

Towards a Hybrid Approach to the Theory of Motivation: A proponent of Contemporary View of Motivation

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Abstract

The paper describes the classical theories of Motivation, and in a relational dictum provides a contemporary view. The various managerial views into subject of motivation take stem from the diverse views and proponent of the notion. The paper proposes a hybrid theory, which may combine the most meaningful characteristics from a range of available theories of Motivation.

Keywords— Hybrid Approach, Theory of Motivation, Human Actions, Maslow, Psychological Maturity.

Aims Research Journal Reference Format:

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's complex and competitive business environment, it is ever imperative for businesses to motivate employees including those demotivated for different reasons. Motivation is the need, drive, and the desires that drive human actions and thoughts (CMI, checklist 221:1). Imbibing an appropriate level of motivation, employees use all their talent and acquired skills to fully participate, and make a full contribution to the workplace. In practice, irrespective of the classic theories and dynamic of its application, motivation provides the needs for more work, been viewed as a mystery, because as many as the number of the theories as needed for solution. Having explored or perhaps, exploited different theories on the subject of motivation, it seems correlatively, individuals' situations determine their motivating needs. In addition, in times of dynamic move of change or economic difficulties, employee morale tends to deflate and it is difficult to understand from various theories of motivation, to determine who motivates the motivators, and in what way to benefit is the best approach of adopting the right motivating theory in time of rapid and unpredictable change.

1.1 Working Definition

CMI (checklist 068:1) defines motivation as the creation of stimuli, incentives, and working environments that enable people to perform to the best of their ability. This does not deviate appreciably from the CMI (checklist 221:1)'s definition, which sees motivation as the needs, drives, and desires that drive human actions and thoughts. An attempt to give a working definition presents an analytical approach to the subject of motivation.

2. DESCRIBING THE CLASSIC THEORIES

2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow (1954) progresses numbers of significant suggestions regarding human behaviour and motivation (Figure 4.1). To him, people needs could be hierarchically represented; it is all about needs expansive from basis to climax, the human is a wanting being, and always wants something at every stage of life or career, right from smallest possible to maximum.

Applicably, needs stop being motivators as soon as being reasonably fulfilled. Thus, it has been replaced as a motivator; in other words, an unsatisfied need in the hierarchy becomes a motivator. Maslow identified five human needs show in figure 4.1. Managers need to articulately indentify the level each subordinate or employee has attained on the hierarchy, follow on this, and then motivate the worker in the most suitable way. It could be qualified as well as applied generally, but not exclusively. It provides a dynamic image instead of a static type. Notably, each level within the hierarchy blends. The chain of causation presents a problem since it could not run from stimulus to individual needs in behavioural pattern. The illogical act of human at times could be problematic particularly when a person is rundown of two needs, though Maslow's theory will want the most basic needs met first. In addition, the same need in one person does not necessarily provoke the same impulse in all individuals. It is possible to come up with an alternative response, but many things in human endeavour demand for satisfaction either immediate or in the end. Satisfying a particular need could entail a long-range goal, achieved only through a succession of refined ranking.

2.2 Theories of X, Y, and Z

Douglas McGregor (1960) believed that managers operate based on a set of primary beliefs that have direct impact on the way business activities are being run (www.manager.org.uk/library). He came up with some assumptions, which categorises his theory into X and Y. These assumptions about managers' behaviour also culminate into the centrality of how employees are being viewed and managed. People are central to management irrespective of styles adopted. Both theories detailed in McGregor's paper first published in 1960 titled: 'The Human Side of Enterprise.' This combined ultimately depicts contrasting different managing techniques (CMI, checklist 026:3). Theory X presents the conventional approach using three different assumptions to direct and manage, whilst Theory Y is the combination of personal and organisational goals, worked on six different suppositions.

Theory X explains a managing approach that entails organisational regulation, lock in visibly specific processes, and prescribe different penalties (in case of failure) or packages of rewards (for success) to get the best out of workers. This managing, styled around beliefs that utilizes autocratic controls, which subordinates eventually mistrusted and resented. McGregor (as cited in CMI, checklist 026:1) suggests it comprises a negative assertion regarding the 'mediocrity of the masses', as he concedes to the 'carrot and stick' as a style, which fails each time people needs are principally societal as well as self-seeking. This does not totally alleviate the problem, and thus, he indicated to further an alternative, to limit assumptions of Theory X and give a thorough weighing up on methodologies of Theory Y.

This position was self-damning as well as receiving criticism from anti-McGregor school of thought. However, William Ouchi in 1970s expounded a theory Z that McGregor began evaluating Japanese (Type J) and American (Type A) organisations. Describing Type A firms as offering temporary employment, focused careers on actualising elevation frequently, and job empowerment whilst Type J organisations, focused on the culture of Japanese society- collective responsibility. It is a paradigm of togetherness (Japanese Style) versus individualism (American style). Few of Americans' firms such as Procter and Gamble, and Hewlett-Packard follow on 'hybrid type' (called Type Z) because they share some common features with the Japanese business ethos (CMI, checklist 026:op cit).

2.3 Psychological Maturity

Chris Argyris (1964), a curb fan of job enrichment, who frequently disputed Taylorism idea of 'hires a hand', rather than an entire service of an individual (CMI, checklist 019:1). He sustains the argument that the work condition of a person will influence the personal development and potential of that individual. Primarily, he emphasises the strength of trust in worker, and tenaciously defend the mutual benefit that comes when firms help to develop individuals into realising their full potentials.

He proposes seven stages of development from infant to mature behaviour. He believes that motivation is innate and each person already has what he referred to as the 'psychological energy.' It ultimately motivates, though is not an approach that synthetically does it, but it invigorates the inborn energy towards getting people to give their best at work. It is synonymous to McGregor's theory Y management style, i.e., to encourage higher or full participation from employees, better communication, job enrichment and enlargement, so that the innate energy could naturally develop in people.

2.4 Two-factor theory

Frederick Herzberg (1966) presents another focus into the subject of motivation, particularly, away from the factors of salary, achievement, and environment (Rob Dixon, 2004:119). He took into study, two-hundred engineers, and accountants, about the factors that improved or reduced their job satisfaction. He identified hygiene and motivating factors as channels into job satisfaction. Hygiene creates an encouraging environment for motivating workers and demeaning job dissatisfaction, such as company policy, salary, supervision, and working conditions. Wherever hygiene dissatisfied, it leads to job dissatisfaction although its presence does not create job satisfaction in itself.

To Herzberg, what advance job satisfaction are the motivating factors, which eventually create job satisfaction complemented with hygiene factors. Attaining satisfactory level of achievement, recognition, responsibility, and job itself creates a better atmosphere for job satisfaction. Herzberg's work shows that though job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are on the linear side of the graph but they are not simply opposite to each other. It furthers that job satisfaction corroborated by motivating factors, and dissatisfaction underpinned by hygiene factors.

Rob Dixon (2004:120) provides important implications for managers that, 'a better working condition is not necessarily a motivating factor in itself.'

2.5 The Hawthorne Experiments

Putting Mayo's result into workable perspective presents an integrated approach into the subject of motivation. If employees are unsatisfied with channels engaging with personal difficulties and job dissatisfaction, notwithstanding the approach, the problems are then of technical deficiency instead of the environmental reasons. Managers are to filter, using the industrial difficulties as funnel of balancing the residing professional efficiency in solving the problem of job dissatisfaction.

To Mayo, the answer of motivation was 'socially human.' His Hawthorne experiments indicating the formulation of strict regulations output from different informal procedures and embedded human emotions, sentiments, difficulties, and professional relations. Managers must adopt skills that put individual activities such as relational aptitudes to analyse, stimulate, annotate, and communicate, into aggregating perspective. In other words, motivators are to balance between the procedural sides of organisations by engaging with the human side, driving motivational approach into doing business well.

This perspective from Mayo has been gathering fans over the years, putting his view into a highly objective prose in different managing apparatus, notwithstanding the different opposing views (CMI, checklist 005:3). However, his conclusion is helping diverse group of social scientists, trade unions, supervisors, and managers of the 1990s, in addition to the 'Hawthorne effect.' The danger arises, that some individuals been 'singled' out for unique applause, or grievous sense of 'exceptional state of affairs.' Despite the danger, this idea is an initial impetus underpinning the significance of managing technique. It contributes mainly to manufacturing efficiency, using relational influence and/or financial motivation to meet targets (CMI, op cit). This is gratifying both the monetary and any other personal needs based on effective discharge of interpersonal skills.

3. COMBINED EFFECT OF THE CLASSICAL THEORIES OF 'MOTIVATION'

Giving due consideration to contributions of each of the classical theories reveal that motivation is a dynamic subject far from being fully explored. It is noted that each contribution present title for further discussion. Elton Mayo's Hawthorne experiments identify some root causes of self-motivation (CMI, checklist 005:2). Mayo's idea of 'informal organisations' had impacted on Argyris and others. It gives way to the different theories about how organisations learned and developed the discrediting of the 'rabble hypothesis' theory, though based on the assumption that individuals only pursue self-interest but it led directly to the work of McGregor (Theory X and Theory Y) with its wider implications for leadership and organisation (CMI, op cit.).

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides insight into personal behavioural patterns. Frederick Herzberg, who looked at job satisfaction, has carried out other influential research and parity between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's categorizing of the two factors established. Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y suggest management styles that motivate on one hand, and do otherwise to others on the other hand (Rob Dixon, 2004:117-120). A disjointed consideration does not provide a unified solution rather a further work to foster a hybrid theory.

4. PROPOSING AN HYBRID THEORY: 'GET ON DOING IT WELL'

Motivation from an analytical viewpoint requires diverse skills of leading people to getting work done well instead of applying theories that open to high level of criticism that does not get people to work well. Who motivates the motivators and how best to motivate in time of change and/or during crisis? To stimulate the workplace condition in order to get employees to work well in the overall interest of achieving the business objectives goes beyond the use of just a theory. A combined effect maybe of influential approach when individual situation responses to a driven force in getting work done well.

Motivation is a managing skill of stimulating other workers to attaining their best in meeting objectives. In the twentieth century, there was a paradigm shift from motivation by dictation and discipline, promoted by F W Taylor's scientific management, towards a style of creating an appropriate corporate climate, and addressing the needs of individual employees (<http://www.managers.org.uk>). Agreed to as one of the key managing processes regularly squabbled that self-motivation is the answer. To create working environment that enable an individual to give the best to the workplace. Many managing theorists have proposed insightful ideas to the subject of motivation. Where do we go from here? Rob Dixon (2004:116) divides motivation theories into content and process; Herzberg, Maslow, and McClelland are content based whilst Adam's equity theory and Vroom's expectancy as process. In addition, this places attention on the environment and the employees, notwithstanding, the perspective. The questions then arise, who motivates the motivators and, how do we motivate those who are demotivated in time of Crisis?

5. CONCLUSION

Giving due consideration to the prevailing classic theories of motivation, the author concludes that due to the changing nature of business, the subject is dynamic and further consideration should be given to the subject specifically, to answer the question, who motivates the motivators? Any hybrid theory should provide answer to this question considering the different limitations exhibited by the classic theories.

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Appendix

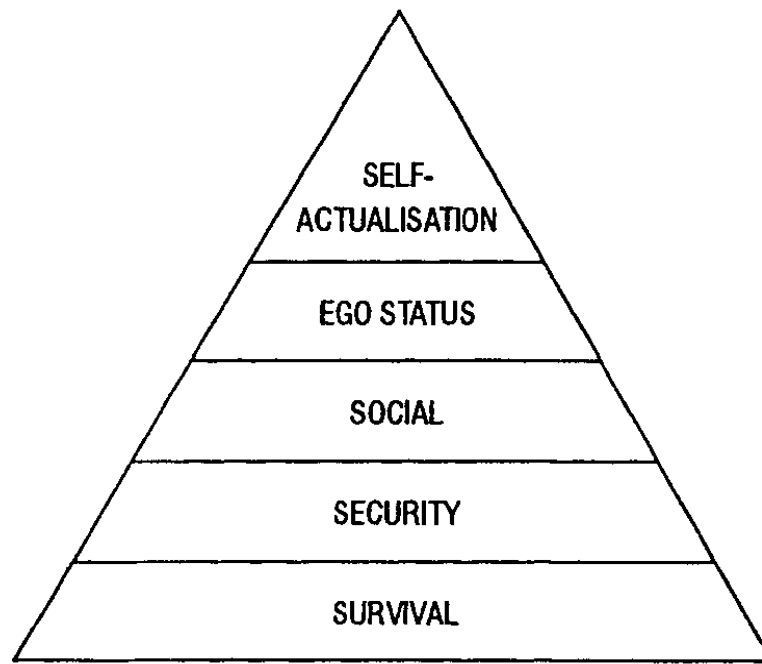


Figure 1: Maslow's Modern day Representation of the Hierarchy of Needs
Source: CMI, Checklist 009:1