

## DEVELOPING WORKPLACE MOTIVATION: ITS NATURE AND BENEFITS

Dr. Murad Abel

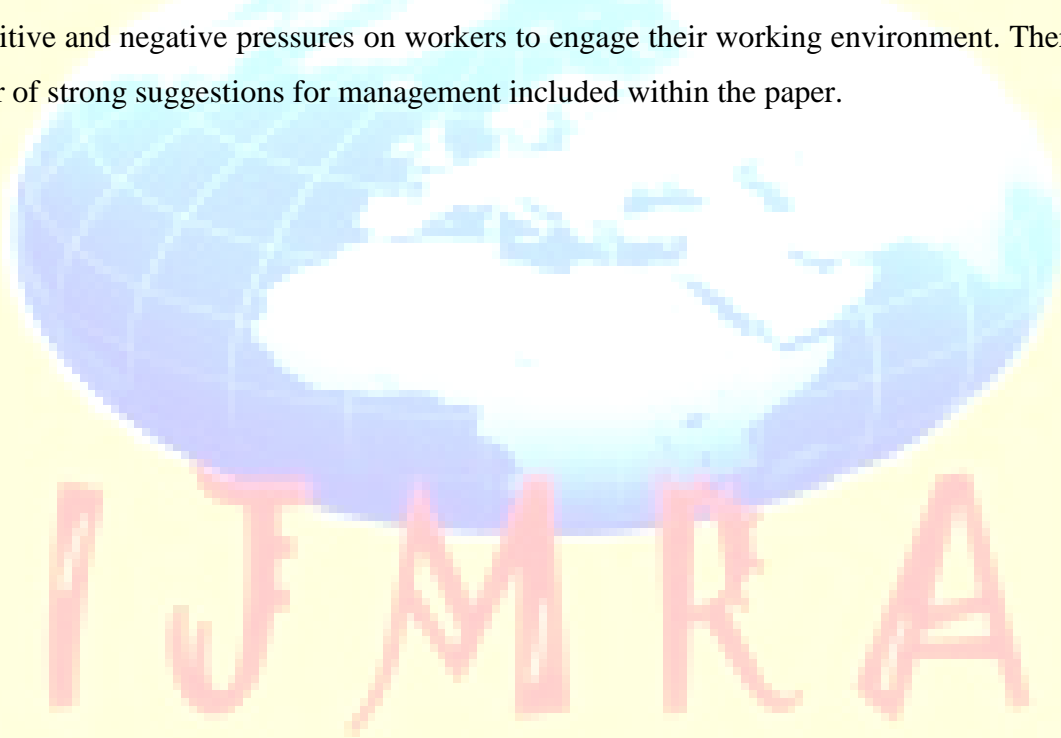
### Abstract

The paper discussed the leading theories of employee motivation and how they apply to the modern workplace. Furthermore, the topic of motivational type is included to discuss the concepts of personality and its manifested differences in employee approaches to needs attainment. A discussion on motivational methodologies on how to implement and create pathways for organizational improvement in productivity is covered in significant depth. The paper helps managers to see the vantage points of employees and what factors lead to their motivation in order to create stronger organizational approaches to human capital development. A summary of the findings and suggestions for management are provided.

**Key Words:** motivation, employee motivation, organizational development, motivational theories, management, workplace productivity, human resources, human capital

### Executive Summary

The paper discussed the nature of employee motivation and how it impacts the success of the workplace. Through understanding the leading motivational theories and the personality types that are associated with the theories managers will create a better grasp of employee needs. Furthermore, understanding how motivation is generated from the individual but is manifested within the motivational pathways of the organizations will help managers align their business structure for maximum productivity. Of particular interest is Herzberg's 2-Factor Motivational Theory which discussed the frustrations employees face within the workplace. Such frustration can either lead to higher levels of effort or regression into inactivity. Each employee is different and their vantage point can be adequately assessed through a job motivational field that explains the positive and negative pressures on workers to engage their working environment. There are a number of strong suggestions for management included within the paper.



Today's organizations must deal with new trends as rapid product changes, technology adjustments, global competition, deregulation, demographic changes, and economic shifts to a service economy move at a faster pace. Organizations can no longer limit themselves to job description criteria to evaluate employee worth as employees are constantly pressured to adjust to an ever changing environment (Raza& Nawaz, 2011). Focusing on older models will slow down the process of change and will ultimately cost organizations in terms of productivity and labor costs. Understanding leading theories on employee motivation will help organizations adjust their policies and procedures in order to create higher levels of achievement and ultimately more profits. Future competitiveness rests on encouraging employees to do more with less while staying engaged in their organizations.

#### The Character of Employee Motivation

Companies that have the ability to create pathways that encourage motivated employees to grasp onto lines of development is important for creating higher levels of overall development. Modern organizations should understand how to take employee drive and funnel it through appropriate organizational channels (Radovanovic & Savic, 2012). These channels are typically defined in the processes, procedures, and promotional networks of the organization. The stronger and more clear the pathways are defined the more motivational potentials of employees will be drawn to such approaches.

It is beneficial to first understand what motivation is before moving onto a discussion on how to motivate employees within the workplace. Motivation is the set of processes used in defining the goals of behavior. It is this set of processes that support, guide, and maintain the behavior of people, aimed at achieving a particular goal (Radovanovic & Savic, 2012). Thus, motivation is the activity of an employee defining a goal and putting forth energy to obtain it.

Motivation is derived from the word *motivate* which means to push, move, or influence the environment to achieve some objective (Kalimullah et al, 2010). Motivation can also be seen as the process by which behavior obtains a result, attempts to complete an objective and continues to push forward until that objective is completed. It still may further be viewed as an internal drive that pushes to fulfill some want (Bedeian, 1993).

In the workplace, motivation is the essential driving element of the entire business. Workers will come to work, put forth effort, and try to achieve certain goals. Such practical utility and persistence of such behavior requires motivation. Likewise, it is motivation that helps

employees follow workplace rules, solve practical problems, and further the organizations interests. From productivity to quality motivation is an essential element of employee efforts. Managers have the ability to foster motivation in employees in order to push them to more productive ends.

As the world market changes organizations should learn to change their approaches to employee management in order to align their organization efforts to environmental realities. The time when employers looked exclusively at job descriptions for measurement of employees' value is over and organizations should now look more closely to individual skills and abilities (Raza & Nawaz, 2011). In the past job based approaches stressed how employees should complete jobs through specific work activities, obligations and accountability (Lawyer, 1993). In today's world employees moved between the grey lines of job descriptions to fulfill every changing tasks.

In modern times a greater emphasis should be placed on the individual that focuses on skills, competencies and abilities (Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1992). This new perspective creates a dynamic shift from the function of the job to the enhancement of the individual in order to achieve organizational objectives. The more enhanced the individual's abilities the more they can benefit the organization through positive action while weathering environmental difficulties.

Employee motivation is one of the main functions of management that is supported the policies and procedures of an organization (Shadare et al, 2009). Managers have an ethical and moral responsibility to encourage employees to perform to their highest levels. The responsibilities can be codified into the processes, procedures, policies, compensation and other corporate approaches to employee management. By doing so they are fulfilling the fiduciary responsibilities of their positions and contributing to economic growth of both the organization and the nation.

The responsibility of corporate growth does not end with the manager. It also includes employee's responsibility to engage the organization. Through the need to accomplish some goal, or find a path to personal development, an employee will scan their work environment to put their skills, knowledge and abilities to the most appropriate efforts. Such excited employees are seeking ways to make their work more interesting and efficient and therefore organizations should foster this effort in order to make the company more successful (Kalimullah et al, 2010).

It this type of scanning and resulting problem solving that ultimately leads to efficiency of effort and higher pay and profits.

Through the capitalization of employee motivation, an organization can meet customer demands, lower costs, and adjust to overcome environmental challenges. Organizational effectiveness is the efficient process of turning inputs into outputs (Matthew et al, 2005). The more efficiently the organization is run through motivating processes the more effective is the process of converting the organizational factors into viable products or services. This is accomplished through the minds and bodies of workers that engage in the micro and macro decisions throughout the entire process.

Precisely what causes one person to be motivated and another to not be motivated is complex. Motivation has a number of factors and contributors that create the right environment for action. *“The complex of forces that initiate and keep somebody at work in a company, this is, the motivation starts and maintain activity in the intended direction”* (Vroom, 1964). Motivation starts within the individual and is maintained through the needs, desires, and benefits of that individual. However, the contextual factors create additional benefits or detractors from their decision to take a certain course of action.

An organization that has a high level of motivated employees is likely to accomplish more goals than those who do not. The organization is considered a socio-economic group that fosters employee motivation in order to earn more revenue as well as weather environmental challenges (Kvedaravicius, 2005). Furthermore, motivation exists within a cultural perspective that impacts its manifestation within the workplace (Savareike, 2011). It is this motivational energy that creates a level of dynamism within an organization which furthers organizational development.

Motivation is a complex process that creates a need and desire within individuals who seek to find paths within the organization to achieve satisfactory fulfillment of these needs and desires. Organizations that can create appropriate pathways for employees to obtain needs fulfillment are likely to maintain higher levels of motivation and reap the financial rewards of higher employee effort. The characteristics and dynamics of motivation exist within a culture perspective of the value of certain needs and can be encouraged through stronger organizational cultures. Moving from a perspective of job tasks to employee centered abilities helps foster a proper framework for understanding employee motivation. Through proper adjustments in the

environment and culture an employee is more likely to make the important connection between effort and reward.

#### Motivational Theories

It is often beneficial to review common motivational theories as they fit within the context of the workplace. Each theory has a particular approach that can lead to greater insight of how motivation works within individuals and the organization in general. Furthermore, each theory also has a different vantage point that rests in psychological development, workplace opportunities, goal orientation, or social expectations. Consider the following theories:

*Maslow Hierarchy of Needs:* Through this theory the needs of individual's progress through different stages based upon their development. People move through physiological needs, security and safety, social needs, self-esteem and self-actualization. As each person accomplishes some need the next one takes precedence.

*Frederick Herzberg's Two Factors Theory:* In this theory there are primarily two factors of satisfied and dissatisfied. Satisfaction often came through the context of work functions while dissatisfaction was often a result of the organizational dynamics. Motivation fosters the execution of work tasks while the organizational factors were seen as context to these factors.

*Theory X and Theory Y:* In such a theory the X employee has a low level of motivation and the Y is engaged in the work task. The X employee does not feel as though the environment should make particular demand while the Y employee feels that such demands are a normal part of work life. X employees must often be coerced while Y employees have a more natural tendency to engage in the work environment.

*The Expectancy Theory:* Developed by Vroom (1964) and Porter & Lawler (1968) as a way of understanding individual motivations within the workplace. According to the theory each employee has expectancies of their work environment. When the expectancies are in match with work performance and clear rewards from the environment the employee will create motivation.

*The Goal Setting Theory:* The theory helps explain that setting goals and having appropriate feedback creates higher levels of motivation (Latham and Locke, 1979). Organizations can partner with individuals to help those set goals that are acceptable to the company and continue to give them accurate performance feedback throughout employees' fulfillment of these processes.

*Equity Theory:* The equity theory indicates that motivation is a result of how people are treated when compared to others. In this theory people are more motivated when there is a perception of fairness and just treatment of everyone. Employees view the rewards of others and their distribution patterns to determine if they are being treated fairly for their efforts.

*The Group Culture Theory:* Even when dealing with individuals it is important to consider the factors that motivate an entire group that may have needs that are distinctly different from those of the individual. Under this theory the personality of a group and their needs should be considered as a motivational factor (Adair, 2006).

Within each of these theories there is an opportunity to see the overall categories of employees and how they approach their environments. Understanding how the employee behaves within the environment further highlights their particular interest and approaches. Managers can use these interests and approaches to make important decisions on the motivational vehicles they would like to offer an employee. The motivational type of the employee often impacts his or her vantage point and choices.

#### Motivational Types

Even though understanding the common theories is helpful to create an encompassing view of motivation as it does not address the behavioral methodologies employees use to put forth energy in their environment. The theories help us understand how motivation develops while the types categorize the general make up of the individuals that display motivational tendencies. It is these genres that help managers understand how certain individuals relate to their environment. There are four positive motivational types and one negative type that impacts employee behavior (Gerchirov, 2005 & 2008):

*Instrumental Type:* Workers who actively orientate toward earning money as a way of satisfying all of their needs.

*Professional Type:* Workers who seek self-realization through the context of employment. They desire to use abilities, active involvement and initiative, improve qualifications and engage in creativity.

*Patriotic Type:* Workers who seek collective engagement, team work, interaction with colleagues, work relations, and finding common causes.

*Take Charge Type:* Workers who desire maximum independence, reject control, and have purposeful orientation of action.

*Avoidance Type:* Workers who engage in negative behavior this is designed to reduce effort, focus on self gain, follows rigid traditions and avoids responsibility.

Each of these motivational types impacts the methods employees use to navigate their environment. For example, some employees may seek to obtain financial resources as a main motivational schema while another seeks to gain new skills and abilities. Understanding the motivational type of each employee can help to foster more motivational approaches and efforts in engagement. Managers should seek to determine the appropriate motivational theory and motivational type in order to align their approaches to the needs of their employees.

#### Herzberg's 2-Factor Motivational Theory

One of the more commonly used and practical theories is Herzberg's 2-Factor Motivational Theory which proposes that employee motivation is a result of internal and external incentives. Research in Lithuania furthers the concepts by finding that the three motivating factors for employee's efforts lay in personal achievement, the type of work and personal development (Balvociute & Bakanauskien, 2011). The study helps highlight how the internal need to achieve and develop leads to the external motivational behaviors that engage the work environment. The combination of the two factors can further lead to higher wages and income.

There is also another way to apply these two concepts. According to the EFQM-Model, measurements of motivation encompass enablers and results. Specific enablers include leadership, people, policy & strategy, partnership & resources, and processes while the results are often exhibited in people, customer, society and other key performance metrics (Ehrlich, 2006). In other words, the motivating pathways lead to specific performance outcomes that are reinforced through reward. It is the combination of these employee efforts that increases the organizations financial success.

Motivation is difficult to maintain unless there is some satisfaction level obtained by employees. According to Bruggmann (1974) satisfaction can be seen in three different processes that include expectations, level of aspiration, and problem solving. Employees use these three different processes when evaluating whether or not they are going to exert effort on some objective. If they cannot find a solution to their expectations or aspirations they may not engage in motivated behaviors.

Motivational potentials are those organizational pathways that encourage employees to latch to a line of development. Such motivational potentials often reside in the conditions of



defined areas of responsibility, definitions of optimal work results, positive work tasks, results of sub-dominant goals, transparent incentive systems, and opportunities of choice of rewards (Heckhausen & Rheinberg, 1980). Before employees are motivated to fulfill certain needs they will want the right environment with appropriate potentials for success.

#### Job Motivational Field

It can be beneficial to see job motivation as a field where intrinsic and extrinsic forces influence a person to act in a particular scope or direction (Savareikiene, 2012). It is also possible to predict these behaviors based upon these pressures. For example, an employee who is highly motivated to achieve some objective and perceives a rewarding path will likely do so if the right factors are present. The job motivational field can be expanded through job enrichment tactics.

Through expanding employees desires to learn new skills and achieve it is often beneficial to engage in job enrichment. Job enrichment is a qualitative change to employment that increases autonomy, accurate feedback, job significance, and influence on their work environments (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Job enrichment encourages workers to learn, develop, and innovate solutions which further morale and satisfaction (Hackman & Lawler, 1971). As the employee learns higher levels of work mastery in a variety of arenas they become more capable in their abilities, more knowledgeable of their environment, and take greater ownership of their work. It is this knowledge that they alone are responsible for their work and have ownership of their results that leads to greater motivation (Orpen, 1979).

A survey of 534 respondents indicated that job enrichment was associated with job motivation, job satisfaction and mildly with organizational commitment (Raza & Nawaz, 2011). The study further helps cement the ideas that motivation, satisfaction and commitment are associated with mastery over ones work, autonomy, and greater knowledge of the work environment. The path to higher levels of motivation rests, in part, in the development of workers through appropriate training and development which leads to general enrichment of their capabilities.

#### Components of Motivation

The Legitimacy Model views organizational effectiveness as “*component preferences for performance and natural limitations on performance from an external environmental perspective*” (Zammuto, 1982). In other words, while reviewing an organization it is possible to

determine its effectiveness by understanding employees' preferences for performance and the limitations these employees have in utilizing these pathways. If road blocks are removed employees will put their effort toward those designed pathways which have the highest chance of success.

Leadership is an essential component of motivation. Through employee trust of management they will believe that the leadership function of the organization will fulfill their explicit and implicit promises (Baldoni.J, 2005). Thus, leadership and trust in management is necessary if employees are to make that decision to put forward effort into the organizational pathways. The leadership function and the labor function raise each other to higher levels of motivation and morality in a synergistic manner that furthers market interests (Rukhmani.K, 2010).

The essential components of employee motivation rely in trust, rewards, decision making, empowerment, information and group expectations (Baldoni.J, 2005; Yazdani,B.O. et al, 2011; Hassan et al, 2011; Adeyinka et al, 2007; Brewer et al, 2000). When these components work in tandem an environment can be more aligned to the needs of the employees and thus produce more meaningful results for the organization. Investors should ensure their management teams are working to continually align their organizations to foster these motivational components to meet environmental needs.

#### Summary Suggestions for Management

From the literature, managers can learn a number of important concepts that benefit employees as well as the manager. Through the development of the employee, the organization can realize higher levels profit return while reduce overall labor costs. Furthermore, offering pathways for development will give employees more opportunities to be motivated. Motivation, self-interest, and self-development is first generated in the individual and then manifested within the organization. Such development strengthens the overall future prospects of both the organization and the individual in order to ensure there is greater ability to adjust to market changes. A new way of looking at the employee and their potential within the organization can create a better vantage point by changing from a perspective of the job function to the capabilities of the employee.

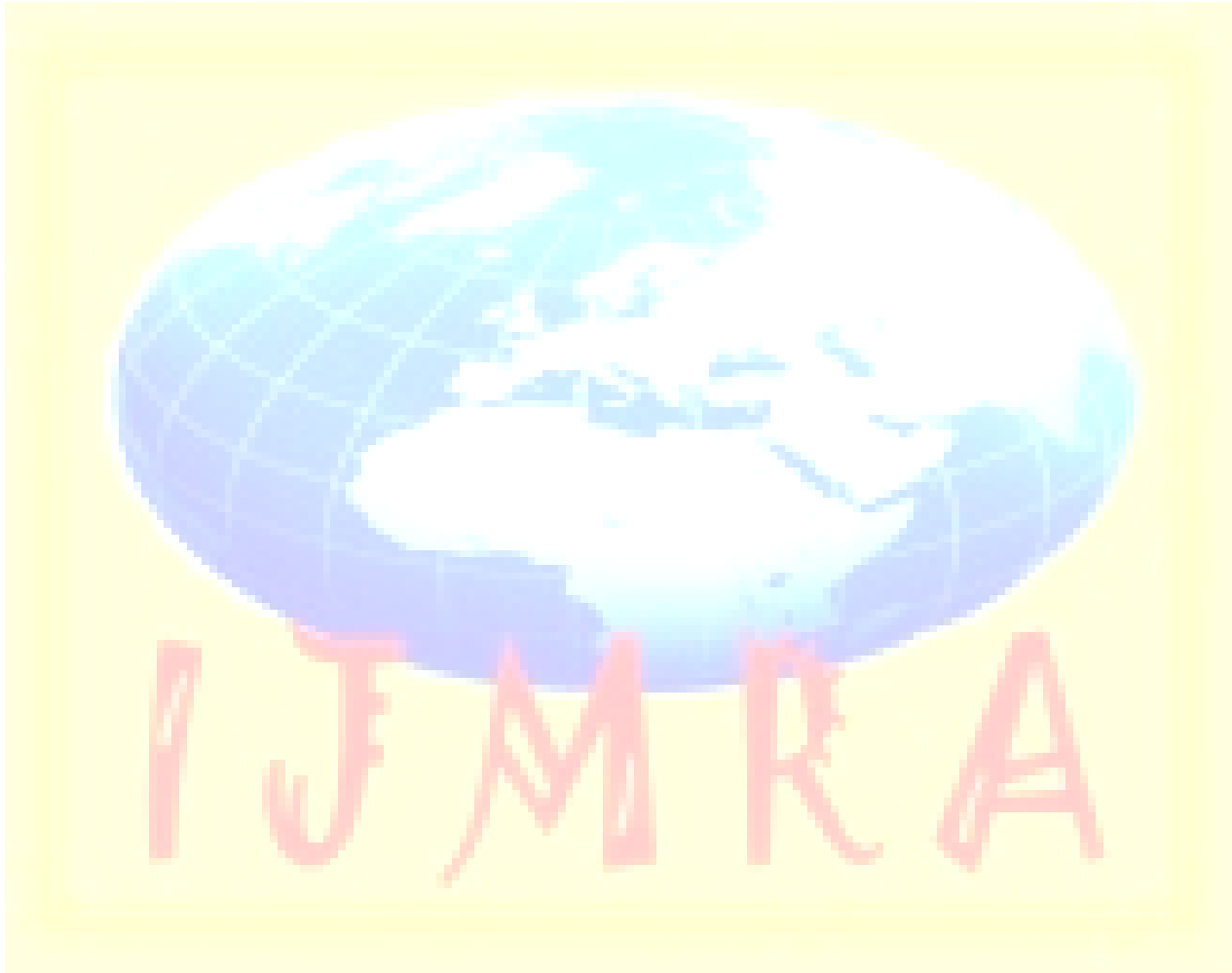
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**Factors:**

Goal Setting, Performance Feedback, Perception of Fairness, compensation factor, leadership factor, encouragement factor, trust factor, respect factor, decision-making factor, management quality, positive relationships, recognition factor, growth opportunities, organizational loyalty, need identification, need fulfillment, job importance, task relevance, working conditions, training opportunities, communication networks, task completion.



### Author Biography

Dr. Murad Abel is a full-time assistant professor at Ashford University in the College of Business and Professional Studies. He has approximately twenty years of business experience in human resources, training & development, business and real estate evaluations, and teaching. Currently he is working on research related to improving organizational innovation and efficiency in human capital.

