

Herzberg's Motivation Theory in Workplace

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In this review authors will analyze Herzberg's motivation theory as one of the content theories of motivation. It attempts to explain the factors that motivate individuals through identifying and satisfying their individual needs, desires, and the aims pursued to satisfy these desires. This theory of motivation is known as a two-factor content theory. It is based upon the deceptively simple idea that motivation can be dichotomized into hygiene factors and motivation factors and is often referred to as a "two-need system". These two separate "needs" are the need to avoid unpleasantness and discomfort and, at the other end of the motivational scale, the need for personal development. A shortage of the factors that positively encourage employees (the motivating factors) will cause employees to focus on other, non-job related "hygiene" factors. The most important part of this theory of motivation is that the main motivating factors are not in the environment but in the intrinsic value and satisfaction gained from the job itself. It follows therefore that to motivate an individual, a job itself must be challenging, have scope for enrichment, and be of interest to the jobholder. Motivators (sometimes called "satisfiers") are those factors directly concerned with the satisfaction gained from a job.

Keywords: motivation, Herzberg's Theory, researches

Introduction

Employee motivation is a main factor of organizational performance and employee satisfaction and retention. In fact, few organizations have made job satisfaction as a top priority, because they have not understood the amazing opportunity they have in front of them. Undoubtedly satisfied employees tend to be more creative, productive, and committed to their employers. Recent researches also have shown that there is connection between staff satisfaction and staff efficiency. Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation specializes in which factors are relevant for motivating employees. The theory was founded on research carried out in the 1960's. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (also known as Herzberg's two-factor theory) states that certain factors in workplace cause job satisfaction while a separate set of factors cause dissatisfaction, all of which act independently of each other.

In 1959, Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman published the two-factor model of work motivation and developed the motivation-hygiene theory, which was influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Jones, 2011). Herzberg created an example of two major factors influencing people's attitudes towards work. Initially Herzberg and his colleagues developed a theory that satisfaction and dissatisfaction with a job were affected by two different factors and due to this, satisfaction and dissatisfaction could not be reliably measured on the same

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continuum (Herzberg et al., 1959; Stello, 2011). Researches on job satisfaction were conducted in order to decide which factors in an employee's work environment caused satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Subsequently, Herzberg et al. (1959) studied more than 203 accountants and engineers working in nine factories in the Pittsburgh area of the United States to determine which factors influence the worker's work environment and cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). The main hypothesis of Herzberg's theory was that certain factors lead to positive attitudes towards work, and others lead to negative attitudes. The other hypotheses stated that the factors and effects involving long-range sequences of events and short-range sequences of events, respectively, were distinct (Herzberg et al., 1959; Stello, 2011). According to their research data, the original hypothesis of the Herzberg's study was restated and then changed to the two-factor theory of job satisfaction. The two factors that had an effect on job satisfaction were divided into two sets of categories. The first category was associated with "the need for growth or self-actualization" and became known as the motivation factors. Motivation factors included achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and the possibility for growth (Herzberg, 1966; 2003). The other category of factors was related to "the need to avoid unpleasantness" and was known as hygiene factors. Hygiene factors included company policies and administration, relationship with supervisors, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary (Herzberg, 1966; 2003).

Critical Review in Herzberg's Theory

Herzberg's theory is appreciated on the ground that it provides an insight into the task of motivation by drawing attention to the job factors which are often overlooked. It shows the value of job enrichment in motivation. Thus, Herzberg's theory has solved the problems of managers who were wondering why their policies failed to motivate the employees adequately.

However, this theory has also not gone unchallenged. It has been criticized on the following grounds.

Not Conclusive

Herzberg's theory was conducted on knowledge workers (managers, accountants, and engineers) thus scholars criticize its ability to be generalized.

Methodology

Another criticism of this theory is directed at the method of research and data collection. The interviewers were asked to report exceptionally good or exceptionally bad job experience. This methodology is defective because such information will always be subjective and biased.

Job Enrichment

This theory has given too much emphasis on job enrichment and has totally ignored job satisfaction of the workers. He didn't attach much importance to pay, status, or interpersonal relationships which are generally held as great motivators. Keeping in view all these points we can conclude that Herzberg's theory has been widely read and there will be few people who are not familiar with these recommendations. This theory provides valuable guidelines to the managers for structuring their jobs in order to include such factors in the jobs which bring satisfaction.

Motivation Meaning

At the heart of the two-factor theory is the difference between motivation and hygiene factors, or intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Herzberg described motivation factors as intrinsic to the job and hygiene factors as extrinsic

to the job. Thus, motivation factors operate to only increase and improve job satisfaction, whereas hygiene factors work to reduce job dissatisfaction. But in general, what do we mean with the word motivation?

The term motivation has been discussed and conceptualized by various researchers. Early years of definition provided by Whiseand and Rush (1988) explained motivation as the willingness of an individual to do something and conditioned by actions to satisfy needs. Later, Wregner and Miller (2003) described motivation as something that energized individuals to take action and which is concerned with the choices the individual makes as part of his or her goal-oriented behavior. Following the recent definition contributed by Fuller et al. (2008), motivation is a person's intensity, direction, and persistence of efforts to attain a specific objective.

On the other hand, motivation is defined by Saraswathi (2011) as the willingness to exert high levels of effort, and the definition is further provided as effort, organization goal, and need.

Motivators, or satisfiers, are those factors that cause feelings of satisfaction at work. These factors also lead to changing the nature of the work. They challenge a person to develop their talents and fulfill their potential. For example, adding responsibility to work and providing learning opportunities to a person to work at a higher level can lead to a positive performance growth in every task a person is expected to do if the possible poor results are related to boredom of the task they are supposed to accomplish. Motivators are those that come from intrinsic feelings. In addition to responsibility and learning opportunities also recognition, achievement, advancement, and growth are motivation factors. These factors don't dissatisfy if they are not present but by giving value to these, satisfaction level of the employees is most probably going to grow (Bogardus, 2007, p. 34). When hygiene factors are maintained, dissatisfaction can be avoided. When, on the other hand, dissatisfaction is most probable to occur, motivation can't take place.

Motivation in Groups

Advancement

Advancement is defined as the upward and positive status or position of the person or employee in the workplace. A negative, or neutral status at work is considered negative advancement.

The Work Itself

The actual content of job tasks and assignments has either a positive or a negative effect upon employees. Whether the job is too easy or too difficult, interesting or boring, can impact satisfaction or dissatisfaction of employees in the workplace.

Possibility for Growth

Possibilities for growth are the actual opportunities for a person to experience personal growth and be promoted in the workplace. This allows professional growth, increased chances to learn new skills, undergo training in new techniques, and gain new professional knowledge.

Responsibility

This factor includes both responsibility and authority in relation to the job. Responsibility is related to gaining satisfaction from being given the responsibility and freedom to make decisions. Gaps between responsibility and authority negatively impact job satisfaction leading to dissatisfaction.

Recognition

Positive recognition happens when employees receive praise or rewards for reaching specific goals at their

job, or when they produce high quality work, while negative recognition at work includes criticism and blame for the job done.

Achievement

Positive achievement includes achieving a specific success, such as completing a difficult task on time, solving a job-related problem, or seeing positive results of one's work. Negative achievement involves failure to make progress at work or poor decision-making on the job.

How Work Motivation Changes Year by Year

Many of the ideas emerging from the 1960s and 1970s have subsequently been extended and further developed to reflect an expanded pool of research findings and more sophisticated research methods. Indeed, the 1980s witnessed a series of refinements and extensions of existing theories. For example, researchers made great strides in conceptual developments and empirical work focusing on social learning theory, as they did in new work focusing on goal-setting theory, job design, reward systems, punishment, procedural justice, innovation and creativity, and cross-cultural influences on work behavior.

However, by the 1990s, intellectual interest in work motivation theory—at least as measured by journal publications—seemed to decline precipitously. As evidence of this, consider the number of theoretical (as opposed to empirical) articles published in leading behavioral science journals over the past decade (e.g., see Ambrose & Kulik, 1999, or Mitchell & Daniels, 2002). You will find few articles that focus on genuine theoretical developments in this area. Instead, you will see minor extensions, empirical tests, or applications of existing theories. While clearly helpful, this hardly leads to breakthrough developments in our understanding of the principles underlying work motivation. At the same time, a review of the most recent editions of textbooks in the field of management and organizational behavior reveals that most of the theories discussed date from the 1960s and 1970s, with only fleeting references to more recent work. An outside observer might conclude from this situation that either we have lost interest in the subject of work motivation (perhaps because it is no longer a pressing issue in organizations) or that we solved the work motivation problem long ago, thereby eliminating the need for additional work. Neither of these conclusions seems very plausible. Why, then, has there been so little intellectual activity focusing on this important topic? Perhaps we have yet to develop the breakthrough ideas that can push us to the next level of understanding.

While theoretical developments on work motivation may have declined in recent years, the world of work has changed dramatically. Indeed, one can argue that the past decade has witnessed greater workplace changes than any other decade in memory. Companies are both downsizing and expanding (often at the same time, in different divisions or levels of the hierarchy). The workforce is characterized by increased diversity with highly divergent needs and demands. Information technology has frequently changed both the manner and location of work activities. New organizational forms (such as those found in e-commerce) are now commonplace. Teams are redefining the notion of hierarchy, as well as traditional power distributions. The use of contingent workers is on the rise. Managing knowledge workers continues to perplex experienced managers across divergent industries.

With this in mind, in 2001 AMR issued a call for papers on the topic of the future of work motivation. A special seminar was held at the 2001 annual meeting of the Academy of Management to stimulate interest and discussion in the topic. Six papers emerged that seem to offer new and useful ideas and insights into future directions for the theoretical development of the topic. What these papers have in common is a genuine effort to

build on existing theories of work motivation by adapting and extending them to fit the realities of the changing contemporary workplace. The six papers appearing in this special issue address a variety of issues critical to advancing our understanding of motivation theory and motivation in the workplace. Throughout, all of these contribute to the long tradition of substantive research and theoretical development in the field of work motivation that benefit both organizational researchers and practicing managers alike.

Methods and Results

In this review we found some studies about how the theory of Herzberg's affects the work life and we will present the most interesting for us below. We will refer some relevant researches that prove this theory. At the research of Emrah Ozsou (Sakarya University March, 2009) the data were collected with the participation of the employees of the municipalities operating in Sakarya (Turkey). A questionnaire form which was designed to test the Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory was distributed to each participant (paper-pencil). After eliminating incomplete and sloppy questionnaire forms, 162 valid questionnaires were obtained. The motivation factors of Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory (i.e., achievement, recognition, work, responsibility, advancement, and growth) and hygiene factors (hygiene factors, i.e., company policy and administration, supervision, relationship with supervisor working conditions, salary, relationship with peers, personal relationship, relationship with subordinates, status, and security) were measured with the method inspired by Lundberg et al. (2009). To do that, all the factors (totally 16: 6 for motivation factors and 10 for hygiene factors) were measured with a five-point Likert scale format (ranging from 1—not at all important to 5—very important). For the rest of the factors, the same approach was adopted. In addition, the participants were asked to distribute 100 points to 16 factors consisted of Herzberg's Theory and to indicate what per cent each factor was effective in their motivation. According to the findings of the study, the basic assumptions related to Herzberg's Two-Factor theory were partially supported in the sample of Turkish public sector employees (white-collar employees working in municipalities). Some of the factors considered as hygiene factors in Herzberg's theory were found to be important motivating factors. According to Herzberg's theory factors such as salary, working conditions, company policy and administration, and relationship with supervisor were considered as hygiene factors. However, in the current study, they all were found to be significant motivators. In a different research by Sabir Ansari (October 2020) who designed a test for employee motivation in three selected Nepalese organizations based on Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. A questionnaire was developed to obtain data from the respondents of selected organization in Nepal. The sample consisted of 150 employees, made up of 50 respondents for each organization. 150 (100%) respondents completed the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to rank all the 16 factors mentioned by Herzberg, by presence of which cause them job satisfaction. Each respondent was also asked to describe their demographic data including sex, age, marital status, age-group, job position, length of employment at present organization, strength of feeling about their current working environment. The findings of this study indicate that the respondents considered Salary to be the most influencing factor, presence of which provides a sense of job satisfaction for Nepalese employees. The finding also shows that the ranking of the motivational factors by the Nepalese employees is different from that of Herzberg. Thus, the finding contradicts the Herzberg's Theory because Herzberg mentioned Salary to be a hygiene factor, which means, and the absence of it causes job dissatisfaction but presence of it will not cause job satisfaction. However, the other top motivating factors remain constant. The top six motivational factors causing job satisfaction of Nepalese employees are Achievement, Recognition, Responsibility, Salary, and Advancement indicating that

five out of six motivational factors (mentioned by Herzberg) are significantly important for motivation and job satisfaction for the Nepalese employees. A significant correlation was found to exist in factors causing motivation and job satisfaction for U.S. and Nepalese respondents. The result showed that the factor which can motivate a worker does not depend much on the geographical condition or the ethnic group. The psychological thinking and expectation of human at work can be same irrespective of the cultural or ethnic difference.

Result of ranking the factors by male and female shows that a significant correlation exists between their rankings of factors causing motivation and job satisfaction. From the finding we can say that the need and wants of male and female at work is not much different. Both have ranked Salary as the most important factor for motivation. Both male and female respondents have ranked six factors with the same rank. That is, they ranked Salary, Possibility of Growth, Working Condition, Personal life, Relation with Supervisor, and Supervision-Technical as first, second, eighth, ninth, eleventh, and sixteenth respectively. The top six factors identified are Salary, Possibility of growth, Recognition, Achievement, Responsibility, and Advancement.

A significant correlation was found to exist between the ranking of factors causing motivation and job satisfaction between supervisors and non-supervisors. The top four motivational factors identified by both supervisor and non-supervisors are Salary, Achievement, Recognition, and Possibility of growth. From the finding we can say that the need and wants of supervisor and non-supervisors are not much different. Both the respondents' groups have identified Salary to be the most important factor causing motivation and job satisfaction.

Another result from the hypothesis shows that the type of motivational factor is independent of the type of organization. The factors which motivate a worker and cause them job satisfaction remain same irrespective of the organization type. The result revealed important psychology of the human regarding their needs which can motivate them to work. The respondents from all three different type of organizations marked Salary as the most important factor for their workplace motivation.

Suggestion

Motivation is very much needed for employees in an organization to be productive, and management or leadership style has an important role to play. Motivation is not always based on financial rewards, but non-financial rewards methods can also be used to derive the best out of employees. Although individuals have their expectations, it is the leadership's responsibility to develop and align with theories that is suitable to bring job satisfaction to their employees. However, there is no single reliable theory to be used, a mixture of them can be utilized. In terms of empowering workforce, employees should be encouraged and given a platform to voice out their concerns on how they can be motivated. Rewards and promotions following performance appraisals may be used to boost employee's moral as well as feedback. All employees should understand the company's vision and goals and work together towards those. In some organizations, workers perform their duties in an assembly whereby if a certain section of employees is affected it will affect the whole plant. Employees perform their duties diligently if they are inspired and motivated as the results will always be positive with efficient production. Organizations which are results-oriented will go all the way to motivate their employees for them to reach their goals. Further qualitative research on motivation strategies and theories is recommended.

Conclusion

Managers understand that staff demotivators can often be related to issues other than work itself, the resolution of which can lead to improved staff motivation, greater job satisfaction and improved organizational

performance. On the other hand, understanding individual goals, combined with broader skills and abilities, can lead to greater opportunities. Therefore, individuals must be seen as valuable to organizations and capable of acquiring new skills useful for the future. Improving their skills and increasing the knowledge of employees will, in the long run, increase the value of an organization's human resources. More importantly, it can lead to greater staff engagement, understanding and commitment.

Consequently, the theory is directly applicable to the wider field of work and plays a very important role, especially in relation to motivation. On the other hand, it is not possible to get absolute results by simply applying the theory of motivation, since there are other key factors that may influence this theory.

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