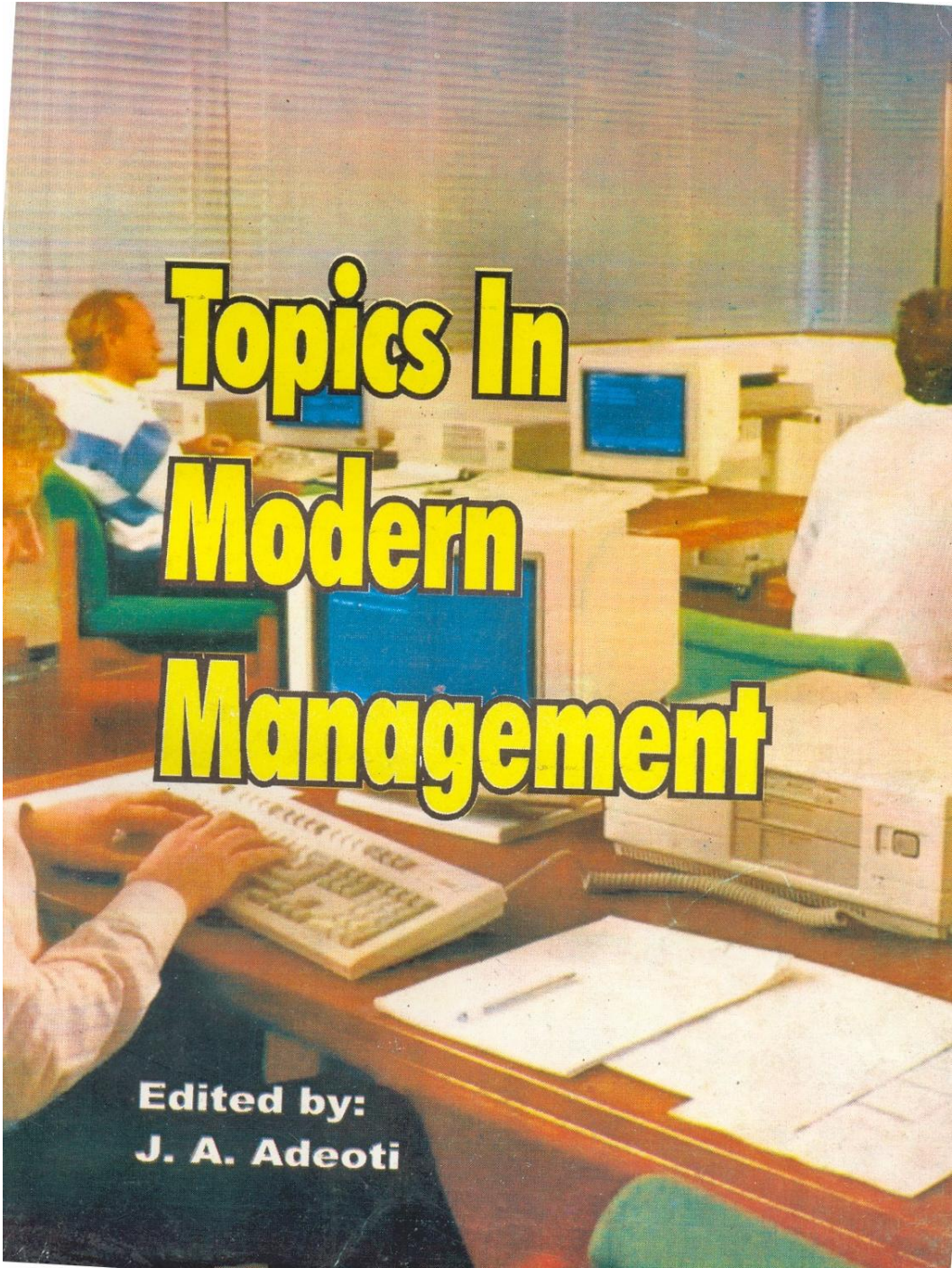




Topics In Modern Management

**Edited by:
J. A. Adeoti**

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MOTIVATING AND COORDINATING WORKERS IN A DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT

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PREAMBLE

Motivation is a human psychological characteristic that contributes to sustain human behavior in a particular direction, while coordination is the process of integrating the activities of different units in order to pursue organizational goals. Motivation and coordination are the tools that managers use to arrange job relationship in a dynamic environment. The two terms go hand in hand; motivation without coordination will make workers to lose sight of their schedule within an organization.

The paper examines motivation and coordination of workers in a dynamic working environment. It maintains that job performance in any dynamic environment is a function of motivation and coordination.

The paper concludes that in this highly competitive global economy and dynamic environment any organization that wants to achieve high performance objective must effectively motivate and coordinate its workers.

Introduction

Motivation is a simple and complex topic of research that has been studied from many different perspectives. Simple, in that it explains what we see happening in human behaviour, yet complex when it poses contradictions. As organizations continue to rely on employees to fill vital positions within the organization, the dynamics of how organization and managers motivate employees, both permanent and temporary, changes; moreover, the individual's motivation to perform, either a permanent employee or a temporary employee, becomes a primary concern for organizations in this dynamic working environment.

Cooperation in any organization involves problems of both motivation and coordination. The motivation problem stems from the fact

that every individual in a group of people working together (a team) has an incentive to free-ride (Alchian and Demetz 1972). The coordination problem arises from the fact that, even if the free rider problem is solved, individuals need to coordinate on the intensity of cooperation they wish to achieve.

The problem of motivation can be solved by lateral and hierarchical control. Lateral control is enforcement of the (implicit) team contract through adequate punishment strategies that are adopted by non-deviating team members. Hierarchical control is the enforcement of a defined level of team-internal cooperation through superiors. Lateral and hierarchical control can be used as complementary mechanisms (Ruigrok et al 1999).

Accordingly, as Pamela and Seaford (2002) have pointed out the maximisation of individuals' motivation to achieve the organisation's objectives can only really be obtained through a thorough understanding of theories of motivation. Coordination is the process by which an agent reasons about its local actions and the (anticipated) actions of others to try and ensure the worker acts in a coherent manner.

Many problems arise in an organization which cannot be solved by individuals working in isolation because no one individual has sufficient competence, expertise, resources or information to solve all problems. It may be impractical or undesirable to permanently synthesize the necessary components into a single entity because of historical, political, physical or social constraints, therefore temporary alliances through cooperative problem solving may be the only way to proceed. Different people may have different resources (e.g. processing power, memory and communications) which all need to be harnessed to solve a complex problem. (e.g. in concurrent engineering systems, the same product may be viewed from a design, manufacturing and marketing perspective).

Even in a situation where individual can work independently, meaning coordination is not essential, information discovered by one worker can be of sufficient use to another that the two workers can solve the problem more than twice as fast. For instance, when searching for a lost object in a large area it is often better, though, not essential, to do so as a team.

Job performance in any working environment is a function of ability and motivation. Therefore, to understand motivation one must understand human nature itself. Human nature can be very simple, yet very complex too. An understanding and appreciation of this is a pre-requisite to effective motivation in the workplace and therefore effective management and leadership.

If one understands the principles of motivation, how does one go about designing such principles into jobs? Motivation is important to the development and long term sustainability of organizations. Motivation can be interpreted in many different ways; as many organizations and people hold different view points about motivation.

However, motivation in the work environment and from a management point of view, we suggest, can be classified into two main points as follows: Motivation, which is results from meeting the needs of management and workers, and which springs up, grows and exists in any workplace environment.

The improvement of coordination between all levels has long been accepted as a very important element in the development and improvement of any industrial organization and there are few long term successful management which have not exerted a great deal of effort in this direction.

There is, however, the possibility that the policy of improved motivation and coordination may be pursued solely because of its effect on productivity, and not from the more fundamental motive of producing a correct and balanced attitude to the personal and social needs of the workers.

Merely to aim for higher output may bring neither greater output nor satisfaction to the worker, but if the aim is to bring more personal satisfaction to the worker in his work and his surroundings, then both higher output and job satisfaction may be achieved.

The objective of this paper is to examine the aspect(s) of traditional thinking applicable to the design of jobs, propose alternative factors for one to consider, including motivation and coordination factors, generate some ideas on how these factors, may be applied to dynamic work situations.

Motivation Theory

Steers and Porter (1991) stated that there is a sizeable discrepancy between the theories of motivation and the practices used in most organisations. If managers truly want to improve performance at work they must take an active role in managing the motivational process and in changing the work environment. This is supported by others (for example, Cole (1995)) who believe that motivation needs to be better understood by managers and applied to the workplace. Maslow developed his theories in the 1940s and had a positive view of human nature, believing in the individual's potential for growth. One of Maslow's contributions was his hierarchy of needs which sees people as having a set of needs which they

are motivated to satisfy; each element is a motivator until it has been satisfied and is then superseded by the next. Herzberg went on to describe the higher-order needs representing sense of pride and accomplishment. Child (1984) and later Spitzer (1995) both add weight to these theories, believing that if the organisation is not properly designed - for example, inconsistent decision making, little opportunity for achievement, unclear expectations, conflicting goals and lack of involvement in decision making - then motivation and morale may be depressed.

Maslow's theory still forms part of basic management training today (Hodgetts and Luthans, 1991). A study carried out by Hagemann (1992) supports its usefulness. She found that more than 60 per cent of the respondents gave answers related to satisfying socio-psychological needs such as feedback, a feeling of belonging, openness, honesty, credibility, trust, fairness, etc; 20 per cent were concerned with satisfying intellectual needs - self-fulfilment, interesting and varied tasks, or challenges. Only 10 per cent of the replies quoted material incentives. This study illustrates that both Maslow and Herzberg appear still to have an important role for managers. Others agree, stating that "there is general acceptance of the overall structure" (Stewart and McGoldrick, 1996).

Herzberg *et al.* (1959) moved on from hierarchical needs to examine what they termed "motivators" and "hygiene factors" in the workplace, postulating that where job satisfaction was high there would be correspondingly high motivation. Although one can argue that this work constituted an examination of job satisfaction rather than motivation, Robbins (1998) believes that the recent growth of worker participation in planning and controlling their work is due to Herzberg *et al.*'s (1959) recommendation that those factors which they find intrinsically rewarding (achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and growth) should be emphasised. Nevertheless, if one follows Herzberg *et al.*'s thinking to its logical conclusion, no matter how much emphasis is placed upon factors that staff find intrinsically rewarding, such as worker empowerment, supportive management, team work, delegated authority and responsibility, if hygiene factors, such as low pay, are not addressed their full effect will not be felt.

Managerial Role Motivation

Managerial role motivation theory is the basis for a better understanding of the motivation to manage concept (Miner, 1978). According to Miner's managerial role motivation theory, certain "role requirements" occur frequently across a wide range of managerial jobs and

levels and in a variety of large hierarchic companies. Hierarchical organizations are those with at least three levels of management (Miner, 1978). To be a successful manager, one must have the desire and the motivation to fulfill these roles. In the absence of such motivation, a manager's performance is relatively unsatisfactory (Miner, 1978).

There are six motivational dimensions corresponding to six managerial role requirements which when combined form motivation to manage. These dimensions are a direct result of the manner in which large, hierarchic organizations are structured and the roles managers have to fulfill to succeed in these hierarchies (Miner *et al.*, 1995). These components are:

1. favorable attitude to superiors
2. desire to compete
3. desire to assert one
4. desire to exercise power
5. desire to be distinct and different
6. desire to perform routine administrative duties responsibly

The Work Environment

Managers have known all along that value creation is, and will continue to be, the primary reason for the survival of all productive organizations. However, under new work conditions, to create value, every organization has to seek, generate, distribute, and apply knowledge, a function that instead of being driven by capital emerges from an environment in which the human spirit is enthused. Only those knowledge organisations that develop a work environment that motivates their employees to engage in a behavior consistent with this goal will succeed. These organizations will be able to recognize and solve contemporary problems and bring solutions to the marketplace sooner than their competitors who fail to develop such an environment (Amar, 2004).

Hauschild *et al.*'s (2001) study states that much of an organization's most valuable knowledge is embedded in the minds of its employees. That knowledge, in turn, can be managed only through buoyancy that excites the deepest parts of the employees' minds. Therefore, understanding the theory and application of motivation and coordination is very important in managing human resource in making both new and old organizations succeed in the changing working environment.

The work environment describes the factors that affect an individual

when he or she is at work. It includes:

- ⇒ Human relationship such as management and trade union with which the individual is concerned
- ⇒ The working group of which he or she is a member
- ⇒ The motivational policies of the organization
- ⇒ The productivity agreement of his or her firm
- ⇒ The physical conditions which affect him/her and the psychological factors of the work situation.

There are many management theories on the effect of the work environment on the individual, achievement, motivation and on working groups. It is therefore, necessary to consider the interest of individual who has been involved in this work.

Baker et al (1991), posited that contrary to popular belief, workers tend to embrace changes. Technology itself does not cause worker motivation (and with it, production levels) to drop, but the turbulent environment of rapid technological change causes fear and confusion that lower motivation, when employees comfortable with the status quo view technological change as a threat and fear obsolescence, their attitude towards work shifts and their motivation decreases. Using automation to empower the worker to make decisions will increase motivation. A new motivational model (base on the work of Maslow, Hertzberg and Fitzgerald) that accounts for the components of motivation may make the transition to an automated system easier.

Dynamics of Motivation and the Knowledge Work Environment

Since the organization is a living entity, it is constantly evolving and hence changing its characteristics, the approach to understanding human motivation at work requires a dynamic perspective: Such emphasis is further strengthened by the dynamic nature of human psychology and sociology and their impact on behavior at work. These dynamics set the guidelines for rediscovering, adapting, or updating the theory and practice of motivation. The question now becomes: How does one excite employees about their work and their employer's goals considering the dynamics of motivation in a knowledge work environment?

There are a number of succinct factors present in the contemporary organizational environment that have opened up and are forcing a review of the motivation theory and its practice, which, until now, had been

considered as formulated, empirically tested, and established. These factors affect both content and process of motivation. That is why these are the drivers of motivation in the knowledge work environment. It becomes important for managers to decide how to motivate their employees only after considering these factors as they apply to their organizational environment and, preferably, after making some adaptations specific to each department, section, and employee. There could be so many variations due to these drivers that there is no one-way to motivate all employees.

To be effective in exciting knowledge workers, managers have to do the following. First, develop a working understanding of the mind and behavior of their employees and, then, work according to a model that updates their own practice based on the results of the dynamics of their specific motivation system.

Fostering Employee Motivation

Motivation is what moves us from boredom to interest. It is what energizes us and directs our activity. Motivation is sometimes likened to the engine and steering-wheel of an automobile. Energy and direction are at the centre of the concept of motivation.

There are two kinds of motivation: *Extrinsic* and *Intrinsic* motivation: Extrinsic motivation works through indirect satisfaction of needs, most importantly through monetary compensation.

Extrinsic motivation in an organization is achieved by linking employees' monetary motives to the goals of the organization. In the literature and in popular imagination an ideal compensation plan links pay to individual performance. The most important criterion then of course is that the employee's contributions to the organizations are measurable with some degree of accuracy (Pearce 1996).

Intrinsic motivation works through immediate need satisfaction. An activity is valued for its own sake and appears to be self-sustained (Deci and Ryan 1985, Frey 1997). Following Deci (1971) "one is said to be intrinsically motivated to perform an activity when one receives no apparent reward except the activities itself". The ideal incentive system for intrinsic motivation consists in the work content itself.

Intrinsic motivation has two dimensions. Following Lindenberg (2001), one can differentiate between, enjoyment based and obligation-based intrinsic motivation.

- i. *Enjoyment-based* intrinsic motivation is focused on by Deci and his group (Deci, Koestner and Ryan 1999). It refers to a satisfying flow of activity (e.g. playing a game or reading a novel for pleasure.)
- ii. The second dimension, *obligation-based* intrinsic motivation, was introduced by Frey (1997). This form of intrinsic motivation has been the focus in three well established strands of research namely: organizational citizenship behaviour, organizational commitment and organizational legitimacy.

Organisation in the last decade has witnessed a growing interest in organizational behaviour that is not directly recognized by the formal reward system. (Podsakoff et al 2000). This so called organizational citizen behaviour is often thought of as a "willingness to cooperate". It accounts for the relatively low amount of free riding in organization, compared to what orthodox economists would expect (Organ and Ryan 1995; Simon 1991).

Another field of research centers on the notion of legitimacy of organizational authorities and rule-following behaviour (Tyler and Bladder 2000). This approach dates back to the well-known differentiation of Weber (1985) about authority. Employees bring to the work place a set of normative codes specifying morally correct forms of domination (Halaby 1986). They accept decisions of "legitimate" authorities even in situations in which rule breaking is difficult to apprehend. The two kinds of motivation have their own advantages. Extrinsic motivation is sometimes indispensable:

- a) Intrinsic motivation can have an undesirable content, like envy. Uncontrolled passions can be disciplined by extrinsic reward as long as they are observable.
- b) In situations where no intrinsic motivation exists in the first place, monetary rewards can increase performance e.g. in simple jobs in an assembly line (Lazear 1999).
- c) Extrinsic motivation may have an influence on the decision whether to join a particular team. To participate in a team sometimes depends on extrinsic factors such as expected monetary rewards or reputation.

An imbalance between static motivational theories and dynamic organizations can affect the validity of the instrument when measuring motivation, if the instrument is only based on motivational theories. To study the motivational process in a specific organization a contingency approach could be used. Values are one example of what requires dynamic treatment of the motivation concept. To examine values on an individual, an

organizational and a social level must be the starting-point when deciding motivational factors. To find out the values and hereby the factors, considered motivational by the employees, one has to involve the employees in a mutual dialogue. (Osteraker 1999)

The Dynamic Selection of Coordination Mechanisms

Coordinating the behavior of workers in any organization is a major concern of many employers. Coordination has been perennial topics in organization studies. Effective coordination of workers is time saving. Coordination, apart from being a time saving alternative, it is also effective, as both upper and middle level management would be able to respond to immediate environmental problems in a more rapidly and flexible manner.

Success in a task, particularly a task involving several workers must be effectively coordinated. Lack of coordination leads to lack of success. Take a familiar case of two people cleaning up after dinner. Major jobs are apportioned by agreement or convention. I'll wash, you stack and tidy up. Then the realities of the situation along with the shared understanding of the participants leads to moment to moment decisions about who will do exactly what and how. To get started perhaps I'll help stack, certainly I'll get the dirty ovenware. But if the pots and pans are fairly large we'll need to cooperate about where they are to be stored in the interim, and where the dishes are to be stacked. Some of this can be done without language since the constraints of the space beside the sink may substantially determine what goes where. But typically some coordination relies on explicit language use and signaling.

Coordination mechanisms have different properties and characteristics and are suited to different types of tasks and environments. They vary in the degree to which coordination is prescribed at design time, the amount of time and effort they require to setup a given coordination episode at run-time, and the degree to which they are likely to be successful and produce coordinated behaviour in a given situation. In the majority of cases, these dimensions act as forces in opposing directions; coordination mechanisms that are highly likely to succeed typically have high setup and maintenance costs, whereas mechanisms that have lower setup costs are also more likely to fail. Moreover, a coordination mechanism works well in a reasonably static environment but will often perform poorly in a dynamic environment and fast changing one. In short, there is no universally best coordination mechanism (Galbraith, 1973). The implication of this is that Nigerian manager must consider dynamic nature of the environment before settle for a particular mechanism. There is also need for constant review of

the mechanism to suite the current situation of things in the environment.

Coordination Requirements

The cognitive Models which center on coordination assumes that "75/25 assumption" that is 75% attention to one's work, 25% attention to one's partner's work.

- Paying attention to your partner's work
- Considering your partner's workload in your decisions
- Determine actions to balance workload (give help, request help)
- Communicating those actions
- Executing those actions on time

Motivational Needs of an Individual in a Dynamic Environment

The motivation that attracts, retains, and engages younger employees, who are the potential source of newer and untapped knowledge (Strempel, 2003), is quite different from that of their predecessor generations. Thus, what motivates the new employees is quite different from what motivated the generation before them. Some of these differences have already been documented (Loughlin and Barling, 2001; Wallace, 2001; Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001). For example, whereas, climbing the corporate ladder was very important to employees of the yesteryears, it is not so to Generation Y. Thus, it has become very important for organizations to know how to motivate their employees. It is for this reason that, even though a lot has been said and done on the topic of motivation, the subject is being taken afresh by practicing managers, especially those in a knowledge organization.

Good motivation can only be established if the needs of an individual are satisfied and his/her will to work is stimulated. This presents the difficulty that management is dealing with groups of individuals, all of whom may respond differently in a given situation. What will motivate a worker working in Ikeja, Lagos State will be entirely different from what will motivate a worker in Ilorin, Kwara State. This is because the two workers are not working in the same environment. Even where workers are working in the same organization but in different environment, the motivational needs will be differ. The environment will influence what will motivate worker in his place of work. Henceforth, the employers of labour must put this into consideration before designing their motivational programme for

their workers.

However, it is possible to generalize on the average response evoked in certain situations in the context of motivation in industry; it is possible to arrive at general conclusions about man's attitude to work and the hopes, fears, and aspirations regarding it. The extent to which these hopes and desires are fulfilled in the work situation or working environment is naturally governs the degree of job satisfaction derived by the worker. The extent to which the personal job satisfaction is achieved is measure by which each worker will apply his/her abilities and the will to work.

To provide job satisfaction must, therefore, be the ultimate aim for those who organize and coordinate workers. For any organization to achieve this objective in a dynamic environment, it is necessary to provide motivation of the right type to all in the organization.

Conclusion

Organisations are operating in a complex, open and dynamic environments. Therefore, the problem of how to motivate, coordinate and manage workers' behaviors and make them work cooperatively in such environments has become one of the key challenges facing organizations in recent time.

Motivation and coordination are terms associated with the forces acting on a worker causing him to act in a certain way. Therefore, understanding dynamics of motivation and coordination are requisite for identifying what drives worker to act in certain ways. Motivation and coordination are inferred in terms of behavioral changes brought in by internal or external stimuli. In this case, those stimuli are deduced with respect to the work environment. Additionally, worker's motivation may change based upon certain factors. These factors are identified as the drivers of motivation and can be used to understand what drives motivation among workers in the dynamic work environment.

Motivation is a complex topic of research that has been studied from employing many different approaches. Without adequate coordination in any working environment, the benefits of decentralized problem solving will vanish and the organization may quickly degenerate into a collection of chaotic.

Regardless of the environment, the organization must ensure that the objective of coordination covers all the necessary portions of the overall problem of the organizations. It must ensure that all workers interact in a manner that will permit their activities to be developed and integrated into

an overall objective of the organization.

One needs to know that the study of motivation is concerned with the activity the workers perform in a given environment, and how the worker maintains a given activity or changes between different activities, as a function of environmental events and internal needs.

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Notes

Members of the Generation X are children of the Baby Boomer generation who are born before 1977. The term was coined by Novelist Douglas Coupland (1992) in his novel, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*. The Generation Y, sometimes also referred to as Nexters, constitutes people born in year 1977 and later - the late offspring of the Baby Boomers.