

Concept of Motivation: A Point of View



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Abstract

Motivation is the process, which influences people to act. It arouses behaviour, sustains behaviour and channels behaviour into a specific course. The key to understanding the process of motivation lies in the meaning of and relationship between needs, drives and incentive. Motivation should never be underrated. Along with perception, personality, attitudes and learning, it is presented as a very important process in understanding behaviour. Researchers have proposed various theoretical streams for work motivation which try to explain human motivation. Motivation in an organisation is the willingness of an employee to respond to organisational requirements. Motivation seeks to know, analyze and bring into play the motives behind man's action. Motivation is the process of increasing organisational conditions which impel employees to strive hard to attain company goals. Motivation determines how they will do and when there is negative motivation performance is low. One of the key elements in human resource management is motivation. It is concerned with 'why' of human behaviour.

Keywords: Motivation, Behaviour, Organization, Employees, Work, Performance, Efficiency.

Introduction

Today, virtually all people- practitioners and scholars have their own definition of motivation usually one or more of the following words are included in the definition—desires, wants, wishes, aims, goals, needs, drive, motives, and incentives. Technically, the term motivation can be traced to the Latin word 'movere' which means 'to move'. The meaning is evident in the following comprehensive definition: 'Motivation is a process that starts with a physiological or psychological deficiency or need that activates behaviour or a drive that is aimed at a goal or an incentive.' Thus, the key to understanding the process of motivation lies in the meaning of and relationship between needs, drives and incentives. Motivation is the process, which influences people to act. It arouses behaviour, sustains behaviour and channels behaviour into a specific course. Motivation can be defined very simply as the willingness to exert towards accomplishment of some goal.

Motivation is literally the desire to do things. It's the difference between waking up before dawn to pound the pavement and lazing around the house all the day. It's crucial element in setting and attaining goals and research shows you can influence your own levels of motivation and self-control. A motive is an impulse that causes a person to act. Motivation like intelligence can't be directly observed. Instead, motivation can only be inferred by noting a person's behaviour.

Motivation is a basic psychological process. Older theories of motivation state that rational thought and reason were the guiding factors in human motivation; however, psychologists believe that motivation is rooted in a basic impulse to optimize well-being, minimize physical pain and maximize pleasure. Motivation describes the wants or needs that direct behaviour toward a goal. It is an urge to behave or act in a way that will satisfy certain conditions, such as desires, wishes or goals. Few would deny that it is the most important focus in the micro-approach to organisational behaviour. Many people equate the causes of behaviour with motivation. Motivation should never be underrated. Along with perception, personality, attitudes and learning, it is presented as a very important process in understanding behaviour. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that motivation should not be thought of as the only explanation of behaviour. It interacts with and acts in conjunction with other mediating processes and the environment. It must also be remembered that, like other mediating processes, motivation cannot be seen. All that can be seen is behaviour. Motivation is a hypothetical construct that is used to help explain behaviour; it should not be equated with behaviour. In

fact, while recognizing the 'central role of motivation', many of today's organisational behaviour theorists think it is most important for the field to reemphasize behaviour.

Aim of the Study

The objective of this paper is to analyse the importance of motivation in understanding the employees' performance and achieving the goals of an organisation. The paper is based on the simple and basic analysis of motivation and how it has been defined differently by different thinkers and how the definition and concept has changed with the time.

Historical background and review of literature

The relationship between man and his work has long attracted the attention of philosophers, scientists and novelists. The interest of psychologists in this problem date back to the early part of the twentieth century and is reflected in the emergence and development of such fields of specialization as industrial psychology and vocational guidance. Much of the early work in this field dealt with the measurement of aptitudes and abilities and with the utilization of these measurements in improving the selection of occupation by persons and the selection of persons by organisations. This emphasis on improving the 'fit' between the abilities of persons and the demands of their jobs made an important contribution to both organisational functioning and individual adjustment. It did not, however, shed much light on the basic processes affecting the behaviour of people in work situations. The concepts of aptitude and ability have always been difficult to deal with in any formal or theoretical fashion and, to this day, have not played an important role in systematic theories of behaviour. Few principles or generalizations have emerged from the voluminous literature dealing with the relationships between aptitude or ability tests and performance criteria. Theories of motivation are designed to explain why people behave in a particular way.

The psychologists' interest in the motivational implications of work has two principal antecedents. The first of these was the work on vocational interest by Cowdery (1926), Strong (1929), Kitson (1930), Fryer (1931) and Kander (1946). From its modest beginnings with Freyds comparison of the personality characteristics of life insurance, salesman and engineering school students, this work has resulted in the development of a number of interest tests, which are widely used in the vocational guidance and in research in occupational psychology. A somewhat different perception on the problem of motivation and work stem from the writings of Elton Mayo and his followers in the Human Relation movement and from the research of Kurl Lewin and his associates in Group Dynamics. Since publication of the investigations conducted in the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company, a large amount of research has been carried out on the social environment and on the behaviour of the workers. On the other hand, conventional human resources theories, developed some time ago by Maslow and Herzberg, suggest that satisfied employees tend to be more productive, creative and committed to the goal

of their institution. People are essential to productivity. The success of productivity improvement strategy is dependent on employee commitment and job-satisfaction.

In motivational issues the concepts like need, motive, goal, incentive and attitude are appearing with as much or greater frequency than concepts of aptitude, ability and skill.

So far, motivation has been presented as a basic psychological process consisting of primary, general and secondary motives and drives such as the power motive, affiliation motive, and achievement motive. Since the subject of our enquiry is the interrelationship of work and motivation, it is necessary to give some initial attention to the meaning of these terms. 'Work' is particularly an ambiguous term. It is used in Physics to refer to the transfer of energy by a process involving the motion of an object as a result of the application of a force. We will substitute the term 'work' with the term 'work role'. A work role is defined as an act of functions done for production of goods and services. It means roughly the same thing as the term 'job', as it is used colloquially and in the industrial psychology. The term motivation has been used in almost as many different ways as the term work. We will use the term 'motivation' to refer to a process governing choices made by the persons and choosing among alternative form of voluntary activity.

In choosing to deal with the interrelationship of work and motivation, we are selecting for examination of both the effects of motivational variables on personal behaviour in work roles and the effects of work roles on motivation variables. There are three phenomena within this general field of enquiry which have attracted the attention of psychologists and which be will taken up in this research. These are—

1. The choices made by persons among work roles
2. The extent of their satisfaction with these chosen work role
3. The level of their performance or effectiveness in their chosen work role

Each of this phenomenon can be treated, at least in part, as a function of the relationship between the motives of people and the actual or cognized properties of work role.

Researchers have proposed various theoretical streams for work motivation which tries to explain human motivation. Before taking a step to see the interrelationship between work and motivation, let us take a brief review of the different theories of motivation. The content models go as far as the turn of the century, when pioneering scientific managers such as F.W.Taylor, Frank Gilbeth and Henry L. Gantt proposed sophisticated wage incentive models to motivation of workers. Next came 'The Human Relation' movement and then the models of Maslow, Herzberg and Alderfer. Most work has been done based on expectancy-based and attribution. These process models are cognitively based; other cognitive models exist in psychology but equity and attribution are the ones that have had greatest impact on work motivation so far.

The content theories attempt to determine what it is that motivates people at work. The content theories are concerned with identifying the needs/drives that people have and how these are prioritized. They are concerned with the types of the incentives or goals that people strive to attain in order to be satisfied and perform well. The content theories are referred to as 'static' because they incorporate only one or few points in time and are either past or present time oriented. Therefore, they do not necessarily predict work motivation or behaviour, but are still important to understanding what motivates people at work. At first, money was felt to be the only incentive (scientific management), and then a little, it was felt that incentives include working conditions, security and perhaps a democratic style of supervision (human relations). More recently, the content of motivation has been deemed to be the so-called 'higher-level' needs or motives such as esteem and self-actualization (Maslow); responsibility, recognition, achievement and advancement (Herzberg); and growth and personal development (Alderfer). The term motivation has been used in almost as many different ways as the team work. Psychologists who use it often disagree about specific processes to which it applies. We will use the term motivation to refer to a process governing choices made by persons or lower organisms among alternative form of voluntary activity. We specifically exclude from the realm of motivated behaviour, reflexes or tropism as well as responses mediated by the automatic nervous system such as salivation or heart rate.

Motivation has been Defined Differently

Motivation is obedience to an internal personal authority (obedience to sense to duty, it is sometimes called), which arises out of an ideal or value common to group, the end sought by the group being defined by the ideal or value. 'As the term is used ordinarily by the employer, the labourer and the psychologist alike, it refers to a feeling of togetherness.' There is a sense of identification with and the interest in the elements of one's job, working condition, fellow-workers, supervisors, employers and the company. The more a worker or employee possesses such feeling the higher is morale. Without them no can explain the meaning and sense of motivation in all respects. From the view point of public administrative personnel, high morale is not the cause, it is a result of opportunity to work, which provides sufficient uplift and brightness to make life seem worthwhile. Motivation is considered as a dynamic between individuals and the organisation they serve.

Motivation is mainly psychological. It refers to the forces operating within an individual, which impel him to act in a certain way. Motivation in an organisation is the willingness of an employee to respond to organisational requirements. The more positive the individual's motivation towards the organisation, the more effective he is in his performance which is determined by his perception. Definitions of motivation are many. A review of them would indicate that they define it in terms of what it is,

where it resides, whom it affects and what it affects. Thus to use this classification, motivation is composed of the following—

1. What it is—an attitude of mind, a spirit-de-corps, a state of well being (or unwell-being) and an emotional state?
2. Where it resides—in the minds, attitudes and emotions of individuals as members of a group.
3. Whom it affects—immediately employees and executives in their interactions; ultimately the customer and the community.
4. What it affects—immediately, willingness to work and co-operate in the best interest of the enterprise. Ultimately, output quality and costs of operations.

So, motivation is a state of mind and spirit, affecting willingness to work, which in turn affects organisational and individual objectives. Motivation may range from very high to very low. It is not absolute but is subject to change depending upon management's plans and practices.

An Intractable Problem

Unfortunately, motivation is not a simple concept it involves a complex combination of individual needs, drives, tension, discomforts and expectations. The motivation of any organism, even the simplest one, is at present only 'partly understood'. Moreover, needs vary significantly with the individual and lead to differential behaviour patterns. To confound the matter even further, an individual's needs vary over time. His value system evolves continually and an integral part of that evolution is the motivational process. As some needs are satisfied, they become less important in the scheme of things. Others develop through experience. Thus, understanding individual motivation requires continual updating in order to reflect the most current mix of goals. As people become better educated and economically blessed, the traditional carrot and stick policies only scratch the surface. The ever-increasing constraints, internal as well as external, imposed on the organisations further erode the power of managers to motivate employees. In spite of these frustrating limitations, it is highly important to the managers of the group of people to understand in what way he may be able to generate enthusiasm and goal directed behaviour on the part of his subordinates. Motivation theory provides a great deal of insight into the reasons that different individual exhibit different behaviour patterns in an organisation. It is useful in explaining why the same individual exhibits different reactions to the same stimulus at different times.

Importance of Motivation

Organisations are run by people. Hence no one can afford to avoid human behaviour at work. This is because motivated employees are more productive and quality conscious and apathetic ones. Basically motivation is the set of forces that cause people to choose certain behaviours from among the many alternatives open to them. It is important because of its significance as a determinant of performance and its intangible nature.

Motivation as a pervasive concept affects and is also affected by a host of factors in the organisational milieu. Motivation may be regarded as the most vital element in the process of management. It is an important tool in the hands of managers for getting things done. Motivation seeks to know, analyze and bring into play the motives behind man's action. It gets the members of the team to pull their weight effectively to give their loyalty to the group to carry out properly the task they have accepted and generally to play an effective part in the job that the group has undertaken. Insight into the topic of motivation in work in organisations has escalated dramatically in recent years. Several factors appear to account for the prominence of this topic as focal point of interest.

The importance of motivation can be seen through people being inspired to make a change in their lives. For employees specifically, this might mean aiming to enhance their performance in the office, leading them to generally work harder and smarter and allowing them to complete tasks efficiently and properly, helping them to achieve their personal goals, increase in level of job-satisfaction, helping in self-development—all of which positively impact the organisation's bottom line. Employee motivation is a critical aspect which leads to the performance of the department. For best results it is important that the employees should be motivated regularly as a part of routine work. Motivated employees can lead to increased productivity and allow an organisation to achieve higher levels of output. When employees are motivated to work, they generally put their best effort in the tasks that are assigned to them.

Motivation is important for employees as well as for organisation too because of its innumerable benefits, such as--

Puts Human Resources into Action

Every organisation requires physical, financial and human resources to accomplish the goals. It is through motivation that the human resources can be utilized by making full use of it. This can be done by building willingness in employees to work. This will help the organisation in securing best possible utilization.

Improves Level of Efficiency of Employees

The level of subordinate or an employee does not depend upon his qualifications and abilities. For getting best of his work performance the gap between ability and willingness has to be filled which helps in improving the level of performance of subordinates. This will result into- increase in productivity and overall efficiency.

Leads to Achievement of Organisational Goals

The goal of an organisation can be achieved when the some factors are taken care of, like, best utilization of resources, cooperative work environment, co-ordination and co-operation take place simultaneously which can be effectively done through motivation

Builds Friendly Relationship

Motivation is an important factor which brings employees satisfaction. This can be done by keeping

into mind and framing an incentive plan for the benefit of the employees, like—monetary or non-monetary incentives, promotion opportunities and disincentives for inefficient employees. In order to build a cordial friendly atmosphere in an organization, if above mentioned steps are taken care then it will benefit the whole organisation as well as employees too.

Contributes stability to work force

Stability and work force is very important from the point of view of reputation and goodwill of an organisation. The skills and efficiency of employees will always be of advantage to employees as well as the organisation.

We can easily say that employee satisfaction is important because this can lead towards a positive growth—at individual level as well as at institutional level. In Mario Andretti's words—'Desire is the key to motivation, but its determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal—a commitment to excellence that will enable you to attain the success you seek.' Insight into the topic of motivation in work in organisations has escalated dramatically in recent years. Several factors appear to account for the prominence of this topic as a focal point of interest. Every organisation needs people in order to function.

1. Managers and organisational researchers cannot avoid a concern with the behavioural requirements of an organisation. Motivation is the inner state of our mind that activates and directs our behaviour. It is always internal and externalized via our behaviour.
2. Motivation as a concept, is pervasive and a highly complex activity that affects and is affected by a host of factors in the organisational milieu.
3. Motivating employees is a vital part of every organisation. Organisational effectiveness becomes to some degree a question of management's ability to motivate its employees, to direct at least a reasonable effort towards the goal of the organisation.
4. Measuring of quality of life is important. As technology increases in complexity, machines tend to become necessary, yet insufficient vehicles of effective and efficient operation. In other words, it becomes necessary for an organisation to ensure that it has employees who are both capable of using and willing to use the advanced technology to achieve organisational goals.

Many organisations are now paying attention to developing their employees as future resources (or talent bank) upon which they can draw as they grow and develop.

The modern concept of motivation derives from the historical need to account for the arousal and direction of behaviour. Human and animal activity occurs in peaks and troughs and it shifts its direction from one goal to another many times throughout a day. Even the ancients knew that these shifts in levels of activity and direction were the result of some combination of changes in external stimuli and internal state.

The study of motivation has assumed importance in case of both public and private

organisation. So far motivation was studied and emphasized more in the context of private organisation where it was supposed to have direct impact on productivity. We find that most of the theorization in the case of motivation has been done by people studying mainly business organizations. However, since the government today has become a major source of employment in most of the developing societies of the world, it has become imperative for the scholars of Public Administration to understand and analyse the process of job-satisfaction and motivation in their specific context.

Measurement of productivity is very difficult in public administration unlike private sector. Still it is essential that studies be made regarding motivation of government employees, especially the factors which influence it. Organisations come in all kinds and so is motivation. Instead keeping a hawkish eye over employees banning mobile phones at work place, tight schedule, it is better to provide good work-life, rewards and punishments, Now-a -days organisations are going out of the way to make their staff love their work they do and also ensure they've a great work-life balance. Various rewards and recognition programmes ensure innovation, team work, creative leadership and above all highly motivated staffs which is the key to success for an organisation. An organisation is established to attain certain objectives. To accomplish them two things are necessary, a sound organisational structure and a trained efficient and motivated personnel. Personnel have in fact become the most important factor in the success of any enterprise. More often than not, in majority of public and private enterprises both successes and failures can be linked to the people working in them. A crucial issue that often emerges in management of organisations is how best to keep employees in an efficient and satisfied state. To answer this question one has to analyze a large number of social, psychological and organisational factors that affect the performance of employees on their job.

Employees always do not have a monetary reason for doing what they do. Instead the outcomes of their actions intrinsically matter to them. Many individuals are motivated to extent effort because they care about them and their jobs. Teachers value the education of their students, police officers care about reducing crime, fire-fighter risk their lives in order to save others and so on. What makes people work? Why some people perform better than others? Perhaps one of the biggest questions confronting organisations today is the 'people' question. In fact if

you dig very deeply into the problem you will get to people. But how do we motivate employees to achieve the goals of an organisation and at the same time satisfy the needs of the employees. How to tap the latent human capability in organisation's endeavour? How do we get people to perform at a higher than 'normal' percent of their physical and mental capacities and also maintain satisfaction? This is the challenge of motivation. Even money after sometime or a certain point doesn't matter; it is job-satisfaction and a cordial office atmosphere that ultimately makes the difference.

Conclusion

Motivation is an inspirational process which impels the members of the team to pull their weight effectively to give their loyalty to the group to carry out properly the tasks that they have accepted and generally to play an effective part in the job that the group has undertaken. It is the process of indoctrinating employees with unity of purpose and the need to maintain harmonious relationships among people. Motivation is the process of increasing organisational conditions which impel employees to strive hard to attain company goals. Some people perform the same type of job more efficiently than others at any given point of time; people vary in the extent to which they are willing to direct their energies to attainment of goals due to differences in motivation. Human beings are the factors of production which can give productivity with less output and vice-versa. Abilities determine what they can do. Motivation determines how they will do and when there is negative motivation performance is low. One of the key elements in human resource management is motivation. It is concerned with 'why' of human behaviour.

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