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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF e-GOVERNANCE PROJECT IN PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (PDS) OF GUJARAT <i>PARIKSHIT TIWARI & RAVI GOR</i>	1
2.	A SURVEY ON TRUSTBASED SECURE AODV IN MANET: A LITERATURE REVIEW <i>V.VALLINAYAGI</i>	5
3.	A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION AND AWARENESS OF THE PEOPLE ABOUT THE DIGITAL INDIA INITIATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA <i>DR. ASHA NAGENDRA, ANUKRITI PANDEY & VISHAKHA BABBAR</i>	8
4.	IMPACT OF ICT & OPENNESS ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN QUANTITATIVE SUBJECTS <i>SHILPA MUJUMDAR, DR. H. S. ACHARYA, DR. TEJASWINI APTE & VENKATESH IYENGAR</i>	11
5.	RISK ANALYSIS OF EXCESS AND OBSOLETE INVENTORY IN A COMPUTER COMPANY: A CASE STUDY <i>KUSHAL NAGENDRA & DR. ASHA NAGENDRA</i>	17
6.	A STUDY ON PURCHASE BEHAVIOR OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS E-RETAILING <i>DR. G. PRAKASH RAJ, DR. A. PAPPU RAJAN & DR. J. MICHAEL SAMMANASU</i>	20
7.	TRAINING FOR SKILL UP-GRADATION IN SELECTED IT ORGANIZATIONS: A SAMPLE SURVEY <i>S. S. K. SASTRY AKELLA & DR. K. VENKETESWARA RAO</i>	24
8.	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND INDIAN ECONOMY: A DISCUSSION <i>DR. BANDANA PATHAK</i>	30
9.	DIGITAL ACCESS SKILL IN THE WEB AMONG LIBRARY USERS OF PATRICIAN COLLEGE STUDENTS: A STUDY <i>G. MEENAMBIKA, S. MAIDHILI & DR. N. THILAGAVATHY</i>	35
10.	AN APPLICATIONS OF DATA WAREHOUSING <i>PADMANJALI.A.HAGARGI</i>	39
11.	A REVIEW OF E-BANKING SERVICES IN INDIAN BANKING INDUSTRY <i>DR. AVNEET KAUR</i>	44
12.	ASSESSMENT OF TEMPERAMENT, EMOTIONAL STABILITY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE AMONG DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN VELLORE DISTRICT <i>K. ELAMATHI</i>	48
13.	CONVERGENCE OF IFRS <i>SHAILAJA D.KELSHIKAR & DR. MANOJ D SHAH</i>	54
14.	FARMERS' ATTITUDE AND SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS TOWARDS DRIP IRRIGATION SYSTEM IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT <i>DR. P. MAHESWARI</i>	58
15.	WATERMARKING USING ARNOLD TRANSFORMATION AND PRIVATE KEY <i>HARJOT KAUR & GURINDER SINGH</i>	61
16.	BARRIERS OF USING AND PRACTICING ELECTRONIC SHOPPING (AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF VIEWS OF A SAMPLE OF CONSUMERS IN IRAQI KURDISTAN REGION ERBIL CITY) <i>ZANA MAJED SADQ, JAMIL ABDULKARIM ABDULLAH & SAID MOHAMMAD KARIM</i>	66
17.	RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS AND CREATIVITY AMONG FACULTY MEMBERS: A CASE STUDY OF SAMBALPUR UNIVERSITY <i>SWAGATIKA NANDA</i>	71
18.	RATIO ANALYSIS BETWEEN PRISM AND RAMCO CEMENT <i>INNA YADAV</i>	74
19.	DIGITAL MARKETING AND ITS EFFECTS ON CONSUMER DECISION MAKING PROCESS <i>MONIKA BANGARI</i>	81
20.	A STUDY ON EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION IN A SHIPPING COMPANY <i>P. ANBANANDAN</i>	84
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	87

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A STUDY ON EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION IN A SHIPPING COMPANY

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the motivational factors of employees at Shipping Company called as Port users. At first the discussions are about some relevant theories of motivation, and their influence. This is followed by why motivation is required for employees. There is a structured descriptive type questionnaire which maps employees' motivation on a nine-point scale based on motivational theory and research studies. The findings suggest that recognition, interesting work, and salary are motivational factors for productivity. The factors like promotion, supervision, working conditions, job security, are also other motivational factors that need to be considered.

KEYWORDS

factors, influence, motivation, port users

INTRODUCTION

In the earlier days, countries were ruled by despots and workers had neither any choice nor could they expect better wages or working conditions or better human relations. Employees were considered just a tool as the production of goods and services. This approach was changed after conducting series of research on employees referred to as the Hawthorne studies conducted by Elton Mayo from 1927 to 1932 (Dickson, 1973). According to Taylor (1911) motivation is "What you want men to do and then see that they do it in the best and cheapest way". People cannot be motivated to do something, if there is nothing in it for, one of the challenges facing researchers into motivation is that it cannot be seen. Kanfer (1990), states that what most people see is 'a multidimensional stream of behavior and products of those behaviour'.

DEFINITION OF MOTIVATION

Motivation is the complex force that keeps a person at work in an organization (Dubin, 1974). It is a way which urges, drives, aspires, strives, directs, controls or explains the behavior of human beings (McFarland, 1974). Motivation is an internal process (Baron, 1991). For this study, motivation is an inner force that drives individuals to accomplish personal and organizational goals.

IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATION

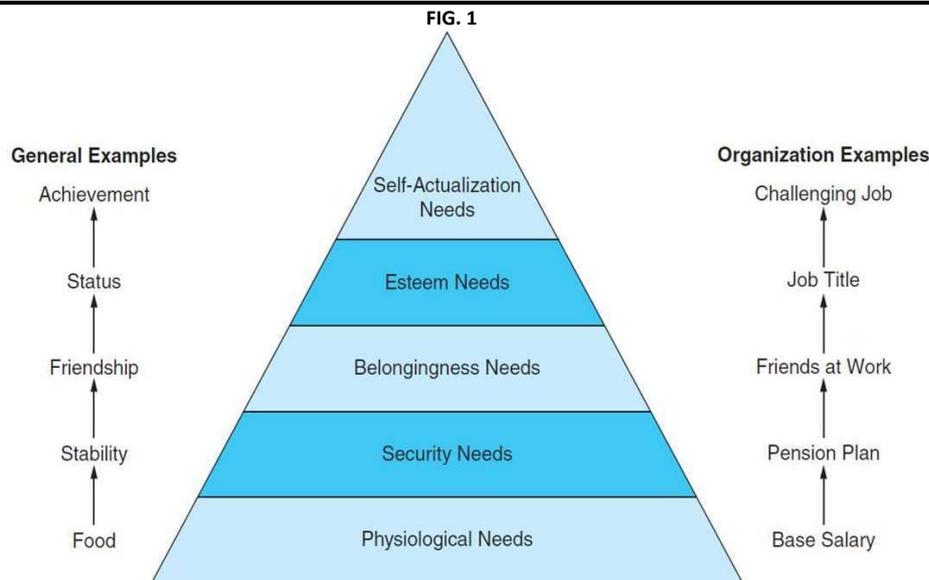
Motivated employees are more oriented towards their job and would be more focused. The performance of motivated employees is high, which results in to increased productivity and reduced cost of operations. Motivation leads to the stability of workforce that is very important from the point of view of reputation and goodwill of the organization. Motivated workforce will leads to greater understanding, acceptance, understanding of objectives and decision making between management and employees (Denton, 1991) If management neglect to educate and motivate their employees, they will become dissatisfied lose their interest in job believed by Darmon (1974).

SOME THEORIES RELATED TO MOTIVATION

Several important, epoch-making studies experiments and movements have been conducted during the last century to understand what motivation in, and how it can be ingrained in the employees. As a result, highly educative, eye-opening and useful theories and principles have been enunciated. From the very beginning, when human organizations were established, people tried to find out the answer of 'what motivates people in the organization most. The starting was made by Elton Mayo's Hawthorne studies on Human relationship. Taylor and his followers in the form of scientific management and more particularly 'differential piece rate system' were concerned about using financial incentives to motivate people in the organizational context. Mayo's study found that employees were not motivated solely by money but behaviour linked to their attitudes (Dickson, 1973) which emphasized security and working conditions at the job. 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. The earlier part of these approaches was based on the types of needs that people had and the way these needs could be satisfied so that people would be motivated. Four major approaches that have led to our understanding of motivation are as follows:

- a) Maslow gave the theory of need hierarchy;
- b) Herzberg proposed two-factor theory
- c) Vroom's expectancy theory
- d) Adam's equity theory.

According to Maslow, employees have five level of needs (Maslow, 1943) viz. Physiological, Safety, Social, Esteem, and Self-actualization. Maslow suggests that the various levels are interdependent and overlapping, each higher-level need emerging before the lower-level need has been completely satisfied. A research study was conducted by Herzberg (1959) and associates. The findings categorized motivation into two factors; motivators and hygiene factors. Motivator or intrinsic factors, such as achievement and recognition are produced by job satisfaction. Hygiene or extrinsic factors, such as pay and working conditions produce job dissatisfaction.



SOURCE: Adapted from Maslow, A.H. (1943), A theory of human motivation. *Psychology Review* 50, 370–396.

Vroom's theory was based on the belief that employee effort will lead to performance and performance will lead to rewards (Vroom, 1964). Rewards may be either positive or negative. Employees will be motivated to do things to achieve some goals to the extent that they are awarded. According to his theory, the first-level outcome of high performance thus acquires a positive valence by virtue of the expected relationship to the preferred second level outcome of promotion (Hunt and Hill, 1969).

Adams' theory states that employees strive for equity between themselves and other workers. Equity is achieved when the ratio of employee outcomes over inputs is equal to other employee outcomes over inputs (Adams, 1965). Carrell and others states that employees should sense that their contributions are returned in a fair and equitable manner (Carrell & Dittrich, 1978).

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study employed a descriptive (quantitative) survey method. The respondents of this study were employees of the Port Users. The sample size of this study was restricted to 75 employees. Sixty-four employees of the 75 employees participated in the survey and the participation rate was 85%. The study population was the Chennai Port Users (Clearing and Forwarding employees and Shipping company staff).

The Port users' work is to facilitate their customers to import and export their consignments from vessels. Port users approach their customers for consignments. Once they get the consignment then they start the procedures of filing the document to the Customs and Ports. Based on the documents filed by the port users, customs officials assess the consignment and raise the invoice for payment of customs duty. After these formalities are over, then they file the Import/Export application to Chennai Port Trust. According to the declaration in the import and export application and customs invoice (Bill of Entry copy), port officials advise port users to pay the port dues. Once they have paid the Customs duty and Port dues, they are allowed to enter the Port for clearing or forwarding the consignment to the consignee. Shipping companies file the vessel particulars in advance for vessel planning.

Based on the review of literature, a survey questionnaire was designed to collect the data for the study (Harpaz, 1990, Kovach, 1987). Data was collected through use of typed printout questionnaire which was personally handed over and some of the questionnaires were issued through respective departments who interact with the Port users frequently. Questionnaires were filled in by the respondents and returned either by port officials directly or department mailbox. The questionnaire looked very simple and the respondents were asked to rank the nine factors that motivated them in doing their work: The parameters were: 1-very highly influence ...9-least influence. Face and Content validity for the instrument was tested using professionals. The pilot study was conducted before going to the survey. Based on the opinion of the experts and professionals, some questions were omitted and some were re-arranged.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The motivational factors were ranked as follows: (a) Recognition, (b) Interesting work (c) Salary (d) Career growth/Promotion (e) Caring of employees (f) Job security (g) Working environment (h) Relationship, (i) Supervision.

A comparison of these results with Maslow's need-hierarchy theory provides some interesting insight into the employees' motivation. The top first and second motivational factors were recognition and interesting work. These connects to Maslow's self-actualizing factor. The next motivational factor was salary and this connects to Maslow's physiological factor. The fourth and fifth factors were caring employees and this related to Maslow's social factor and career growth/promotion was connected to Maslow's self-esteem factor. As per the results, the most influencing factors of Port users were self-actualization, physiological, social and self-esteem which need to be satisfied. The findings show that the motivational factors do not coincide with Maslow's theory. Hence, Maslow's conclusions that lower order motivational factors must be fulfilled before next level were not consistent as per this study.

The study also compares the highest ranked motivational factor that is, Recognition to Vroom's expectancy theory. For instance, assume that a Port user attended a berth meeting insisted their vessels were waiting for long time to board the pilot crew, hence we suffer higher charges and our organization managers may insist port officials within two hours to pilot boarded the vessel to save reasonable port dues. In the same way customs officials and port area managers speedy process their application and the delivery of the cargo is made within reasonable time, the reputation of the organization and the cargo volume increases.

Next highest ranked motivational factor was salary (wages), as per Adam's theory. If an employee at the organization feels that their salary is lowering with same type of other organization offered an inequity may exist and the employee will be de-motivated. Further, this cause all employees feel that there is lesser salary offered by company within the radius of same type of organizations in same type of work nature inequity may exist. Adams (1963) states people are motivated to maintain fair relationship between their performance and reward in comparison with other organizations

The last example compares the highly influenced third motivational factors to Herzberg's two factor theory. The highly influenced three factors are recognition, interesting work, and salary. The first two factors are motivator and the third one is hygiene factor. Herzberg et al (1960) stated that to the degree that motivators are present in a job, motivation will occur. The absence of motivators does not lead to dissatisfaction. Further, the degree at which hygiene is absent from job, dissatisfaction occurs. Paying employees lower wages (hygiene) than what they believe to be fair may lead to job dissatisfaction. On the contrary, employees will be motivated when their work is recognized and will not necessarily be motivated by higher pay.

So far the discussion was about the influencing level of motivation as compared to motivational theories, which is only one side of the coin. The other side of the coin is how these ranking factors compare with similar related research studies. A study of industrial employees, conducted by Kovach (1987) resulted in ranking

the motivational factors viz. interesting work, appreciation and feeling of being in on things among the top three ranks. Another study by Harpaz (1990), showed the top three factors were interesting work, good wages, and job security.

The above research studies by Kovach (1987) and Harpaz (1990) invariably employees top ranking factors such as interesting work as highly influenced motivational factor, whereas second highly influenced factor may have varied Kovach (1987) result appreciation but Harpaz (1990) result good wages. Similarly, the next influential factor as per Kovach (1987) feeling of being in on things but as per Harpaz (1990) is job security. This results of the study slightly matched with Kovach (1987) on interesting work and Harpaz (1990) salary factor. Indifferences in the research study findings shows motivation is an individual phenomenon, and the 'one-size fits all' approach to employees' motivation does not work. What is clear, however, is that employees rank recognition and interesting work as the most important motivational factors.

IMPLICATION FOR PORT USERS

The influencing level of motivational factors ranked by employees of the Port users provides useful information for the concerned organizational directors, managers and employees. The above discussed motivational factors as ingredients and the rank orders are just preparatory instructions. The strategy for motivating port users employees depends on which motivational theories are used and this depends upon the organizational setup. If Herzberg's theory is followed, management should focus on pay and job security (hygiene factors) and the next to be considered is recognition and interesting work (motivator factors). If Adams' equity theory is followed, management should begin by considering salary (wages and incentives) before focusing on recognition and interesting work.

People are very responsive to praise and encouragement, which is expressed not only in words but also in action so that they give their best effort to the organization (Dubnick, 2005). First task of a manager is to find out what motivates his/her employees and make a match between employee's desires and the offered reward (Greenberg/Baron, 2003).

This study suggested some motivational factors and rank orders, which are not permanent. In that sense, managers are urged to view other alternative factors. In that case, this study can serve as a "Cook Book" from which managers can choose their favorite flavors. Why do we need motivated employees? The answer is survival (Smith, 1994). It may also be considered, if organization may survive, motivated workforce is required. Motivated employees are more productive.

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