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READING THROUGH MOTIVATIONAL THEORIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews and discusses a number of theories of motivation and their relevance to organizational management and leadership formation. It does so through a comparative analysis of classical theories, which often focus on needs satisfaction, along with contemporary theories, which leans more towards the thought processes that guide motivation, in an effort to provide insight into contemporary organizational dynamics and leadership. A constant assumption of all motivational theories is that people have needs, however they differ in the degree to which people are motivated to satisfy those needs or to achieve certain ends.

KEYWORDS

motivational theories.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to create an insight into the applications and limitations of motivational theories. Through this essay encourage empirically comparative studies on the uses or non-usage of these theories by manager and organizational leaders

ASSUMPTIONS

Managers do not fully use these theories when seeking to motivate their employees either through a lack of knowledge or through the theories' inherent limitations. Each theory on its own is incomplete, which may also contribute to degree to which the theories are applied. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a foundation for needs and motivation theory, stating that a person's needs can be ranked by importance and that the most immediate and important needs must be met before the higher order needs can be achieved. This theory is incomplete in its rigidity and in readily identifiable examples of where the structure is not upheld. ERG theory succeeded Maslow and allowed for greater flexibility of structure and varietal order of needs between people, but still is insufficient. Contemporary theories, such as acquired needs theory, expectancy theory, and goal-setting theory, include the person as an active participant in deciding how they will be motivated and in deciding what their needs levels are. Expectancy theory states that people choose their course of action based on their perceptions or beliefs, but how desirable an outcome may be is subjective and can be variable. Goal-setting theory states that goals create motivation when they are accepted by the person and deemed to be difficult without being impossible. This is not universal because of its subjectivity, and like expectancy, an outcome may be worth the effort to achieve it for one person but not for another. Acquired needs separates people's need for affiliation or achievement and developed within a paradigm of vitally important personal needs. An argument could be made stating the relative importance of such needs is different between individuals and changes over time, making the theory less than universally applicable.

METHODOLOGY

In other the accomplish the purpose of this research, a combine use of qualitative and quantitative approach were utilized. This implied a rigorous review of secondary data from selected scholarly publications on the theories mentioned above. A rigorous observational analysis was applied to the contemporary theories focusing on their relevance and application in contemporary organizations. The theories are then classified and broken down, after which a comparative analysis is made between them as well as with the classical theory, to explain their strengths, limitations, and usefulness in today's workplace. The result then presented as rubric.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Books of H. Murray (1938) and D. C. McClelland are extremely important for an analysis of motivational theory taken as a whole, along with the authors which showed us some parallels between this ("needs" theory of motivation) and expectancy theory of Victor H. Vroom. These narrative auto-biographies and experimental books are widely used in this paper, however, the pioneering work of Henry Murray "Explorations in personality" (1938) reduces an importance of David C. McClelland; but, seeing a base of his approaches in psychology, we have an ability to understand his theses properly and in a quite realistic manner, combining with perspectives of a broader viewing and social as well as biological determinisms. In books of 1958 and 1961 years McClelland was tended to "check and add" some new dimensions to the viewing of Murray, for example, making a wider classification of "lower" and "higher" types of "needs" in motivation.

Similar to the previous case, there are different authors, who were used to concentrate their attention predominantly on the description of the expectancy theory through an analysis between the interconnections of its vital elements, which are effort (E), performance (P), and outcome (O): R.Oliver (1974) and S.E.Codrey (2005). When Oliver researched the issues of the expectancy within the core of the expectancy theory, Codrey focused his attention rather on the concepts of instrumentality and, as a result, "valence." All these authors underline an importance of only three vital elements: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence.

Oliver's "expectancy" is based upon the belief "that one's effort (E) will result in attainment of desired performance (P) goals." Accordingly, there were some factors determining the individual's expectancy perception towards the outcomes of the performance: self value, goal difficulty, and control. Afterwards, after the research dedicated to how the effort would inflict the performance, we must be concentrated on a cognitive strategy of the another person, Codrey, who believes that the performance and the outcome must be united or rather combined within his major concept, "instrumentality." According to Codrey, instrumentality as a changeable combination of the performance standards and the results will be increased when "individuals believe they have some kind of control over how, when, and why rewards are distributed." Similarly, from the managers' perspective, it must be important to persuade the employees that their efforts are relatively small to the significance of the rewards they (e.g. employees) achieved.

ERG theory is a development of Maslow's hierarchy of needs that categorizes needs as "existence needs, desires for physiological and material well-being; relatedness needs, desires for satisfying interpersonal relationships; and growth needs, desires for continued personal growth and development" (Schermerhorn, 2010, p. 112). Multiple categories can be active simultaneously. Arnolds and Boshoff (2002) studied the link of relatedness and growth needs to employee motivation and job performance. Since people have different relatedness and growth needs, there exist differences in the way that these needs affect an individual's job performance. Arnolds and Boshoff (2002) found that "top managers are primarily motivated by growth needs," and "frontline employees are primarily motivated by the satisfaction of relatedness needs from peers and existence needs and particularly monetary compensation" (Arnolds and Boshoff, 2002, p. 712).

They go on to state that self-esteem affects these needs and therefore weighs heavily on job performance. People with higher self-esteem “have higher self-perceived competence, self-image and success expectancy”, while people with lower self-esteem have lower job performance and suffer from less effective interpersonal relationships (Arnolds and Boshoff, 2002, p. 701). Enhancing self-esteem helps achieve relatedness needs and growth needs, which in turn affect performance. Their findings suggest that “growth needs can motivate frontline employees via self-esteem enhancement of such employees” (Arnolds and Boshoff, 2002, p. 712).

Lycette and Herniman (2008) emphasize the importance of human psychological aspects in addition to business aspects for goal-setting. Conveying a vision with an emotional message is inspirational and is more likely to produce higher performance than a lofty, aspirational goal that is deemed impossible. A goal of perfection in any setting is a high aspiration since it deviates from the norm where defects exist, but it is unlikely to motivate employees because of the unlikelihood of success. Instead, they insist goal metrics are most effective if there is a single owner accountable for the metric, if it is easy to understand and repeat, and if it applies to all levels of the organization (Lycette and Herniman, 2008, p. 26).

They determined several key aspects of goal setting: difficulty, timeframe, commitment, achievement and satisfaction, and feedback. The level of difficulty of an effective goal is both challenging and attainable. In sales, goals are often set at all levels of the department that are specific, measureable, attainable and challenging. Without a challenge, there is little incentive to try hard, but if a goal is perceived as unattainable, any effort would be considered wasted. The best use of timeframe combines short-term goals, where short-term effort can achieve them, and long-term goals, so that the succession of short-term achievements yields positive growth towards a distant achievement (Lycette and Herniman, 2008, p. 28).

Commitment is important and is more effective if goals are public. This reinforces accountability for the person and exerts a peer pressure to achieve the stated goals. Generally, when lofty goals are decided upon by an individual, the person is challenging themselves to achieve while trying to prove to others they are able to achieve. If goals are public, commitment is more likely because of the negative desire to fail publicly. This assumes that the person who is in charge of reaching the goal also was responsible for setting the goal. If a goal was imposed upon them, there is much less commitment to achieving it, and it is much easier to distance oneself from the goal if it is not achieved.

Achievement and satisfaction are individual traits, and research has shown that “striving for difficult goals leads individuals to experience higher levels of valence (anticipated satisfaction) and instrumentality (belief that performance will lead to results)” (Lycette and Herniman, 2008, p. 28). Such traits should be accounted for when developing goals and the rewards for achieving them because if achievement brings about desired satisfaction, there will be more motivation to try to achieve more (Lycette and Herniman, 2008, p. 28).

RUBRIC

	<i>Classical</i> Helzberg's Two-Factor Theory	<i>Classical</i> Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	<i>Classical</i> Theory X and Y
Description	States that there are two general factors that cause job satisfaction or dissatisfaction - job context as source of dissatisfaction and job content as source of satisfaction.	States that there is a hierarchy of needs where the bottom needs must be met before moving on to the higher order needs. It is strict and universal.	Both of these theories have the foundation that management's role is to assemble the factors of production including people, for the economic benefit of a company.
Strengths	Simplifies the sources of dissatisfaction and satisfaction, which gives the employer an understanding of what to do to decrease dissatisfaction and increase satisfaction; has practical implications for management thinking.	Easy to understand; straight-forward hierarchy of importance; makes sense in general. Motivation is the result of a series of needs and can be traced to what needs have been satisfied to that point.	Theory Y-There is hope that you can align personal goals with organizational goals by using employees own search for fulfillment as the motivator.
Limitations	Seems only verifiable if the same methods are used, not if different methods are used; if it cannot be replicated using different methods, it does not hold as much weight as other theories.	Needs do not follow such a strict hierarchy; does not translate to more social cultures; needs tend to vary in importance depending on stage in life; once one need is met, the next is not necessarily the most important.	Theory X-assumptions that people will only work for money rather than security.
Paradigm	It works well within the paradigm of management working to find ways to improve employee attitudes. The two factors have continued to be relevant in subsequent thinking, but have been drastically expanded upon.	Functions within a general paradigm. Clearly someone needs to be able to eat before worrying about other things. It works within the US's individualistic culture.	Theory X approaches can range from hard approach to soft approach. Theory Y approach is that high-level needs of esteem will always be a factor because needs are never completely satisfied.
Managerial Application	Managers have to make the work environment challenging for their employees. Manager also wants the employees to work to their full potential.	Managers have to figure out what level of need each employee is on. Managers have to provide certain things to the employees for them to move from level to another. Managers have to provide things that range from cigarettes breaks to retirement benefits.	Managers must have a management style that is between a soft and hard approach. They have to balance a style that will range from threat and coercions to giving increasing rewards to employees.
	<i>Contemporary</i> Acquired Needs Theory	<i>Contemporary</i> Expectancy Theory	<i>Contemporary</i> ERG Theory
Description	Describes achievement, authority and affiliation; to achieve higher goals (for the greater good). Goal seekers seek neither recognition nor approval from others -only agreement and compliance.	The belief that you can complete an action; one's capabilities; It can be described as emphasizing individual perceptions of the environment and subsequent interactions arising as a consequence of personal expectations.	A person has existence needs, relatedness needs, and growth needs, but do not put them in a strict hierarchy and allows for multiple active needs and need changes in different directions.

Strengths	Achievers seek to excel and appreciate frequent recognition of how well they are doing. They will avoid low risk activities with no chance of gain and high risks with high chance of failure. Affiliation seekers look for harmonious relationships with other people, tending to conform and seeking approval rather than recognition.	1) The personal expenditure of effort will result in an acceptable level of performance. 2) The performance level achieved will result in a specific outcome for the person. 3) The outcome attained is personally valued	Is the “more regarded version of the need hierarchy; more focus on job-specific such fringe benefits, related needs from co-workers to managers and growth need satisfaction at work.” Not so rigid, allows for more range of observed behaviors.
Limitations	Power seekers want power either to control other people (for their own goals)	“People consciously choose particular courses of action, based upon perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs, as a consequence of their desires to enhance pleasure and avoid pain.”	Not enough evidence on the influence of motivational impact based on employees' job performance or the influence of pay.
Paradigm	Achievers seek to excel and appreciate frequent recognition of how well they are doing. They will avoid low risk activities that have no chance of gain. They also will avoid high risks where there is a significant chance of failure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Valence: The value of the perceived outcome (What's in it for me?) •Expectancy: The belief that I am able to complete the actions. (My capability?) 	The order of needs will be different for individuals. Managers will focus on the one need of the individual and will not be able to effectively motivate the individual.
Managerial Application	Achievement-Managers have to give them tasks that are challenging but it must have reachable goals and they have to provide them with a lot of feedback. Affiliation-Managers need to provide the employee with a cooperative environment. Power-Managers have to provide employees with the high need for power with the opportunity to manage others.	Managers have to deal with employees that are only concern about valence and not about teamwork. Managers have to let the employees know they are capability of accomplishing the task and they believe in them.	Managers have to realize that employees are trying to satisfy more than one need at the same time. They have to figure out what needs they are trying to satisfy so they can motivate them effectively.

	<i>Contemporary</i>	<i>Contemporary</i>
	Equity Theory	Goal-Setting Theory
Descr iption	Uses social comparison to explain how people react to feelings of fairness or unfairness regarding the outcomes of their efforts.	States that goal are strong motivators for people if they are specific, difficult but not too difficult, and are accepted.
Strengths	Managers will get to know their employees by recognizing the reward that motivates the individual employee. Managers would create a reward and recognition plan to increase good performance that is notice and share by employees.	Tested theory with over 400 studies done on it with it holding up; translates across cultures; extremely relevant in a work setting; shows a link between subconscious and conscious goals and activity.
Limitati ons	There are exception to equity such as demographic variable (sex, nationality, age and personality), individual difference and if the individual is reacting to inequitable treatments from others.	There is a limit to the correlation of difficulty to performance, and it is subjective to the person; it is hard to understand someone's own perception of the task.
Paradigm	Does not apply to all situations, only applies to situations with high certainty. Individuals also compare their outcome/input ratios to others.	Functions in a work setting extremely well. A key characteristic is the person's perception of the task's difficulty. “Difficult goals are more likely to lead to higher performance than are less difficult ones.”
Managerial Application	Managers have to create a healthy balance between the employees' input/output to promote a strong and productive relationship.	Managers have to find the right goal that would motivate the employees. They have to provide the employees would the appropriate feedback and the goal has to be realistic and challenging.

ANALYSIS

The classical theories listed above are generally content theories. Content theories attempt “to explain work behaviors based on pathways to need satisfaction and the influence of blocked needs” by focusing on the needs of the individual and “deficiencies we feel the compulsion to reduce or eliminate” (Schermerhorn, 2010, p. 110). These types of theories seek to explain how and why human needs change with time.

Motivation is the key factor that drives an individual to fulfill their desires and unsatisfied needs. Managers must find the key element that is important for each employee as individuals. Maslow's hierarchy of needs have five level of needs and people are motivated to fulfill the basic needs before moving on the next need. Maslow's theory is very linear, supposing one need being met before another one is active and that once a need is met, it has been dealt with. ERG expands on that by allowing multiple needs to be active at the same time and by allowing movement in both directions in terms of active needs. “It may help to explain why in some settings, for example, worker complaints focus mainly on wages, benefits, and working conditions—things relating to existence needs” (Schermerhorn, 2010, p. 112). It accounted for needs activation in a way that was left out of Maslow's theory. ERG theory represented a shift in paradigm from Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Frederick Herzberg's motivational two-factor theory is based on employee's attitude and motivation. The two factors from Herzberg's theory are hygiene and motivator. Hygiene is the job context that affects job dissatisfaction. The job context is the working environment such as the policies of the organization, employee's relationship with each other and their salaries. Motivator is the job content that affect job satisfaction; the job content is what the employee actually does. Job satisfaction is when the employee feels like they achieve something. They are being recognized for their accomplishment and they are also giving more responsibilities. In a sense, this can be compared to Equity theory because the theory posits that people desire fairness and are uncomfortable by unfairness, so they will work to eliminate discomfort from it. When these employees are comfortable they are satisfied and that is the motivation to continue to work.

Douglas McGregor theory X and Y is how management assembly certain factors to benefit the organization. Theory X uses hard approach or a soft approach. The hard approach is when a manager uses threats and coercions to get the employees to work. In a soft approach, the manager will tolerant any type of behavior just so they can have harmony at work. Unlike Theory X, Theory Y is when the manager used the motivational energy of their employees. Theory Y would provide the manager with more time to delegate and decentralize. Delegation and decentralization will give subordinates more responsibilities. This is the more sensible way of a management theory.

Process theories developed in an attempt to explain what content theories could not. They “focus on the thought or cognitive processes that take place within the minds of people and that influence their behavior” (Schermerhorn, 2010, p. 110). Process theories look at the individual as an active participant and “examine the thought processes that motivate individual behavior” (Schermerhorn, 2010, p. 110). They stop focusing on innate human needs and assume that the way to explain motivation is by probing the deeper reasons why someone thinks a goal or reward is worth reaching.

Goal-setting theory resulted from studies that demonstrated a link between goals and performance. Goal-setting, "the process of developing, negotiating, and formalizing the targets or objectives that a person is responsible for accomplishing" (Schermerhorn, 2010, p. 121), is summed up best by Locke and Latham as follows: "Purposeful activity is the essence of living action. If the purpose is neither clear nor challenging, very little gets accomplished" (Locke and Latham, quoted in Schermerhorn, 2010, p. 121). Challenging goals are more likely to be achieved than easy goals, but if they are too challenging or perceived to be impossible, there might as well not be a goal at all since it generally does not affect performance.

To begin with our consideration on the theories' most principal concepts, David C. McClelland, based on the pioneering work of Henry Murray "Explorations in personality," demonstrated that individuals in a society can be grouped into high achievers and low achievers based on their scores of what he called "N-Ach." (McClelland in Atkinson, 1958) Accordingly, a person interprets an ambiguous social situation "he is apt to expose his own personality as much as the phenomenon to which he is attending." Therefore, "needs" theory related to individual's motivation, which can be evaluated as "low" or "high." Financial rewards are not the only type of "needs," which determine the motivation. Factors could stop or accelerate the achievement of this various needs, being internal (Max Weber's "values") or external (social environment).

Then, focusing on the description of a core of the expectancy theory, we must primarily put an emphasis on its main concepts. According to Oliver (1974), expectancy theory proposes that persons will decide to act or behave in a certain way, because they are motivated to select a specific behavior over other behaviors due to what they expect to be the result of that selected behavior. In fact, according to that author, the motivation of the behavior selection is determined by the desirability of the outcome. At the same time, the core of the theory is the cognitive process of how an individual processes the different motivational elements before making the ultimate choice. Additionally, motivation is a product of the individual's expectancy "that a certain effort (E) will lead to the intended performance (P)," and the instrumentality of this performance to achieve a certain result (e.g. outcome, O), which elements construct the desirability of this result for the individual, known as "valence (V)" (Codrey, 2005).

Expectancy theory, created by Victor H. Vroom in 1964, naturally has its own strengths, as well as limitations, due to the certain paradigm shifts and circumstances, which determined its characteristics. Firstly, it puts a significant emphasis on the interconnections between the effort, performance, and valence, or the desirability for the results for the individual. On the contrary, these connections within this motivational theory work "if the employees believe the reward is beneficial to their immediate needs." (Montana and Charnov, 2008) While McClelland's theory was quite successful in reasoning individual's personal motivation ("need for achievement"), Vroom's theory is quite distant from the concept of leadership, insisting on social determinism of individual behavior instead of "general problem of motivation." However, advantages and disadvantages of the "acquired needs" theory of David C. McClelland can be treated in such way: he was not an author (the term "need for achievement" was firstly used by Henry Murray), only a popularizer against psychometrics in psychology, and "limits" of this theory could be easily understood when we will take into account "linguistic" and "social" paradigms nowadays, while McClelland's research was dedicated to reasoning of integrated individuality, its needs for achievement rather independent - by other contexts - goals.

Accordingly, expectancy theory and acquired needs theory are quite different, based on the polar concepts of "needs" and expectation in "motivation." Focusing on Henry Murray expectations in motivation field in 1930s, McClelland's theory of needs was produced in time when personal needs of individuals was being considered as vital, while further expectancy theory of Victor H. Vroom, 1964, was tended to implement needs, performance, effort, expectation, and rewards. In acquired needs theory we have seen the significance of institutional power in individuals' personal needs, but only in expectancy theory this personal trend to obtain better socialization (not even in terms of McClelland's "affiliation") corresponds with both "immediate needs" and "some kind of control over how, when, and why rewards are distributed," when instrumentality tends to increase.

DISCUSSION

The contemporary theories of motivation are more relevant today than the classical theories since they have greater flexibility and are more relevant in today's atmosphere. Equity theory is important for a manager because it important for someone to feel recognition for their contributions. A manager may not think that giving extra benefit for someone's effort is bad, but the resentment others will feel will outweigh any benefits for the few. We feel that this theory is applicable for the average or below average employee. They need to know the exact amount of effort needed to get a stable, suitable reward. For the above average employee or over-achieving employee, they are much less interested in everyone else than themselves and will compare themselves internally rather than to others.

The ERG theory is a useful theory when understanding the common needs of all people, and it recognizes that the order of importance of these needs varies for individuals. In terms of understanding human motivation, this theory's assumption of flexibility precludes its use across a wide demographic without a solid understanding of each person's order of importance. The literature review showed that people at different levels of an organization often are motivated by different things, so when one group tries to motivate another, they are often coming from a different perspective than their target audience. It is useful in theory, but the practice of it is left up to individual interpretation.

Goal-setting theory is much more relevant in today's work setting. It gives managers a much better understanding of how to motivate employees. The theory guides managers on the different aspects of motivating goals and also provides a framework to give employees to set goals for themselves. It builds off of the growth needs of ERG theory and the self-actualization of the Maslow's theory by saying that goals are the clear way to get people to strive for achievement. For a manager trying to motivate a workforce towards a specific end, this theory is extremely helpful. It is also useful for allowing employees to motivate themselves by rewarding them for creating and reaching goals within the context of the organization. If personal and company goals can be aligned, then the manager has used this theory to its fullest.

In acquired needs theory, people with a high need for achievement seek to excel and thus tend to avoid both low-risk and high-risk situations. Then, those with a high need for affiliation need harmonious relationships with other people and need to feel accepted by other people. Furthermore, a person's need for power can be one of two types, personal and institutional. Accordingly, those who need personal power want to direct others, and this need is often perceived as undesirable. Persons who need institutional power (known as social power) want to organize the efforts of others to further the goals of the organization. On the contrary, in expectancy theory expectancy is the belief that one's effort will result in attainment of desired performance goals. Similarly, instrumentality is the belief that a person will receive a reward if the performance expectation is met in the workplace.

While McClelland theory had stronger impact on personal truth in psychology about our needs (when performing within the organization, for example), Vroom's expectancy theory is related mostly to Strategic Human Resource Management, correlating mainly with how to imply better productivity due to individuals' expectance on being rewarded in the performance process.

CONCLUSION

Motivating people is still a challenge for the simple reason that everyone is different. The reason that different theories exist to explain motivation is that no single theory is able to fully describe human behavior. With so many possible explanations for how a person can be motivated, managers would have to be experts in nearly all theories in order to apply them correctly for each employee. Different organizations may use certain aspects of motivation in specific areas while incorrectly neglecting other methods of motivation elsewhere.

The classical theories of motivation sought to explain human needs in general terms. They function with a general paradigm where people are lumped together and are relatively homogenous in their needs. The hierarchy of needs rigidly defined the needs all people, but it failed to account for people who did not fit into this rigid structure. The two-factor theory said what generally causes job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, but job satisfaction is not a sound indicator of motivation. Theory X and Y said people were either motivated by intrinsic factors or solely by money and advocated a combination of hard and soft approaches. Individuals have different reactions to these approaches, so they cannot be applied across a wide demographic.

Contemporary theories give people a more active role in their motivation by giving greater emphasis on the individual's thought process. As a result, the theories make separate assumptions about individuals that are applicable in certain paradigms while less applicable in others. ERG theory is an upgrade on the hierarchy of needs that is less rigid, allows for individuals to order their hierarchy differently, and to have multiple needs active simultaneously. Equity theory

applies during times of high certainty by degrades when times become less certain. Goal-setting theory works when the proper balance of difficulty, clarity and inspiration for each person is met. If any of these is not at the right level, an individual may not be properly motivated.

In the end, all of the theories explain one or multiple aspects of motivation, but each one comes with a caveat. They do not always work, but if utilized correctly in the right setting, they can be useful to managers and executives to get the most out of their workers. Organizational behavior is determined by which combination of theories is used within the organization and how the people within it respond to the incentives offered and motives activated.

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