organizational and individual objectives". In the Romanian management literature, Panaite Nica (2007) defines management as the process of efficient and effective performance of activities with and for other persons, through planning, organization, coordination and control, in order to achieve the organizational objectives. Peter Drucker remarks that "every enterprise requires commitment to common goals and shared values. Without such commitment there is no enterprise; there is only a mob. The enterprise must have simple, clear, and unifying objectives. The mission of the organization has to be clear enough and big enough to provide common vision. The goals that embody it have to be clear, public, and constantly reaffirmed. Management's first job is to think through, set, and exemplify those objectives, values, and goals." (Drucker, 2003, p.11)

The role of the management is to focus all the efforts and all the resources of the organization towards the main goals of the organization. So, managing an organization effectively requires the formulation of clear objectives. Since an organization is defined as a group of people reunited by common goals and using common resources, the persistence of the objectives of the organization is necessary for the persistence of the organization.

An objective is a specific result that a person or organization aims to achieve within a time frame and with available resources. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an objective is something you are trying to do or achieve: a goal or purpose; something toward which effort is directed: an aim, goal, or end of action (Merriam Webster dictionary, 2014) Synonyms for *objective* are: aim, ambition, aspiration, end, ideal, intent, mark, goal, plan, purpose and target. The *goal* is defined as aim or purpose of an action, and his synonyms common to the ones of *objective* are: ambition, intention, objective, target, destination, duty, intent and mark.

In organizations, objectives serve as guidelines or road lines for defining the actions and the efforts to achieve the organizational goals. The general assumption is that if the objectives are well defined, the managers will successfully steer the organization towards meeting them. At organizational level, the goals are perceived as general directions or future results, while the objectives are perceived as clear statements about the desired results, necessarily based on current facts and information about the internal and external context. The objectives are providing clear statements about the quality or the quantity of work to be accomplished within a given period of time.

For the managers, assuming an objective implies the acceptance of a definite scope and the commitment to engage all the necessary effort to succeed in achieving the objective. Peter Drucker (2013, p.121), the creator of "The management by objectives", explains that "Objectives are not fate; they are direction. They are not commands; they are commitments. They do not determine the future; they are means to mobilize the resources and energies of the business for the making of the future."

Objectives are key values which are to be achieved by the organization. In an organization, the process of setting the objectives can have many different forms, but it will always state from the most powerful internal or external stakeholders of the organization. They will have the most

important role in defining the goals of the organization, the mission and the vision of the organization. The main objectives will derive from these and form a cascade of objectives that can be imposed or negotiated at all the hierarchical levels of the organization. For example, in a business, traditionally the most powerful stakeholders are the owners, but the objectives must also consider with respect the needs of the clients and the employees. In a charity organization based on volunteer implication, the members might have the highest power in determining the objectives. More recently, for all organizations, the power of the social stakeholders has increased, and a special class of objectives has emerged: the social responsibility objectives.

### **2.1 S.M.A.R.T. objectives**

The most famous, popular and appreciated list of characteristics of an objective is SMART. First presented by Doran in 1981 as *Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, Time-related*, the SMART criteria for an objective has been modified in many versions. The one that is most often found on popular web-sites is: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.

An objective is *specific* when includes the necessary details to be clearly understood. Usually this means to state what should be accomplished, with what requirements and constraints. In an organization, an objective is specific for a person or a structure if that person or structure has the ability and the authority to perform the necessary actions to achieve that objective. An objective is not specific for a person or a structure if that person does not have the ability or the authority to influence the evolution of a situation in order to achieve that objective.

An objective is *measurable* when includes an indicator of progress for measuring the progress toward the attainment of the objective. A good indicator of progress is one that has an attribute, a measurement unit, a scale, a sense of preference and an effective method for data collection and processing.

An objective is *achievable* when the required resources are available for the persons or the structures involved. For example, when the level of performance required for persons and structures involved are within the limits of their potential effort. In the original version (*Assignable objective*), an important point was made. In organizations, the objectives must be assigned to persons responsible for their achievement. This is a matter of responsibility. Should the objective be imposed, negotiated or self-assumed, is a different matter. Also, in the original version, the A – for Assignable – is followed by an R – for Realistic. In many popular publications, Achievable and Realistic are used together, even if the explanations regarding the differences between them are often forced and unclear.

An objective is *relevant* when it truly represents the best choice for describing the wanted results at the end of the individual or organizational effort. A relevant objective is about that area of performance and that special characteristic of the performance which best describes the desired strategic advantage or the desired organizational evolution. Choosing a relevant objective should take into account the multiple options for measuring the performance of a person, structure or organization.

An objective is *time-bound* when a time-frame for the achieving at the desired results is specified. This requires indications such as a starting date, a deadline or the length of the period in which the objective should be achieved. Once the objective is assigned to and assumed by the person, the deadline or the length of the period becomes a defining part of his commitment.

## 2.2. Management By Objectives – MBO

The expression that coined the concept of objective in the management literature was outlined by management guru Peter Drucker in 1954 in his book "The Practice of Management". He used for the very first time the term "Management by objectives".

The Management by objectives (MBO) is now a well-known management model that aims to improve performance of an organization by clearly defining objectives that are agreed by both management and employees. The model is based on the assumption that being involved in goal setting and action plans ensures better participation and commitment among employees, as well as alignment of objectives across the organization. The actual instrument that inspired the MBO was called "manager's letter" and required a job holder (manager or individual contributor) to write a letter to his or her superior indicating what are the goals for the next period of time, how the goals would be met, and what standards were to be expected. When the superior accepted this letter — usually after editing and discussion — it became the work contract." (Greenwood, 1981, p.226)

Peter Drucker believes that setting the objectives with the involvement of the employee responsible for achieving it can reduce the manager's efforts of command and control. "One does not need to be "controlled" or "commanded" if he knows what is to be done and why; if he knows, from continual measurement of results, whether the work is getting done as planned and on schedule, or if not, why not". (Greenwood, 1981, p.229)

## 2.3. Objectives and strategies

The strategic thinking is an important area of preoccupation for managers. The basic mind-set behind every strategic planning process consists of the following three steps: Where are we? Where do we want to go? How do we get there? (Atkins & Cone, 2014) This means that each strategy should start from the acknowledgement of the current situation and contribute to the achievement of one or more organizational objectives.

Michael E Porter defined competitive strategy in his book by the same name as: "Combination of the ends (goals) for which the firm is striving and means (policies) by which it is seeking to get there."(Porter,1980, p.xvi) He emphasizes the need for strategy to define and communicate an organization's unique position, considering that the strategy specifies how organizational resources, skills, and competencies should be combined to create competitive advantage. In other words, competitive strategy is determining how a company is going to win in the period ahead. All strategic thinking involves a foresight of the future, represented by the objectives – future desired results – and strategies – dynamic combinations of actions and resources used to achieve the objectives.

In companies, the hierarchic structure leads to different levels of strategy. Each of these has a different focus, and needs different tools and skills. Corporate strategy focuses on the organization as a whole, while business unit strategy focuses on an individual business unit and his market. A departmental or functional strategy identifies how a specific functional structure will help the organization meet its overall objectives. The practical functionality of these separate levels of strategy requires their strategic alignment by objectives and resource allocation. Objectives are usually cascading from the upper strategic level to the lower operational level. The resource allocation follows the importance of the objectives.

## 2.4. Performance management

Performance management is another domain of the management practices and theories that uses extensively the concept of objective. Performance management has two separate subdomains: individual performance management and organizational performance management.

The *individual performance management* is focused on the appraisal of the individual performance as the main determinant of a series of reactions from the organization and from the employee. Dessler describes the performance management as the continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams, and aligning their performance with the organization's goals (Dessler, 2011). In an organization, the role of the individual performance management is to reveal the potential of personal development for each employee and to determine him to behave in ways that leads to the highest possible performance in the organizational context.

According to Dessler (2011), performance management has the following six basic elements: (1) direction sharing; (2) goal alignment; (3) on-going performance monitoring; (4) on-going feedback; (5) coaching and developmental support; (6) recognition and rewards. Usually, a program of performance management for employees starts with an agreement on the performance objectives and standards, often called targets. The process includes a discussion about the potential and expected personal contribution to the overall organizational objectives. Clear performance objectives or standards are identified, discussed and agreed for each particular job. The performance objectives were first called "targets" in the professional slang. Nowadays the same word is used even in official documents of companies. Monitoring methods are needed in order to measure the actual performance and to compare it with the agreed objectives or standards. During the entire period, the manager holds several meetings for performance with his subordinates, providing information about the current performance, discussing about achievements and under-performances, identifying areas of development and discussing about job satisfaction and rewards. At the end of the period, according to the internal procedures, an appraisal form is filled by the manager or by other persons involved in the process, and this becomes a base for other organizational reactions.

In most of the cases there are two interlinked types of reactions: punishment-reward reactions and personal development interventions. The punishment-reward reactions are usually based on previously discussed, approved and communicated procedures which specify the organizational reaction to a certain level of individual performance. If the performance is below standards or below the agreed objectives, a negative feedback is provided, accompanied by the reduction of some of the incentives normally granted for the employee: temporary salary reduction, elimination of some financial or non-financial benefits. If the performance exceeds the standards or the agreed objectives, a positive feedback is provided, accompanied by the increase of some of the incentives normally granted for the employee: bonuses, prizes, non-financial benefits, promotions opportunities. The personal development interventions are discussed with the employee and usually consist in formation stages, coaching, mentoring or on-the-job formation programs.

The *organizational performance management* is focused on controlling and improving the performances achieved at organizational level. The control of the organizational performances is based on the results of the strategic planning process. The mission, the vision, the objectives and the strategies are references used to establish key performance indicators (KPIs) for measuring the progress towards the organizational goals. On-going monitoring systems are implemented in order to ensure the overall success of the organization and the success of each specific activity. The strategy formulation and the strategy execution are connected by complex methodologies and integrated systems such as the Balanced Score Card, ensuring a continuous and perfectly aligned

process of performance management (Kaplan, 2000, Cokins, 2009). Corrective reactions are formulated and implemented when the KPIs show deviations from the original plans. Improving the performances of the organization is achieved through performance reports and analysis, implementation of corrective actions and periodical reviewing of plans and strategies. Strategic maps, scorecards and dashboards are specific instruments used in this process (Cokins, 2009).

The most important connection between the organizational performance management and the individual performance management is at the level of the KPIs. The organizational performances are measured at the strategic level by KPIs concerning several domains. These strategic level KPIs are derived in appropriate forms at departmental and individual level. Each individual KPI should be strategically aligned with the overall KPIs, and each individual performance objective should be seen as the reasonable personal contribution of that person to the accomplishment of the overall organizational objectives.

The opinions about the domains that should be covered by the objectives had evolved during the time. Peter Drucker (1954) considers that the organizational objectives should refer to the following areas of performances: Market standing relative to market potential both now and in the future; Innovation; Productivity; Financial and physical resources; Profitability; Manager performance and company development; Worker performance and attitude; Public responsibilities.

Kaplan and Norton (2000) suggest that a Balanced Scorecard (BSC) should describe the organizations performance from four different perspectives: Learning & Growth, Business Process, Customer and Financial perspective. The two authors originated the BSC as a performance measurement framework that added strategic non-financial performance measures to traditional financial metrics, to give managers and executives a more 'balanced' view of organizational performance. In each of the four proposed perspectives, Kaplan and Norton explains that specific KPIs should be chosen in perfect relevance with the nature of the activities performed and the current internal and external challenges.

### **2.5. Managerial assumptions about the role of the objectives in organizations**

The study of the scientific and popular management literature concerning the practical use of the concept of objective in the activity of employees, managers and organizations reveals a backbone of ideas that supports the main theories and practices. In my opinion, the general managerial assumptions about the role of the objectives in organizations are the following:

1. Organizational performance is dependent of the existence of clearly defined objectives, known by all members of the organization.
2. Managers are expected to manage the process of setting the objectives by finding the best match between the expectancies of the stakeholders and the organization's resources. Multiple objectives, based on different views of the organizational performance, should be used.
3. Managers are responsible for the level of achievement of organizational objectives. They have the authority to define and implement the appropriate solutions for achieving the objectives (actions and resources dynamically combined in strategies).
4. Objectives are formulated at each hierarchical level in the organization, cascading from the upper strategic level to the lower operational level.
5. Individual motivation and performance are dependent of the acceptance of a personal set of objectives, aligned with organizational objectives. Managers are responsible to ensure the alignment between individual and organizational objectives.
6. Higher accepted objectives will lead to higher individual and organizational performance. Managers are expected to create a pressure towards higher objectives.

7. Involvement of the employees in setting the objectives leads to the acceptance of much difficult objectives than imposing the objectives.
8. Monitoring the achievement of objectives and implementing corrective actions are determinants of the individual and organizational performance (the controlling function of the managerial activity).
9. Punishment-Reward organizational reactions related to the achievement of objectives are determinants of organizational performance.
10. Punishment-Reward organizational reactions related to the achievement of objectives increase the perseverance in pursuing difficult objectives.

### **3. THE CONCEPT OF GOAL IN PSYCHOLOGY**

The literature in the field of psychology is not using the concept of objective but the concept of goal. The goals are points of interest for theorists analysing the bases of human behaviour. There is no satisfactory theory of how people construct and pursue goals (Austin & Vancouver 1996). The formation of a goal is a more or less conscious response to external influences (e.g., the commands and actions of other people and different situations), and to internal influences (such as diseases or emotions). Once a goal is set up, the individual should construct or select some means by which to pursue it. The goals are mentally formed in the process of behaviour generation and, as the behaviours, goals can also be conscious or unconscious. The objectives are in the category of conscious goals.

#### **3.1. The theory of planned behaviour**

In 1985, Icek Ajzen has presented this theory in a chapter called "From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behaviour". His theory builds on previous theories such as learning theories, expected value theory and attribution theory, and is a development of his previous theory of rational behaviour, published with Fishbein in 1975 (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). According to his first theory, the theory of rationale action, if people evaluate the suggested behaviour as positive (attitude), and if they consider that the persons whose opinions matters wishes that they perform the behaviour (subjective norm), this leads to a higher intention to perform the behaviour (behavioural intention). Attitude consists of beliefs about the consequences of performing the behaviour multiplied by his or her evaluation of these consequences (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Subjective norm is seen as a combination of perceived expectations from relevant individuals or groups along with intentions to comply with these expectations. In other words, the subjective norm is "the person's perception that most people who are important to him or her think he should or should not perform the behaviour in question" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

In the theory of planned behaviour, Ajzen (1985) makes a series of changes to eliminate some flaws of his previous theory. According to the new theory, human behaviour is guided by three kinds of considerations: beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behaviour and the evaluations of these outcomes (behavioural beliefs), beliefs about the normative expectations of others and motivation to comply with these expectations (normative beliefs), and beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behaviour and the perceived power of these factors (control beliefs). (Ajzen 1985). In combination, attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perception of behavioural control lead to the formation of a behavioural intention.

The behavioural beliefs offer a theoretical base to explain the way punishment-reward reactions influence the appearance of behaviours. The normative beliefs explain the relation between the individual objectives and the organizational objectives, and fundament the instruments of

intervention of the managers in the behaviours of their subordinates. The control beliefs explain the reaction of the employees and the managers when facing a challenging or an unknown situation.

Further investigating the problem of behavioural control, Ajzen proposes in 2002 a model in which the perceived behavioural control forms an overarching frame for two separate components: self-efficacy and controllability. Self-efficacy is described as the ease or difficulty of performing a behaviour. Perceived self-efficacy refers "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (Bandura, 1997). Perceived self-efficacy was found to account for significant portions of variance in intentions, beyond attitudes and subjective norms, and in behaviour, over and above intentions. In contrast, controllability added significantly to the prediction of behaviour but not to the prediction of intentions, while the mixed sets of items significantly improved prediction of intentions but not of behaviour. (Ajzen 2002) Perceived behavioural control over outcomes is termed *internal* locus of control whereas the perception that outcomes are determined by non-behavioural factors is termed *external* locus of control (Ajzen, 2002). The distinction here is the same as that between efficacy expectation (i.e., the perceived ability to perform behaviour) and outcome expectation (i.e., the perceived likelihood that performing the behaviour will produce a given outcome) (Bandura, 1997).

For the managers, the useful conclusion from these ideas is that the perceived difficulty of the objective – seen as the necessary personal effort – might block the formation of the intention, while controllability – seen as the possible change of results due to uncontrollable factors – might block the performance of the behaviour even if the intention of performing it existed. Hence, controllability is a perception of incertitude and risk, while self-efficacy is a perception of the mastery of personal abilities and knowledge in order to tackle the difficulties rising ahead.

### **3.2. Planning and goals in psychology**

Planning is not a term used only in management. He is also found in the psychology scientific literature. Gillholm and Selart are stating that "An acceptable general definition of planning may be the predetermination of a course of action aimed at achieving some goal" (Gillholm & Selart, 1996, p.26.3). Planning is believed to have three different effects: to enhance prospective memory, to increase the amount of commitment to the intention, and to facilitate recognition and management of spatio-temporal constraints leading to a more realistic plan (Gillholm & Selart, 1996, p.26.4). The enhancement of prospective memory refers to the persistence in the short term memory of the goal, making it available for the conscious part of the cognitive processes related to prospective behaviours. The amount of commitment associated with the goal intention is assumed to be related to how important the goal is. Commitment is one aspect of goal-directed behaviour which seems to be related to performance, especially when the goal is challenging (Klein & Wright, 1994). This view is consistent with the Locke's theory. The recognition and management of spatio-temporal constraints helps the individual in clarifying his behavioural choices. In my opinion, this effect is related with the previously presented perceived behavioural control.

Recognizing that some goals are formed but are not pursued, Gollwitzer (1999) made a distinction between goal intention and implementation intention. He further states that planning is considered to be an important aspect of the formation of implementation intentions (Gollwitzer, 1999). This type of intention specifies only a desired end state or goal to which a person might commits himself or herself, only after taking into account the possible obstacles to implementation. An implementation intention is formed when the conflict has been resolved between different means of achieving the desired goal. One program of research shows that people are more likely to follow through with a goal if they form implementation intentions: plans that specify the procedures by which a goal will be attained and the circumstances under which specific behaviours will be enacted

(Gollwitzer 1999). From the point of view of a manager, writing down a plan is the psychological equivalent of defining an implementation intention, having as consequence a better chance for the pursuing of that goal. Writing down a plan seems also to contribute to the increase of the perceived behavioural control.

Although people may feel committed to perform activities requested of them by others, they need to identify the commitment as something part of the self to be motivated to implement an intention. A possibility is that planning through elaboration of an intention increases the salience of "self-related" components (Gillholm & Selart, 1996). This idea explains the necessity of involving the employees in the definition of their own objectives, and the lower performances when pursuing imposed objective.

### 3.3. Goal setting theory

In psychology, the most important theory about goals is the *goal setting theory* presented by Locke and Latham in 1990. Locke sets the foundation of his theory in his 1968 article "Toward a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentives", stating that employees were motivated by clear goals and appropriate feedback. Goal setting is now considered as the underlying explanation for all major theories of work motivation: Vroom's, Maslow's or Herzberg's motivation theories, Bandura's social cognitive theory or Skinner's operant-based behaviourism.

The goal setting theory is constructed around the following list of conditions specified by the authors as necessary for goals to be motivating:

1. *Clarity*. Clear goals are measurable and unambiguous. In the SMART criteria this is the equivalent of making an objective Specific, Measurable and Time-bound.
2. *Challenge*. The significance of effort for the anticipated accomplishment is important, and so is the fact that rewards typically increase for more difficult goals. Setting SMART goals that are Achievable and Relevant are the equivalent.
3. *Commitment*. Goals must be understood and agreed upon in order to generate the expected behaviours. A specific problem here is the difference in commitment when goals are accepted based on powerful normative pressure.
4. *Feedback*. Knowing that the goal was achieved is important to control the personal behaviour. Feedback helps the formation of the behavioural beliefs and explains the functionality of the punishment-reward organizational reactions.
5. *Task complexity*. An optimal level of complexity is necessary for the arousal of the personal interest. Boring tasks or too complex tasks decrease the motivation for performing the behaviour.

Trying to find the most important ideas of practical use derived from the Locke's and Latham theory, Lunenburg (2011) arrives at the following list of ideas:

- Goals need to be specific;
- Goals must be difficult but attainable;
- Goals must be accepted;
- Feedback must be provided on goal attainment;
- Goals are more effective when they are used to evaluate performance;
- Deadlines improve the effectiveness of goals;
- A learning goal orientation leads to higher performance than a performance goal orientation;
- Group goal-setting is as important as individual goal-setting.

### 3.4. General assumptions in the psychology approaches on goals

The study of the scientific psychology literature concerning the cognitive formation of goals and the factors influencing this process is crossed by a series of ideas that supports the main theories. In my opinion, the general psychological assumptions about the formation of the goals and the factors influencing this process are the following:

1. The source of beliefs (personal or normative) is a determinant in defining one's goals and the performance of behaviours.
2. The goal formation and the implementation intention formation are two separate processes, influenced by specific factors.
3. The level of perceived behavioural control is a determinant for the generation of a goal and the performance of the behaviour. (including here the perceived difficulty and perceived control on collective behaviours)
4. The perceived threats and facilitators are determinants for the generation of a goal and the performance of the behaviour. (e.g. The level of perceived means is a determinant for the generation of a goal and the performance of the behaviour.)
5. The perceived outcome expectation is a determinant for the generation of a goal and the performance of the behaviour.
6. The perceived outcome expectation is influenced by the degree of novelty (incertitude, risk) of the situation which requires the generation of a goal.
7. The perceived behavioural control and perceived outcome expectation are influenced by the time-horizon of the objective.
8. The need for a conscious formulation of a goal is dependent of the cognitive arousal generated by the activity and the expected outcome (the level of requested attention and the importance of the goal).
9. The pursuit of a goal is dependent of the existence of already learned conditioning mechanisms (beliefs, attitudes) and the perception of their present functionality (punishment – reward reactions).

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

A comparative analysis between the managerial main ideas about objectives and the main psychology ideas about goals offers a chance for a validation of the managerial perspectives from the point of view of the cognitive psychology theories. Comparing the list of assumptions resulted from the management literature with the list resulted from the psychology literature shows no contradiction. This means that the manager's perspective about Objectives is correct, even without them knowing the psychological explanations.

The analysis reveals some interesting details about goals formation and the connection between this and the performance of behaviours that might represent important insights for managers. First of all, the managers must take into account the main source of beliefs influencing the appearance of behaviour. Behaviours emerging from objectives based on personal beliefs will generally lead to higher performance than behaviours emerging from objectives based on normative pressure. The formation of the personal beliefs is to be considered as the most important determinant of goals related to the highest performances. The managers must understand how these personal beliefs are formed in order to be able to generate behavioural changes from them.

Second, the perceived difficulty of the objectives must be analysed in two components. The perceived necessary effort should be differentiated from the perceived control on results. The employees and the managers will show a propensity to formulate and accept objectives under the level of the predicted results or at the level at the predicted results when performing a normal effort.

Also, the employees and the managers will hardly accept objectives on which they perceive significant probabilities for a change in results due to uncontrollable environmental factors.

Third, the perceived behavioural control will be differently perceived in the case of objectives achievable by individual effort, objectives achievable by team effort (as a member) and objectives achievable by team effort (as the leader). Also, the perceived behavioural control will be differently perceived in the case of long term objectives, middle term objectives, daily objectives and task related objectives.

At last, the punishment-reward reactions of the organization must be coherent with the idea that the employees and the managers will engage in behaviours based on their perception about the expected: (1) sanctions for the failure to meet the objective; (2) normative pressure after failure; (3) organizational indifference; (4) social recognition for fulfilling or exceeding the objective; (5) rewards for fulfilling or exceeding the objective.

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