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THE INFLUENCE OF MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE PERFORMANCE

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Abstract:

This paper deals with the idea of *performance* being best predicted by the interaction of leaders' ability and *motivation*. There is no formula for *motivation*. In today's world, leaders are keen to understand how their leadership is affecting *motivation* and how can it improve the work *performance*. The complexity of *motivation* is given by the influence of perceptions and a number of factors. Not all people are *motivated* the same thing, they all have different stimuli depending on their interests and time in their life. A good leader should understand all the factors that could motivate a person and should realize that not all people can be motivated by the same thing in order *to achieve performance*.

So, this paper digs into the importance of *motivation*, which was discovered from the time immemorial by ancient strategists, and how they realized *that motivation influences* the people and their lives. First of all, the meaning of *motivation* and goal setting is emphasised. Then, the current approach on the *issue of motivation* and some existing causes of problems are identified. Next, a *performance* approach is discussed, together with *the main objectives of performance* evaluation. Finally, *the influence of motivation on the performance achievement* is described based on the leader – subordinates relationship. It is important for an army leader to be able to motivate subordinates to accomplish a physically challenging task or to perform a hazardous task that is dangerous and life threatening.

1. Introduction

Motivation is an internal condition of a person which pushes himself (herself) to think or to act in a specific way to achieve a goal. By influencing people's motivation, you can make them want to do what must be done. It is a practical action which we meet frequently during our lives.

Motivation is a psychic mechanism which converts the pressure generated by motives in behaviors, directed toward a goal.

People are not motivated by the same things and these motivations are subject to changes over time, everyone is wants to achieve performance. Motivations like feelings or achievement are considered intrinsic, rewards and achieving certain goals are considered extrinsic.

2. A bit of history

From ancient times, scientists and strategist were interested in human behavior. The greatest strategist Sun Tzu said (in the year 400 B.C.), that “*an important matter like*

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war, first of fifth mainstays (like: whether conditions, terrain, commander and doctrine) is the influence of moral” and he explained that this influence “is the harmony between military leaders and people, **the motive** to follow their guiders in life and death without fear for their lives” [2]. To accomplish that it is necessary that “those people must be treated with kindness, justness, equity. Giving trust the Army will have team spirit and everybody will be happy to follow their leaders” said another Chinese strategist Chang Yu.

Napoleon explained that “all the wars are actually wars between two motivations”.

3. Motivation in military organization

3.1. Definition of motivation

Motivation is a combination between desire and energy directed to achieve a goal. Forces such as beliefs, values, interests, fear, and worthy causes can motivate the people. We must keep an open viewpoint on human nature because there is no formula for motivation. The direction of each person is steered by a complex array of forces that cannot always be seen or studied.

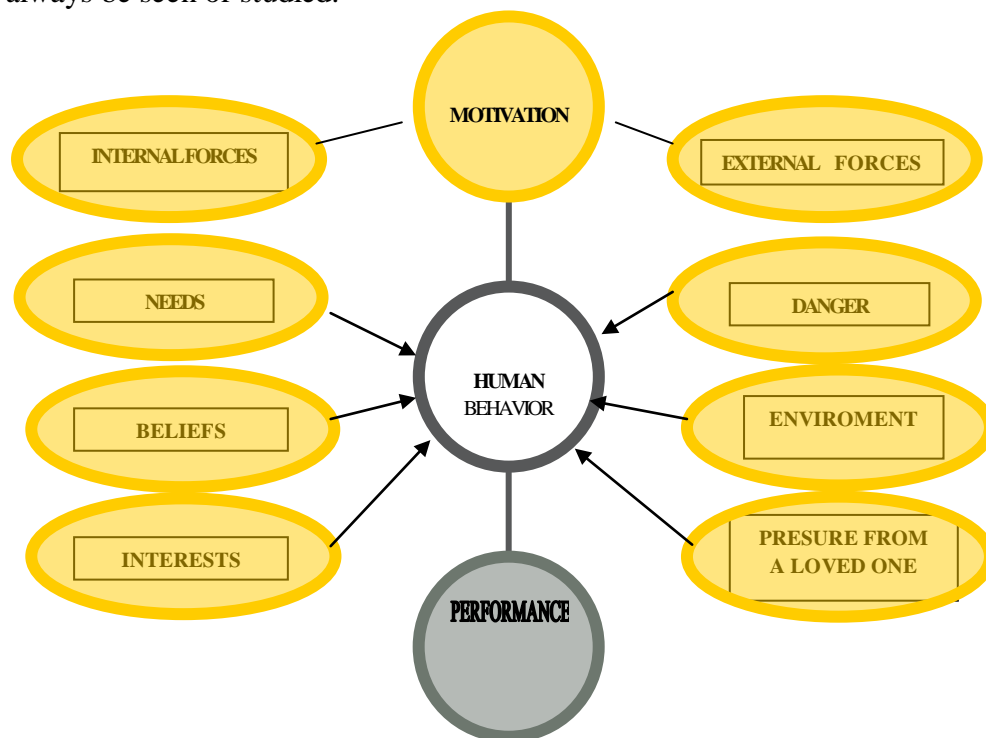


Fig.1. Forces that can motivate people

3.2. Definition of Goal Setting

Goal setting is a process where leaders and their subordinates jointly identify common objectives, define subordinates’ major areas of responsibility in terms of the results expected, obtain the subordinates’ personal commitment through mutual agreement, and use these objectives as guides for operating the unit and assessing the contribution of each of its members.

3.3. Motivation Issues

In a motivational issue, although people often know the right procedures and have all the resources available, they choose not to do the things the right way. This is caused

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not by the position people are in, it is because of the inherent problems of the person. That causes loose of focus from getting the desired results. Motivational problems could be family issues, personality problems and the lack of understanding. Some of these motivational problems affect the person's behavior or the other people or processes.

The leaders have to make sure they get the facts right otherwise they will be unable to correctly assess and overcome the problem. They will have to find out what the core of the problem is and must make a plan of action so there will be no break of the contract between the military organization and the subordinates.

The starting point in this kind of action is to observe the subordinate on how he is doing his tasks and projects. Also, the leader should be careful not to make the subordinate feel hunted so he should just observe and document the areas in which the latter is having issues and does not conform to the standards. The subordinate's history (previous leaders the subordinate might have worked with) is also an important factor to check. In this manner of approaching the problems it will provide a deeper perception of the individual and determine if it is a pattern or something new.

3.4. Causes of problems

3.4.1 Lack of communication regarding requirements or expectations

This issue cannot be blamed on the subordinate. Leaders can provide the means for subordinates to motivate themselves to the desired behavior by constant feedback. The feedback should be provided at all time and not only during a performance rating period, as this is a part of the leader's job.

3.4.2. The absence of motivation

The lacking of motivation of a subordinate can be caused by problems that include personal life, family etc. Subordinates should be helped to understand the consequences of their negative behavior.

3.4.3. Keep in focus

People need meaningful work; they need to know that it is important and necessary for the survival of their organization, so the manager needs to make sure that every subordinate gets these questions answered:

- What are the changes and new responsibilities of the job?
- Who will evaluate the performance and how?
- Is the learning of new skills required?
- Will the old responsibilities be authorized?
- How will the transition benefit careers?
- What are the new skills and training that are needed to be performed?
- Will this make any changes on the market in the future?

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4. Performance and performance evaluation

4.1. What is performance?

Performance is a good result obtained by a person or by an organization. Performance is the observable behavior, and it could be measured quantitative and qualitative. Performance assessments are measurement of a specific range of skills, knowledge, and attitudes in relation to certain objective standards. This evaluation must be based upon well a person has performed to set a standard.

Performance is considered to be a synonym with efficiency and is used to obtain specific results. On the other hand, bad performers are considered to be doing just busy work, in opposition to activities that are actually efficient.

Vince Lombardi – “if you don’t keep score, you’re only practicing”

4.2. Main objectives of performance evaluation

The objective of performance evaluation is to help subordinates improve their performance and weak competencies in order to grow as individuals so that the organization can meet its present and future goals. Sometimes organizations use this tool for protection against lawsuits, to justify different level of pay increases, or to provide “annual appreciation”. Many managers and leaders view performance evaluation as an additional burden required by Human Resources structures.

Oliver Cromwell – “who stops being better stops being good”

One of the most powerful tools a leader has at his disposition is the performance evaluation. There are three main objectives:

- Performance could be *measure fairly and objectivity* against job requirements. This ensures that efforts are rewarded and inefficiency is signaled for poor performance.
- *To increase performance by identifying specific development goals*. The assessment allows the subordinates plan for better performance on the job and to accomplish their mission.
- *To develop career goals* so that subordinates may keep pace with the requirements of a fast paced organization. Because the task becomes more demanding with new requirements, people want to perform effectively in their jobs. But, that does not mean they will be able to perform effectively tomorrow. They must be allowed to grow with the jobs and the organization.

4.3. The influence of motivation to achieve performance

The main leader – subordinate relationship issue is trust problem. Motivation of the subordinates for getting performance is based on trust. All get together organizations - as basis for long term performances – are not able to exist without trust. An axiomatic true of the organizations’ theory say that trust is acquired by trust, and distrust is giving rise to distrust. Sometimes, the distrust leaders are getting from the subordinated derives from the

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misapprehension of the human behavior, conscious or not, declared or not, in the sense that subordinates are not capable to be responsible or they are less creative and have less initiative to accomplish their missions. In order to achieve the goals, leaders have to supervise the members of their teams and put restraints on them, because they have the tendency to try to evade their job.

The theory and practice of leadership demonstrates that this point of view is totally wrong. People can work without pushing, they are able to create or to have initiative, and they have satisfactions on their accomplished work with the condition of being motivated.

As a leader we have the power to influence motivation. For that it is necessary to know how to guide our decision making process. First we have to ensure that our team is trained, encouraged and has the opportunity to advance. Also, the way to ensure that leadership process is conducted in an honest manner basis on same value, moral and ethic principles that we seek in others.

The first step in completing an objective is setting the performance goals. To make a goal achievable it should be challenging and realistic and so that it will be want everyone wants in the end. The best way to improve an employee's work performance and help them achieve great things is constructive feedback.

3. Conclusion

Motivating people to achieve performance is a hard, challenging, and interesting job. Leaders should be aware how their actions and decisions might affect the team they conduct. To accomplish their missions, leaders need to have in minds that in same situation each person may react differently. The following guidelines could form a basic view of motivation:

- Allow the needs of the team to coincide with the needs of the organization based on true value, moral and ethic principles, teaching and encouraging people how to do and how to be the best they could in their job.
- Recognize in an honest manner the importance of each member of the team. Feeling that everyone will be motivated to do better.
- Reward the good behavior. A letter, a certificate or a simple thank you may seem small and insignificant, but they can be powerful motivation. The reward should be specific and prompt in order to make them to believe that it was indeed a good job. When somebody did a mistake, show what was wrong and help them to achieve a particular goal.
- The leader must be the role model that he or she wants the other to grow into. Develop morale and team spirit. Team spirit is the consciousness of the organization that allows the people within it to identify with and feel part of it.
- Allow the people to be a part of the planning and solving process. People who are of the decision making process become its owners, thus it gives them a personal interest in seeing the plan succeed. When communication is clearer, everyone has a better understanding of what role they must play as part of the team. When the subordinates feel that they are part of the team, recognition and appreciation from a respected leader are powerful motivators.
- Looking out for the team, keeping them informed, counseling people who behave in a way that is against the team's goal, and protecting the people when needed, allows leaders to be aware of the subordinates' lives and give the opportunity to show concern for them.

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The Sioux Indian Tribal Prayer reads, “Great Spirit, help us never to judge another until we have walked for two weeks in his moccasins.”

In groups that are exposed to extreme work-related hazards and stress, such as the military, the leaders are directly responsible for how stressful experience are made sense, of interpreted, and understood by the members of the team. They also need to know how to set realistic and challenging goals that are achievable - the end-state everyone wants. Setting performance goals is the first step toward accomplishing the objectives. A leader has the power to influence motivation and discover the key to improved subordinates' performance.

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