

MA in Education: Managing People in Schools

Motivation

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Motivation

Motivation is an important aspect of ensuring the effectiveness of organisations. It is particularly crucial in the case of schools and colleges, because a large percentage of their resources is spent on staff. There has been much research undertaken to identify what motivates people, and a number of models and theories. These are described briefly below. Most of the theories have critics, and it is important to consider those criticisms when writing about this topic. Mullins (2001) has a useful chapter on 'The nature of work motivation'.

Some theories of motivation are linked to human needs, the assumption being that if organisations meet people's needs, then they will be motivated to work. Maslow (1970) identified a hierarchy of needs, the idea being that people need to satisfy the lower order of needs first, before becoming concerned about the higher level needs:

Self-actualisation
Esteem
Belonging and love
Safety
Physiological

Evidence suggests that the theories about needs do not apply well to people involved in mass production, or to individuals who do not have strong needs for self-actualisation. They are also culture bound (some cultures place much greater emphasis on self-actualisation than others).

Alderfer (1972) condensed Maslow's five levels of needs into three levels:

- Existence needs: covering both physiological and safety needs
- Relatedness needs: covering belonging and love, and esteem (as far as relationships are concerned)
- Growth needs: covering both self-esteem and self-actualisation.

McClelland (1961) undertook research into how people think, in many different environments. Three broad categories of need were identified:

- Need for affiliation
- Need for power
- Need for achievement.

These are similar to Maslow's love, esteem and self-actualisation needs. McClelland suggested that managers have higher achievement needs than affiliation needs and that effective managers should possess a high need for power (because they have to lead people). He distinguishes between power directed towards an organisation (based on a concern for group goals), and power aimed to dominate over other people.

Herzberg (1966) posits 13 factors affecting motivation, dividing them into two categories:

Hygiene or maintenance factors

- Policies and administration systems
- Appropriate, accessible and competent supervision
- Interpersonal relationships
- Salary and related benefits
- Status
- Job security
- Personal life
- Working conditions

Motivators

- Achievement
- Recognition
- Job interest
- Responsibility
- Advancement

Herzberg (1966) suggests that absence of the *hygiene factors* causes dissatisfaction, but their presence is not necessarily motivating. It is the factors in the second group that contribute most to satisfaction and motivation. Providing the *hygiene factors* can make a quick difference in the short term, but it is the *motivators* that have long term impact.

There have been many criticisms of Herzberg's theory, two of which are, firstly, that it only has limited application to manual workers and secondly, that it was based on a critical incident technique that influenced the results.

McGregor's (1960) identification of *Theory X* and *Theory Y* managers also has implications for motivation. **Theory X** managers assume (among other things) that:

- The average person is lazy and dislikes work
- Most people must be coerced if the organisation is to achieve its goals
- The average person avoids responsibility
- Motivation occurs only at the level of physiological and security needs.

Theory Y managers assume (among other things) that:

- For most people, work is as natural as rest or play
- People will exercise self-direction and self-control if they are committed to the organisation's objectives
- Given the right conditions, workers can learn to accept and to seek responsibility
- Motivation occurs at the affiliation, esteem and self-actualisation levels of need.

If you assume that people are lazy and need to be controlled, then the way you motivate them will be through coercion. If you assume that people can be creative and exercise initiative and self control, then you are likely to motivate them through stimulation and shared goals.

Vroom (1964) was the first person to describe 'expectancy' theory, which suggests that people anticipate feelings of satisfaction if their preferred outcomes are achieved. Vroom argued that people are most highly motivated when:

- "They feel confident of achieving a high level of performance
- The attraction of the reward is high
- They think they will receive rewards if they perform well
- They feel they will be fairly rewarded by comparison with others around them" (in Law and Glover, 2001, p.63)

Vroom (1964) believed that it was possible to calculate the level of motivation by establishing numerical factors for three key variables:

Valence: this is the preference for, and anticipated satisfaction from, a particular outcome.

Instrumentality: this is the extent to which first-level outcomes (which are performance-related) lead to second-level outcomes (which are need-related) – a first-level outcome with a high valence is likely to lead to a large number of second-level outcomes.

Expectancy: this is the extent to which people believe that the choice of a particular action will lead to their desired outcome.

Equity theory is linked to expectancy theories, and is based on exchange theory. It concerns perceived equitable rewards, in other words, people's feelings about the fairness of the way they are treated.

The theory of **goal-setting** as a motivational force has developed from the work of Locke (1968). It is based on the idea that people are motivated to achieve goals which satisfy their emotions and desires. The amount of effort they are prepared to make depends on the difficulty of the goal and the level of their commitment to it.

Evans (2001) has conducted extensive research into morale, job satisfaction and motivation in schools, which identified three factors as highly influential:

- **Realistic expectations:** what the individual realistically expects from her/his work
- **Relative perspective:** the individual's perspective on her/his situation in relation to comparable situations
- **Professionalism orientation:** the individual's stance in relation to his/her work, which influences her/his professional practice.

She concludes that leadership influences job-related attitudes, indirectly (rather than directly), through its capacity for "shaping work contexts that either match, or are at odds with, what individuals want in relation to: equity and justice, pedagogy or androgogy, organisational efficiency, interpersonal relations, collegiality and self-conception and self-image" (p. 305). [Note: androgogy is the theory of adult learning and is often associated with learner-centred approaches, whereas pedagogy is more focused on teacher-focused learning.]

Understanding motivation in an international school

What motivates a teacher to take up a post in an international school? Local staff may be motivated by the same things that attract teachers in any national school: local position, convenient, career progression, family needs, etc. (Hobby, Crabtree and Ibbetson, 2004). But what of overseas staff? Hardman (2001) carried out research on the recruitment and retention of overseas staff in international schools. Table 1 indicates, in rank order, the incentives and conditions that teachers considered were their strongest motivators when seeking to join and/or remain in an international school.

Table 1 Factors influencing motivation to join, and remain in, an international school

Factors	% of sample
Professional advancement in school	88.5
Financial incentives	84.6
Happy working climate of school	84.6
Strong sense of job challenge	84.6
Strong staff development programme	76.9
High quality of staff, students and parents	73.1
High expectations of staff	69.2
High ideals and values of staff	65.4
School strongly centred on student learning	61.5
Staff empowerment through collaborative decision-making	57.7
Strong personal/family induction and integration programme	57.7
Positive staff appraisal programme	53.8
Strong staff involvement in students' personal and social development.	50
Strong staff induction programme	46.2
High prestige of the school	38.5
Strong staff involvement in extracurricular activities	23.1
Other: Sane administration and Board of Governors	3.85
Other: Sense of staff community	3.85
Other: Sense of adventure and need for change	3.85
Other: Good relationship between Admin. & staff	3.85

From his written and interview data, he evolved a taxonomy (Table 2).

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do you recognise this?</i> • <i>Is it relevant?</i> • <i>(How) can it be helpful to boards and principals?</i> |
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Table 2: CATEGORIES OF OVERSEAS TEACHERS APPLYING FOR POSTS AT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS (Hardman, 2001)

Category of teacher	Motivators	Advantages to school	Potential disadvantages
Childless career professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ happy working climate ▪ Feeling valued ▪ new teaching ▪ exciting activities ▪ involvement with students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ dedication ▪ experience ▪ may extend contract ▪ welcomes change ▪ no expense of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ few – ideal teachers! ▪ perhaps may eventually turn into a Penelope (ie, someone who has integrated completely with the local community)?
Maverick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ change of country ▪ global travel ▪ new school location ▪ possible escape from own national system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ enthusiasm and creativity ▪ embraces change and responsibility ▪ no expense of children ▪ easy rapport with students ▪ cheap ▪ easy to acquire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unlikely to extend contract ▪ may break off contract unexpectedly if personal circumstances are unsatisfactory ▪ superficial commitment to school development plan (seen as “educational tourist”)
Career professional with family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ prestigious school (rather than location) ▪ whole financial package, (insurance, accommodation, pension, education for their own children), ▪ commitment of school to innovation and improvement ▪ happy working climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ stability – less likely to leave on whim ▪ can create conditions for innovation in school ▪ may bring 2 staff (with spouse) ▪ likely to extend contract, if conditions suitable for family ▪ regards this post as stepping stone for the next, so gives much to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ expensive: huge investment with whole family ▪ disaffected spouse or children may influence teacher’s own decision to stay
Senior teacher (older, children left home):			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ senior Penelope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ social integration into community more important than job challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ stability in school ▪ plenty of experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ change may be threatening and can become “resisters” ▪ may not move when outlived their value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ senior career professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ job challenge and stimulation ▪ life-long learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ experienced in innovation ▪ no ties ▪ maturity in dealing with staff 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ senior maverick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ freedom from family life ▪ urge to travel again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ experience ▪ curiosity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ working towards retirement plans ▪ desire “to see it all before I retire”

