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Motivation – theories

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Abstract:

This paper briefly characterizes the most well known theories regarding motivation and proposes an incipient new model.

Key words: tower, have, be, know, selfish, want to .

1. Introduction

Despite all the theories, to motivate employees remains so far an ideal for most of managers and this because of the lack in consistency of it. This happens because every theory starts from another point of view, an interesting and real one, but there is the need to integrate them and directs them to concrete and enlarge applications.

This work is an attempt to expose apart of them, especially the most known, in order to see if is possible to glimpse a very beginning of such one.

2. Theories

It is not enough that the purpose of an activity to be clear and right in order to reach efficiency and effectiveness. Experience demonstrates that motivation has a huge importance, thus without it or when it exceed, the results are compromised. It was establish that the motivation must be at an optimum.

But what is motivation?

Motivation - eagerness and willingness to do something without needing to be told or forced to do it;

Motivation – set of forces that cause people to behave in a certain way;

Motivation – the sum of the motives regarding to a particular people. The motive being a psychical structure which deals with orientation, initiation and regulation of the actions toward a goal.

According these definitions were developed different theories, which I try to astonish in the next table.

Theories:

Type	Examples
Behavioral theories	Reinforcement, Social information processing
Cognitive theories	Intrinsic motivation, Cognitive evaluation, Goal setting
Equity theories	References ,Choices if inequity , Inequitable pay , Justice, Rewards

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Type	Examples
Expectancy	VIE (expectancy, instrumentality, valence)
Need theories	Needs(McClelland), hierarchy of needs(Moslow),ERG (existence, relatedness, growth)

Table 1 Types of theories and examples

2.1 Behavioral theories

Reinforcement theory studies relation between exterior stimuli, especial reward and punishment, and behavior observed after the stimulus was applied. This theory can be applied to maximize results mainly by rewards, punishments been necessary and utile just in rare cases. B. F. Skinner observe that a stimulus determine behavior and results are consequences of behavior.

When rewards, which include incentives, promotions, job security, and many other things, are tied directly to performance, they serve as positive reinforcement. Increasing rewards work well when people are learning new jobs, new skills but with some limitations, thus they believe can perform better by making an effort and they will receive rewards for performing better, in addition the rewards must be liked.

Punishment, on the other hand, by presenting to the people things with unpleasant consequences, if they fail to behave in a desired manner, can cause responses as anger, resentment, hostility, or retaliation.

Social information processing takes in to consideration social cues consisting in adopting attitudes and behaviors from examples, like colleagues or impressionable, like new starlets. This can be observed especially to the young generation which grows with undesirable consequences sometimes.

We can conclude that this kind of theories deals with extrinsic motivation.

2.2 Cognitive theories

Motivation is studied from the flow experience, intrinsic motivation, cognitive evaluation and goal setting perspective.

Flow experience implies desire to repeat experience, if exists, concentration, and needs some characteristics as high skill levels, challenging and creativity and totally intrinsic motivations.

Intrinsic motivation comes from rewards inherent to a task or activity itself - the enjoyment of a puzzle or the love of playing. Intrinsic motivation has been explained by Fritz Heider's attribution theory, Bandura's work on self-efficacy, and Ryan and Deci's cognitive evaluation theory (which concludes that increasing extrinsic motivation reduces intrinsic satisfaction).

Goal setting studies relations between self efficacy, feed back, the importance of participation and the way of reaching the goal, meaning individual or in a team.

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2.3 Equity theories

The *equity theory* focuses on persons' beliefs about correctness and equal treatment applied to them in comparison to others from the same team, especially, or other people doing the same thing from different teams or organizations. J. Stacy Adams discovered that there is equity when individual's income equal to the income of others in the same conditions. People judge equity by comparing inputs (level of education, experience, effort, and ability) to outputs (wages, salary, recognition, bonuses, and promotion). When the ratio is unbalanced, inequity exists and, as consequences, individuals will reduce the activity by doing the following: *Change inputs* (increasing or reducing effort), *Change outcomes* (strikes for better salaries) or *Leave the job*.

2.4 Expectancy theory

Victor Vroom studied three chain relationships between effort-performance, performance-reward and reward-personal goal and obtained that are motivated to act toward rewards that they want and that they believe they have a reasonable chance to obtain. The preference for an output is called valence. To find this, individuals evaluate if they can reach the goal, the importance of it to them, and what course of action can be done. A person's expectation of finally achieving the goal is very important to success. This theory is useful to understand the motivation of individuals' from different cultures; their background may give each one a unique set of needs and unique perceptions of how to achieve them.

In conclusion, according this theory Motivation equals valence plus instrumentality plus expectancy.

2.5 Need theories

Are the most known because needs are at the basis of motivation and knowing them permit setting a policy in order to fulfill those needs and conduct behavior.

Hierarchy of Needs Abraham Maslow proposed that individuals have a number of different needs that they attempt to satisfy in their activity. He presumed that unsatisfied needs motivate and once a need is satisfied another take its place in the prim-plan of attention, so humans are "wanting beings". Needs are divided in externally, which have lower order (physiological and safety) and internally, which have higher order (social, esteem, self-actualization).

- *Physiological*: These are necessary for survival: food, drink, shelter, sleep. Work satisfies these needs offering a safe, comfortable designed work environment with enough salary compensation.
- *Security/safety*: People need stability, structure, order and protection from unknown.
- *Social*: People need affection, friendship and companionship. This need is satisfied by participation in teams with good relationships.
- *Esteem*: These include the need for recognition and status. People also desire self-respect and need a good self image.
- *Self-actualization*: These are human needs uses to attain self-fulfillment. Individuals satisfy this need by being creative or accepting challenging jobs.

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He structured needs as in the following figure:

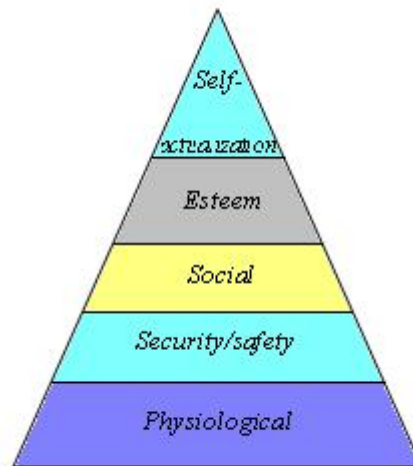


Figure 1 Hierarchy of needs

These needs are arranged in a hierarchy of importance, meaning the higher the level in the pyramid, the fewer the number of individuals who have met those needs.

ERG Theory ERG comes from existence, relatedness and growth which are core needs in this theory. Existence needs are in fact physiological and safety, relatedness needs means relations with others and growth needs refers to personal development. The real contribution of Clayton Alderfer consists in revealing the mechanism of satisfying needs: if a superior need can't be satisfied then would appear frustration, followed by regression to the lower level and at the end by intensification of the need.

2.6 My perspective

Definition:

Motivation – an internal process (meaning psychological) which occurs when exterior and interior stimulus are applied related to a goal and compared to the personal needs.

Starting from this definition I will shape my ideas which I would call my perspective.

I think the key to start the unification process is with an important actor, namely the individual. Maslow touched very well upon this aspect giving us the pyramid of needs, others the same but at different levels, more or less philosophical ones. Which are the critics against Maslow's theory? One is that, sometimes, some layers of the pyramid are inversed, depending on an individual. Something is happening here, there is another process acting, but the pyramid remains standing.

From my perspective I can imagine the process dealing with motivation, thus I will represent it as a tower, a "selfish tower".

I presume that the decision-related activity of a person considers three verbs especially "to have", "to be" and "to know". These three can be arranged like in Figure 3 obtaining a tower.

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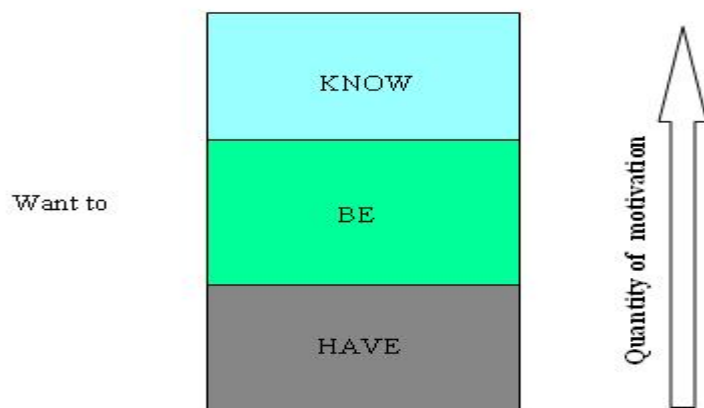


Figure 3 The selfish tower

This tower represents in fact desires, so if we assign “substance“ to one of this three verbs we will find personal goals.

Example: “X wants to have property”

So “property” is a personal goal for him, and so on.

But how this tower appears? It derives from the needs (pyramid of needs for example) under external (social) influences. The process can be imagined like this: when a specific task is assigned to an individual, that person builds instantly the tower looking with an eye at the needs (which exists independently of people’s will) and with the other one, at the results (what if the goal is reached). The building process stops depending on the individual’s analysis process (at “have” level or superior), but once it is finished and the person takes the decision, he or she jumps from that level in real life, and this represents behavior.

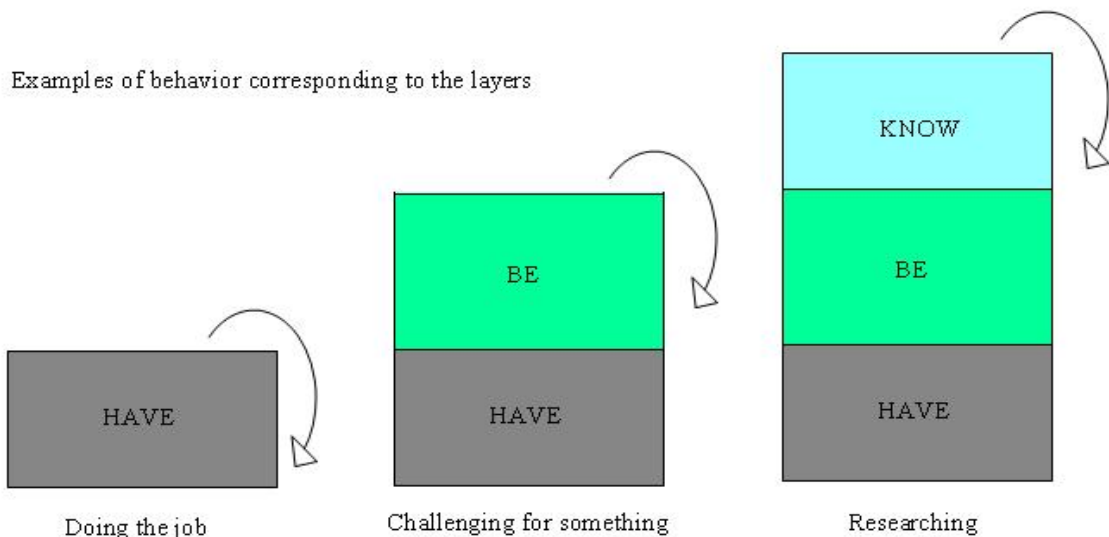


Figure 4 Behaviors depending of the level reached

According to Figure 4, “Have” level implies low motivation, “Be” level more motivation and “Know” level the highest quantity of motivation. In order to obtain a high level of motivation, first, the task must be well explained, and consequences, too, in

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addition, looking from the person's point of view, the task should be associated at least with "Be" level.

Let's examine again the example I gave above: "X wants to have property" it could be someone who can argue that if the property is big, and X is poor, and there is a real chance to reach this goal the quantity of motivation is higher than the "Have" level. It is true but, in this case the person climbs into the next level, namely "Be" level, meaning "He wants to be rich".

Considering "don't want" situation, the tower is inverted, like in figure 5:

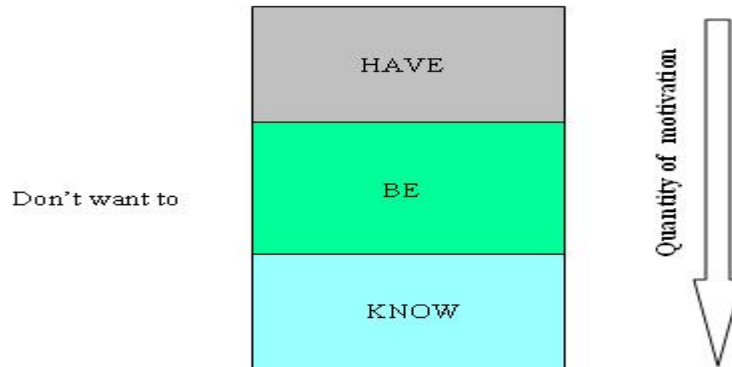


Figure 5 Inverted tower

Heretofore I try if this model can work, probably yes, from now let's see if this model has relations with the theories above.

Just two arguments and a figure:

- It can be seen that the model is between intrinsic (needs) and extrinsic (task and goal) factors so it unifies them.

- Considering "two factor theories" "Have" level and half of "Be" level correspond with Hygiene factors, and the rest correspond with Motivators.

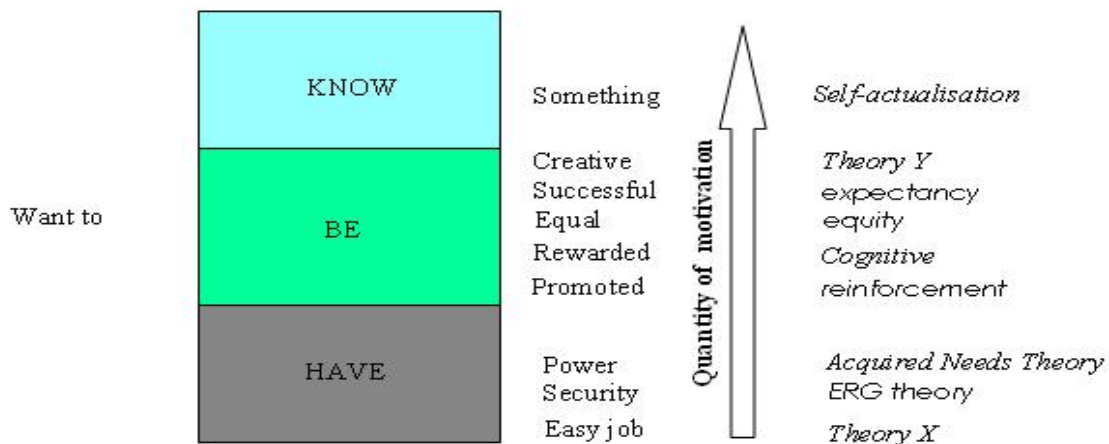


Figure 6 Possible relations with Motivation theories

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According to the Figure 6, if an individual decides that *He wants to Know*, related to a specific task, it is obvious that his responses were “yes”, in a way or another, for the two levels below and he reached the highest level of motivation. I insist that this *He wants to know* refers to accomplishing that specific task in a good way, not just to see what happened if he reaches the goal.

3. Conclusion

All the theories are extremely interesting. Moreover, all of them were validated by research, but there are still large spaces to develop and unify in a way motivational theories. The last model tries to capture what is in an individual's mind when a new task is assigned to him, the respective person being at the centre of the theory.

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