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## THE ART OF LEADING THROUGH MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES IN ORGANISATIONS: REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

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### ABSTRACT

*In our daily pursuits of our missions or mandates, we are managers, leaders or followers. We use the people under our control /influence to achieve our goals. This paper discusses the content theories of motivation as they are so fundamental in influencing decisions of the employees to work harder or slower than others towards meeting various states of deprivation. Hunger and poor leadership styles necessarily affects staff turnover or retention depending on whether the job provides the employee with satisfaction or dissatisfaction of some basic needs. The frustration of poor leadership partly explains what and why some people quit their jobs due to unfulfilled personal expectations. The paper also re-iterates the importance of the content theories in understanding the behavior of poor workers. Migration, enculturation and the globalization of markets further complicate the behaviour and performance patterns of poor workers. Besides observation, the study relied on literature review (desk study). The insufficiency of the content theories to explain how workers arrive at their decisions to stay on or leave their jobs explains the origins of the process theories to guide managers/leaders in understanding the expectations of workers. Strategies such as job enrichment, job enlargement, job training and retraining, providing conducive working environment, periodic systems reviews and organizational redesigns are recommended as aids to managers/leaders. Continuous education is also advocated since knowledge continues to be power in the global arena.*

### KEYWORDS

Behaviour Modification, Globalization, Job Satisfaction, Leadership Development. Motivation.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This article is focused on leadership and development in Ghana by means of motivating employees.

The art of managing or leading people does not come easily to many human beings. It entails understanding, directing and inspiring those whom you have control over or can influence to modify their behavior positively to meet planned and anticipated goals in the workplace. Leaders are people who according to Peters and Waterman (1982) apply their intimate knowledge of the workplace, the structure, systems and psychological needs of people to help team mates to unleash a greater amount of effort towards meeting the tasks assigned to them. Leaders in this regard do the right things to influence the understanding, performance and aspirations of those in their charge. Leaders are different from managers only because the former concentrates on inspiring rather than controlling, asking what and how rather than how and when, innovate rather than initiate and press for change rather than maintain the status quo. Mason (1996) says about managers that their love of imitation is a limitation for growth.

To be an effective manager/leader, one must fill oneself up with knowledge of one's working environment, the employees and tasks before one. A person who is hollow in any job analysis of what needs to be done cannot head anybody. A blind man cannot lead other blind employees. This is where intimate knowledge allows for informed choices and enables a leader to resist being pushed from behind by his or her followers. Leboeuf (1985) points out that humans being intelligent animals are often quick to see the greatest management principle played out that "what gets rewarded gets done in every workplace.

The paper looks at the qualities of an effective manager/leader that allow a person with authority to bring out the best in their followers. Passion and style in leadership allow motivation of staff to yield the desired results. The paper seeks to discuss the content theories of motivation as methods which some leaders use very much in developing world to increase workplace productivity. This is not to say that the process theories are not important or relevant in seeking behavior change in developing countries. Understanding what motivates people leads to a better understanding of how to use people.

### 2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Besides observation, the study relied on literature review (desk study).

### 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND FINDINGS

#### 3.1 THE DEBATE MANAGERIAL/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A leader should also demonstrate considerable selflessness to command loyalty. By serving others, the followers perceive their leader as a caring and dependable father-figure they can trust. Intimate knowledge of tasks or industry standards allows leaders to create wonderful visions and passions which inspire their subordinates. What a leader really does is to create an environment where the inner energies of those influenced as supervisors, peers or subordinates are aroused, resulting in greater productivity or work output.

Either as managers, leaders or followers, one needs adequate knowledge to direct other confidently or to make decisions for subordinates to follow. Most followers also need some education on organizational politics, whom to obey and whom not to obey, whom to align with and whom to avoid as part of the process of career survival or learning the ropes. Education helps both the leaders and followers to resist or succumb to others with skills to grow at desirable levels of intelligence. This is why continuous learning is important to survive, grow and prosper in every economic, political or social engagement within an unpredictable human environment. Managers and leaders differ only in the focus and styles of pursuing their goals. The effective leader, to Carr (1995) and Adair (1983), seeks to move people from co-operation to consensus and finally to high commitment and performance.

Donnelly, Gibson & Vancevich (1992:384) point out that there are managers and there are leaders. Few are both. Some leaders may not even be near the managerial rungs but nevertheless, wield considerable power. Clearly, the top dogs in every organisation are not only leaders but also managers while the underdogs may just be gang supervisors.

#### 3.2 LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS

An effective leader to Blake (1981) must maintain a delicate balance between tolerating wayward behaviours and sanctioning deviant behaviours to maintain discipline and productivity among employees under his charge. The Ancient Greeks believed that virtuous men are almost always in short supply; hence leaders should manage their subordinates carefully to reward good behaviours and sanction unacceptable behaviours. Indeed, tolerating bad behaviours is like nurturing serpents and beasts and turning around later to complain about their natural detestable appetites when they are fully grown and become nuisances to society. The impoverished manager with low concern for performance and low concern for people neither helps himself/herself, the employer nor the business entity.

For a leader to motivate his bosses or subordinates, he or she must know which subordinates and leaders matter in the organization. The leader must know the needs and talents of people indispensable in building good teams and stick to this since power and alliances are important in building effective teams. The manager/leader must know his socio-metric stars whose job security is important to most people because of their popularity in the life of that organization. The leader must similarly know the intelligent staff whose ideas sell like hot cakes in the organization. Good old Thomas Hobbes (1929) observed that "friends are good because they come to our defense when we are in difficulty, riches are good because they buy the allies we need for our security; intelligence is good

because it alerts us to danger “An effective leader should be able to fix a perfect match between the tasks on hand, the talents of the people on hand and the style that enables the subordinates to achieve the tasks with elevated egos.

Dei-tumi (2007:38) captures this matter vividly when he observed that: “There is the noble art of getting things done. There is also the art of getting things undone. The wisdom of life is leaving out the essentials.” Success in any endeavour is about choices and getting one’s priorities, planning horizons and competitive competences right.

**3.3 THE CONTENT THEORIES OF MOTIVATION**

I now want to locate the discussion of motivation of workers by leaders within the context of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, Alderfer’s ERG Theory and McClelland’s Learned Needs Theory. They are chosen merely because they seek to explain what can cause behaviour modification and energize workers towards higher productivity in areas people on the fringes of.

**3.3.1 THE APPLICATION OF MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS THEORY**

Maslow (1954 &1970) postulate that the desire to work is influenced primarily by the physiological needs of man. He believes that as the need for food, shelter, water, air and safety are basic, people’s needs rise to affection, dignity and finally to the desire to attain the best for oneself. To Maslow (1954), “Man lives by Bread alone when there is no bread.” The leader/manager must be able to tell the level at which his workers are placed in the hierarchy of needs and seek to meet those unmet needs for them to be motivated.

The import of the hierarchy of needs theory is that a satisfied need can no longer motivate a person. When one has food, shelter and security, one looks up to higher needs, hence, monetary payment and other prerequisites meant to guarantee these physiological needs will no longer motivate the worker to perform more. By Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, management must know the needs of workers and match the institutional rewards against such needs at all times.

Another import of the hierarchy of theory is that when a person is rich, it means he has money to meet his physiological needs; hence paying a rich worker more money will not necessarily motivate such a person. It also means that a manager who knows his workers well makes a better manager by looking for a better fit between their needs and rewards. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory does not, however, explain why people from rich families who inherit large fortunes still desire to work since fortune has provided adequately for them. It does, however, show that employees work based on certain personal goals. These goals may compete with the corporate goals to evolve a culture that is peculiar to that organization.


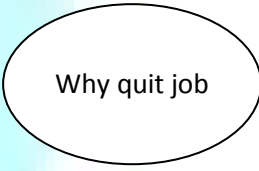
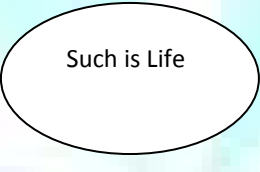

**3.3.2 HERZBERG TWO-FACTOR THEORY**

Herzberg (1966; 1970) conceived the idea of behavior modification as arising also from knowing what really motivates people differently from the hygiene factors. To Herzberg, the hygiene factors are those extrinsic rewards .which when present does not create satisfaction, but when absent, create increased dissatisfaction. These maintenance or hygiene-factors were listed as salary, company policies, supervision, condition of service, interpersonal relationships. Salary does not necessarily motivate as staff often tends to impulse buying too.

To Herzberg’s, the things that motivated people are opportunities for career development, work assignments itself, responsibility, or giving recognition for outstanding performance. The Two-Factor theory postulates that in work places, the expectation of employees move along a continuum of satisfaction to no satisfaction. By this theory, the opposite of satisfaction is no satisfaction and necessarily dissatisfaction. Workers also find themselves along a continuum of no dissatisfaction to dissatisfaction.

The Two-Factor Theory of Herzberg better explains why people may not be satisfied at the workplace but resign or quit the organization. It also explains why some employees may be satisfied but nevertheless quit their jobs. Figure 1 shows the dynamics of forces between being satisfied and being dissatisfied and other matrix states.

**FIGURE 1: THE SATISFACTION/ DISSATISFACTION CONTINUUM**

Feeling	Satisfaction	No Satisfaction
No Dissatisfaction		
Dissatisfaction		

Source: Herzberg (1966: 1970)

According to Herzberg, because there is a continuum between satisfaction and no satisfaction and no dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction, the interplay of the motivating and maintenance factors explain worker retention and turnover. The pay may be bad, but social relations may be so good that people looking for lasting friends or partners to marry may still hang on to certain jobs.

Similarly, turnover may be high in an organization that is well structured, has opportunity for talented workers and recognizes good output and behaviour but these may not be the reasons its employees are looking for in the job. A person might have joined the organization in the hope of high salary to put bread on the table, save adequate and retire in comfort. It is not uncommon to see some people paid so low and yet they hang on and paid so high and yet they quit. When managers are able to obtain a fit between the physiological, social, physiological and other needs and expectations of their workers, the workplace becomes a dreamland and staff turnover will be low.

By the application of Herzberg’s two factor theory, the dreamland workplace is where there is satisfaction and no dissatisfaction as well. This is rare as in real life, it may not be possible to meet the psychological, social and economic needs of all workers from varied backgrounds in one organization. Similarly, if there is no satisfaction and also dissatisfaction, then staff turnover will tend to be very high in that organization. Most employees expect a real life situation where there is some amount of satisfaction and also some amount of dissatisfaction. The motivating leader should be able to increase satisfaction and reduce dissatisfaction.

**3.3.3 THE APPLICATION OF ALDERFER’S ERG THEORY**

Alderfer (1972) propounded another content theory called the Existence, Relatedness and Growth Theory ERG. Alderfer’s ERG Theory postulates that humans desire survival or existence first before all other things. This human craving for existence is similar to Maslow’s lower needs classification. After existence /survival is guaranteed, humans now tend to relate as social animals. This is also similar to Maslow’s needs for affection, belongingness and esteem in the hierarchy of needs theory. Alderfer concludes that the final stage is the desire to be oneself based on one’s estimated potential in life-the self-actualization needs of humans.

Alderfer’s content theory is important and different from Maslow’s in many respects. Since friendship affiliations and interactions are important in providingsatisfaction to employees, managers should be more careful in forming formal groups or teams in the workplace, managers should be more sensitive in doing this to provide a sense of security and belonging among employees to enjoy their jobs and not feel threatened. This calls for a delicate balance in sacrificing ethnic and racial prejudices in building productive work groups, to deal with observed negative behaviors in an organizational culture.



Secondly the desire to grow on a job is important for loyalty and commitment from employees. The manager/leader should develop academic and professional training programmes that will empower employees to meet this need in the workplaces. It is an observed fact that motivated employees tend to have a very high tolerance level for dissatisfaction and stay longer on jobs than unmotivated employees. The latter groups tend to have a high turnover than the former. Perceived hope for growth in an organization can be a motivator. The threat of deprivation or loss of an envisaged want may be motivational and a perception that the envisaged deprivation could be more easily obtained elsewhere may be an incentive to quit a job.

Thirdly because relationships are very important in this model, employees will not only look forward to improved conditions of service, but satisfying relationships in the workplace. If the personal objective of male employees in joining a predominantly female organization is to have and eventually marry one of the beautiful lasses, repeated failure or rejection of love proposals may cause them considerable embarrassment as to want to leave the organization, no matter the state of other attractions. The frustration-regression potential on the productive lives and potential for turnover should not be lost on managers in their study of employees. The contest between the personalizing goals of employees and the socializing goals of companies is far from over. Indeed, it is exacerbated by the rising tide of trade unionism and human rights activism by employees with the globalization of markets.

Similarly, Blake (1981) noted that concern for satisfaction of employees and the concern for results from them should lead managers/leaders to avoid impoverished management styles where concern for people and work are both low. A high demand for results and high employee welfare should lead to building efficient and effective teams. A delicate balance for people and tasks would guarantee a stable workplace.

Application of McClelland propounded the Learned Needs Theory of Motivation.

David McClelland propounded the learn needs theory of Motivation. This is also clarified as a content theory because it seeks to explain what really motivates employees for higher performance in the workplace. The theory propounds that human behaviors within most cultures show that high achievers are those who have great affinity for:

- Achievement
- Affiliation
- Power

McClelland observed that most people who become successful entrepreneurs pursue their felt needs and businesses to achieve their goals. Indeed persons who are not ambitious for dreamless in life do not become disappointed. A desire to be successful almost always goes with a desire to avoid failure in one's business. McClelland (1961) further observed that every great achiever has a high desire for affiliation with people. Such people expect to work with other people employ talented people and rain talented people to do their business for them; they recognize that to attain one's potential; one must work with people or through people to build an empire.

McClelland, motivated individuals are risk takers who enjoy challenges, seek personal responsibility and appreciate feedback on their performance of tasks, the desire for power is seen naturally as a desire to be recognized, commended and reward for high achievement to serve or perform better.

The learned Needs Theory implies that managers should endeavor to understand what employees will do or not do itself constrained by the culture of the organization and its surrounding environment. Some poor people may be unwilling to accept job offers such as conservancy labourers because of cultural mindsets that look with disdain on such jobs as degrading. The mindset will not change even if the name of that job is changed to sanitary Engineering Assistant; the job is the same.

Managers must also know that culture is dynamic and changes as a result of socialization, migration and social advancement. What is felt need in one's culture may not be a felt need in another culture. For instance, in some cultures, it is considered a disgrace for an adult not to have his own dwelling place. Such a cultural view may make opportunities for owning houses in organization located within that cultural area very motivational but not motivating to others in whose cultures working adults still live in large compound houses with uncles, aunties, wives, brothers and sisters.

The craving for power is particularly important in understanding people and their behaviors either in organizational or unionized activities, political party participation or contesting for traditional authority power which may have effect on the performance reliability on some employees in the workplace. When a person has money and many friends, he will next seek power.

### 3.4 THE WAY FORWARD FOR MANAGERS/LEADERS

Every manager needs a thorough understanding of the theories of motivation to achieve good results from his / her employees. In ThirdWorld countries, it is only fair to begin with the content theories because many employees in workplaces still come from poverty-stricken homes where basic needs are important in calculations as to whether to work harder, stay on or quit their jobs.

Realistically, money is seen by Herzberg as a hygiene factor extrinsic and dissatisfied because its inadequacy does not introduce dissatisfaction and its presence does not necessarily introduce satisfaction. Parkinson (1957) and Wilson (1992) observe through Parkinson's two laws that when more cash is paid to workers in the form of salaries, their wants and desires increase dramatically. The resulting expenditure rises to meet income levels and occasionally over expenditure may even lead to indebtedness and other frustrations carried over to the workplace. Indeed Peter (1972) believes that sometimes excess cash could lead some workers into day dreaming, malingering, absenteeism, alcoholism or womanizing. The temptation to relax and enjoy themselves may lead to the Parkinson's trite truth that "work expands to meet the time available for its completion.

#### 3.4.1 JOB ENRICHMENT

Meeting human needs is a welfare function or a demonstration of concern for people by management. The nature of the work and workplace environment is important to provide more satisfaction for employees. It is important therefore for managers with over simplified job designs to redesign them to enrich the jobs. The nature and depth of assignments should have meaning such that workers do not feel bored but appreciated and enjoy the work.

#### 3.4.2 JOB ENLARGEMENT

Because humans like to be recognized and appreciated for their contribution, employees love to read meaning in the jobs assigned them. A range of related jobs assigned to a person makes the person feel that he is a significant player in the provision of outputs or services wherever they find themselves.

#### 3.4.3 MATCHING COMPETENCIES TO TASK

Match making in order to provide challengers to employee and constantly searching for perfect fits between tasks and abilities is motivational leadership. Knowing the abilities of people prevents misassignments, job overloads and underutilizing of the abilities of path competencies of staff. Mason (1996:17) points out that in an era of globalization in the sale of products and services, managers need to be more innovative, take more risks than others and also dream more than others in the global marketplace.

#### 3.4.4 TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES

Training is the best method of remedying any observed performance deficiencies of employees. Managers need to develop a systematic method of diagnosing training needs among its employees. Remedying the performance deficiencies reduces the cost of internal failures – cost of replacing defective goods products before they go out. Effective training also reduces considerably any external failures the cost replacing defective goods that have been returned for replacement as substandard in breach performance specifications

#### 3.4.5 THE POWER OF KNOWING EMPLOYEE BY NAMES

Many employees feel honoured when a chief Executive officer meets them and addresses them by their names. They feel after wards that they must be playing significant roles in their organizations to get noticed even at the shop floor by the Chief Executive Officer. They begin to exercise extreme care not to be noticed for negative behaviors. They begin to hope that one day they would be appropriately rewarded for the reasons that led to their being recognized by their names by the Chief Executive Officer who does not directly, supervise them. Hope of goodwill is important in maintaining an employee's performance momentum. How true it was when Kerr (1987) said: "whether dealing in monkeys, rats or human beings, it is hardly controversial to state the most organisms seek information concerning what activities are rewarded and then seek to do (or at least pretend to do) these things, often to the virtual exclusion of the activities not rewarded."

**3.4.6 POSITIVE COMMUNICATION TO CUSTOMERS**

Whether one is selling physical products or intangible services, one has to appear nice and willing to reach out positively to prospective customers to increase markets shares and survive in a competitive market place. The manager/leader has to sharpen his spoken and written communication as well as body language before employees and clients. Carnegie (1981) was instinctive when he noted that an infectious "smile costs nothing but creates much. It enriches those who receive without impoverishing those who give. It happens in a flash, and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever." Communication well in organizations not only dispels mistrust but allows employees to understand the mission and vision and how to achieve the goals. Effective communication increases the arena through transparent goal clarification, blind spots, and forthrightness in interactions.

**4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

Understanding how the content theories work in developing countries and for that matter Ghana is surely important because several working people still live at the fringes of poverty. The motivational factors are important but the extrinsic/maintenance factors are also very important for political reasons and maintaining harmonious industrial climates. Managers/leaders must use these as guides to understanding human behaviour and blend concern for productivity with concern for people in the kind of situation McGregor proposed as Theory X and company growth and viability.

The basic needs of people make these theories relevant and the complex unpredictable environment of man as a rational animal makes understanding the process theories of motivation important. The content theories offer some useful lessons to managers/leaders. The different circumstances of workers necessitate an overlay of needs. Managers/leaders need reliable feedback systems to match tasks to competences. Feedback can be obtained not only at the workplace but from other social events like engagement, marriages, outdoorings and funerals.

There is also need for managers/leaders to respect the top dogs in companies because their knowledge, skills and power and also honour the underdogs because they are the "doers". Sociable bosses get to know their workers, in good times and at bad times. Some of the secrets of success may be discerned by consulting Chancellor & Richardson (2005) to draw from over one hundred success recipes for manager/leaders.

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