A STUDY OF THEORIES OF MOTIVATION IN THE INDUSTRIES WORKERS

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ABSTRACT From the very beginning, when human organizations were established, people had tried to find out the answer to what motivates people maximum. The satisfactory and generalized answer is yet to be found out. Since various people have been engaged in finding the answer of the question relating to ‘what motivates people in the organization most’.

Keywords:

INTRODUCTION

The starting was made by Frederic Winslow Taylor and his followers Frank Gilbreth, Lillian Gilbreth and Henaly Gantt, in the form of scientific management and more particularly ‘differential piece rate system.’ This system was concerned with using financial incentives to motivate people in the organizational context. Then came the finding of human relations which emphasized security and working conditions at the job besides financial incentives for work motivation. In early 1960s, those concerned with work motivation started to search for a new theoretical foundation and to attempt to devise new techniques for application. These theories are known as ‘content theories of motivation.’ Maslow gave the theory of need hierarchy, Herzberg proposed two-factors theory; McClelland emphasized on power, affiliation, and achievement motives.

Because of lack of uniform finding in various researches based on the content approaches, scholars tried to find out the process involved in motivation which led to the emergence of ‘Process theory of motivation.’ These theories are more concerned with the cognitive antecedents that go into motivation or effort and with the way they affect each other. Vroom proposed the theory of work motivation based on valence and expectancy. Some scholars tried to relate the nature of human beings with the work motivation. These propositions are not confined to work motivation; they offer some insight in understanding work motivation.

Various theories of motivation approach the problems of motivation from different perspectives, but they all emphasize similar set of relationship. These relationships are the individuals, his needs, his perception of how he will be able to satisfy his needs, and whether his need satisfaction is equitable. All these theories have their relevance only in particular context, and when the context changes, they may not work because they are not unified theories which can be applied in all situations. Therefore, contingency theory of motivation is required. However, contingency theory has not been fully developed as yet. Not let us go through various theories of motivation to find out what they propose and offer implications for motivating people in organizations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Content theories of motivation try to explain the factors within a person that energize, direct, and stop behaviour, that is, the specific factors that motivate people. For example, an attractive salary, good working conditions, and friendly co-worker are important to most people. (Hellriegel & Slocum 1995, p.174)

The most important well-known content theory of motivation is the hierarchy of human needs developed by psychologist Abraham Maslow in the 1940s. He put forward that people’s needs are arranged in an hierarchy in which basic needs generally have to be satisfied before higher needs come into play. The basic needs include physiological and safety needs, followed by social and affiliation needs. The higher needs include esteem needs and self-actualization to which were later added ‘curiosity’ and the need to understand. (Cole 1995, p.125)

Another well-known content theory of motivation is Clay Alderfer’s ERG theory of motivation, he provides a more flexible approach than Maslow’s. Alderfer’s ERG theory holds that the individual has three sets of basic needs: existence, relatedness and growth. The two theories differ in their view of how people may satisfy the different sets of needs. Maslow states that unfilled needs are motivators and that the next higher level need is not activated until the preceding lower level need is satisfied. In contrast, ERG theory suggests that, in addition to this fulfillment-progression process, a frustration-regression process is at work. That is,
if a person is continually frustrated in attempts to satisfy growth needs, relatedness needs will reemerge as
a significant motivating force. (Hellriegel & Slocum 1995, p.177)

In addition, McClelland has developed a content theory of motivation which is rooted in culture. The need
for achievement underlies the higher levels of Maslow’s hierarchy. That is achievement theory of motivation
which emphasized on the importance of achievement. The work of McClelland is based on the concept of
four main sets of needs and socially developed motives: the need for affiliation, achievement, power and
avoidance. People possess all four needs but the relative intensity of these motives varies among
individuals and different occupations. Although all four needs are important, McClelland’s research had
concentrated mainly on how managers can develop the need for achievement in subordinate staff. The
extent of achievement motivation varies among individuals. It is dependent upon cultural influences,
occupational experiences and the type of organization in which they work. (Mullins 2001, p.235)

STUDY OF THEORIES

Maslow’s "Hierarchy of Needs" Theory

This theory of motivation has received more attention from the managers than any other theory. Abraham
Maslow, an eminent US psychologist, has classified human needs in a logical convenient way that has
important implications for managers. In this theory he has pointed out and explained that how needs
influence human behaviour. Maslow viewed human motivation as a hierarchy of five needs ranging from
most basic physiological needs to the highest needs for self-actualization.

One of the most popularly referred to theories of motivation, is the “Hierarchy of needs” theory, developed
by psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), in 1943

Herzberg’s Motivation- Hygiene Theory

Need priority, to a great extent characterizes the types of behaviour. It will be either directed towards
achieving certain desirable positive goals, or conversely, towards avoiding other undesirable, negative
consequences. Thus, a question may arise as to what variables are perceived to be desirable goals to
achieve, and conversely, undesirable conditions to avoid. In this connection, a research study was
conducted by Frederick Herzberg. This study consisted of an intensive analysis of the experiences and
feelings of 200 engineers and accountants of 9 different companies in Pittsburgh area, U.S.A. During the
structured interview, they were asked to describe a few previous job experiences in which they felt
‘exceptionally good’ or ‘exceptionally bad’ about jobs. They were also asked to rate the degree to which
their feelings were influenced-for better or worse-by each experience which they des-

On analyzing the information from the interview, Herzberg concluded that there were two categories of
needs essentially independent of each other affecting behaviour in different ways. His findings are that
there are some job conditions which operate primarily to dissatisfy employees when the conditions are
absent, however, their presence does not motivate them in a strong way. Another set of job conditions
operate primarily to build strong motivation and high job satisfaction, but their absence rarely proves
strongly dissatisfying. The first set of job conditions has been referred to as maintenance or hygiene factors
and second set of job conditions as motivational factors.

McClelland Needs Theory of Motivation

David C. McClelland of Harvard University in his research studies have contributed to the understanding of
motivation, by identifying three types of basic motivating needs. These needs have been classified as:

(1) Need for Power (n/PWR)
(2) Need for Affiliation and, (n/AFA)
(3) Need for Achievement (n/ACH)

Extensive research has been done to validate, as to how-these three types of needs matter with people-so
important and essential, as these are for the efficient working of an organizational enterprise. The research
has devoted more particular attention to the need for achievement, because in every sector of
organizational working, we find groups of individuals, in their combined efforts, striving to achieve goals.

Alderfer’s ERG Theory

ERG theory put forward by Alderfer. The abbreviation ERG stands for Existence, Relatedness and Growth.
Existence, relatedness and growth also indicate three sets of needs which are the centre point of this theory.
Maslow has suggested five categories of needs arranged according to priority. According to ERG theory,
there are three hierarchies of needs, more than one need may be operative at the same time and if the
individual’s higher need is thwarted, then he thinks of increasing the lower level need. Also if a social need
remained unsatisfied then his desire for more money and better working conditions may increase. Non-satisfaction of higher level needs may lead the individual to increase lower level needs. Thwarting of needs is known as frustration. The ERG theory therefore contains frustration regression dimension. According to ERG theory the frustration at higher level needs can lead regression to lower level needs.

REFERENCES