MANAGING EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDE FOR TOP PERFORMANCE

DR. SOLA AINA
Head, Department of Educational Management
Lagos State University, Ojo.

Focus of Presentation

At the end of the session, participants should be able to

- appreciate the hierarchy of organisational goals and objectives
- understand the similarities between organisation and management
- appreciate the interlocking similarities of skill/education/attitude
- know the assumptions order lying the nature of man
- master the skills, knowledge and techniques of motivating people to obtain optimum level of performance

I. INTRODUCTION

People are the single most important resource in any enterprise. They are the key to high productivity and efficiency. If you ask managers about the most important problem in the management of people at work the chanc`es are, they will mention motivation, leadership and communication. Motivation activates human energy. It is a force which leads people to satisfy their important needs.

All human behaviour is directed towards a goal. The critical factor is the direction of that motivation – is it to work hard, to do high quality work, or to sleep as much as possible on the job without being caught by the supervisor? The topic of motivation has been of keen interest to managers and social scientists especially within the past three decades. In this chapter, some of their findings will be reviewed within the individual and social perspectives. We will then turn to organizational concerns. Finally, consideration will be given to specific motivational techniques for improving productivity among employees.

This paper is designed to:

1. help managers appreciate the critical importance of people in the achievement of organizational objectives.
2. assist readers to understand the nature of man and human behaviour in work situations.
3. highlight the techniques of motivating employees for higher performance.

II. MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF MAN

Every manager makes assumption about people, whether he is aware of these assumptions or not. His effectiveness as a manager will depend on the degree to which its assumptions fit empirical reality. Historically, people in organizations have largely reflected four sets of philosophical assumptions on the nature of man. These four sets of assumptions are:

1. The rational economic man
2. Social man
3. Self-actualising man and
4. Complex man.

i. Rational-Economic Man

The assumptions which underline the doctrine of rational economic man derived originally from the philosophy of Hedonism which argued that man calculates the action that will maximize his self-interest and behaves accordingly. The general line of thought of the rational-economic man should be summarized as follows:

a. Man is primarily motivated by economic incentives and will do that which gets him the greater economic gain.

b. Since economic incentives are under the control of the organization, man is essentially a passive agent to be manipulated, motivated, and controlled by the organization.

c. Man's feelings are essentially irrational and must be prevented from interfering with his rational calculation of self-interest.

Implicit in these assumptions are some additional ones which have been explicit by Douglas McGregor in his analysis of Theory X. Theory X assumes that:

d. Man is inherently lazy and must therefore be motivated by outside incentives.

e. man's natural goals run counter to those of the organization, hence, man must be controlled by external forces to ensure his working toward organizational goals.

f. Because of his irrational feelings, man is basically incapable of self-discipline and self-control.

g. But, all men are divided roughly into two groups – those who fit the assumptions outlined above, and those who are self-motivated, self-controlled, and less dominated by their feelings[2].

Ultimately, the doctrine of rational, economic man classified human beings into two groups – the trustworthy, money-motivated, calculative masses and the trustworthy, broadly motivated moral elite who must organize and manage the masses. As we will find out later, the main problem with this theory is that it fits no one, but rather, it over-generalises grossly and over-simplifies in painting man as either black or white.

ii. Social Man

The Hawthorn Studies dramatically drew attention to the fact that in determining work patterns, the need to be accepted and liked by one's fellow workers is as important as, or more important than the economic incentives offered by management. Elton Mayo, the proponent of the Social Man developed a set of assumptions about the nature of man as follows:

a. That man is basically motivated by social needs and the desire to obtain his basic sense of identity.

b. As a result of the Industrial Revolution and the rationalization of work, meaning has gone out of work itself and must therefore be sought in the social relationships on the job.

c. Man is more responsive to the social forces of the peer group than to the incentives and controls of management.

d. Man is responsible to the extent that a supervisor can meet a subordinate's social needs and needs for acceptance[3].

The school of thought assumes that a manager should not limit his attention to the task to be performed; but should give more attention to the needs of the people who are working for him.

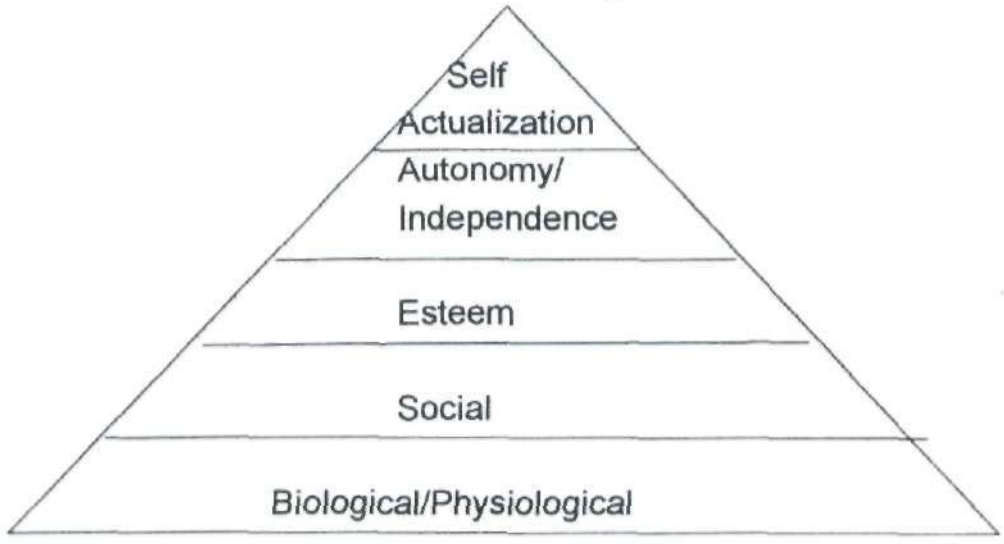
Many studies lend support to the assumption that man is essentially, socially motivated in his organizational life. Though the rational-economic model of man is not very general, we cannot claim clear evidence for the universality of social man.

iii. Self-Actualising Man

A number of psychologists studying human behaviour in organizations have come to a major conclusion that the organisation's life, particularly in industry, has removed meaning from work. Argyris, Maslow, McGregor and others tend towards this point of view. The problem is that most jobs in modern industry are

so specialized or fragmented that they neither permit the worker to use his capacities nor enable him to see the relationship between what he is doing and the total organizational objective. According to this view, man's motives fall into classes which are arranged in a hierarchy as depicted by figure X – I.

Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs



The hierarchy of these needs are:

1. Physiological needs for survival, safety and security.
2. Social and affiliative needs
3. Ego satisfaction and self-esteem needs
4. Needs for autonomy and self-independence
5. Self-actualisation needs the sense of maximum use of all his resources.

As the lower levels needs are met, some of the higher levels needs are realized. Even the least paid and untalented workers seek self-actualisation, a sense of meaning and accomplishment in their work, if their other needs are more or less fulfilled.

IV. *Complex Man*

In the industrial nations of the world, a number of research findings within the past three decades have led to a refinement of our model of man, of organization and of management strategies. Man is a more complex individual than rational-economic, social or self-actualising man. Not only is he more complex within himself but he is also likely to differ from his neighbours and co-workers in the pattern of his own complexity. Some of the assumptions underlying this complexity are:

a. *Man is not only complex, but highly variable; he has many motives which* are arranged in some sort of hierarchy and importance to him but this hierarchy is subject to change from time to time and from situation to situation.

b. Man is capable of learning new motives through his organizational experience.

c. Man's motives in different units in the same organization may be different. A person who is alienated in the formal organization may find fulfillment of his social and self-actualisation needs in the informal organization.

d. Man can become productively involved with an organization on the basis of many different kinds of motives. His ultimate satisfaction and effectiveness of the organization depends only in part on the nature of his motivaton[4].

It is important to note that these points do not contradict any of the previously cited strategies. We are not implying that adhering to traditional principles of organization or getting employee-centred of facilitating the work of subordinates is wrong. Any of these approaches may be right or wrong in some situations and with some people.

V. The Traditional Approach

The traditional form of motivation that is most recognized in Nigeria is that of formal authority and economic reward. It consists of 'forcing' people to work by threatening to fire them or cut their economic reward if they don't. This assumes that the main reason why people work is to earn money. This approach assumes that since no one likes to work, people rules are promulgated to show who is the boss. This approach is associated with Taylor's Scientific Management School.
By virture of our culture we were taught early in life both at home and at school to show strict obedience to our elders. When we grew up as adults, there was little difficulty in adjusting to stern disciplinary measures in the office and in the factory. Since the beginning of the economic boom, coupled with a more *laisez-faire* approach in our educational system, the importation of foreign films and movies, the western text books and the extensive traveling of our educated and economic elite, recent years have witnessed a revolution of our social values. Freedom and self-expression are now encouraged in the home. The ban on corporal punishment in our educational system has contributed to this. As a consequence, the young worker finds it hard to accept leadership.

III WORKER EXPECTATIONS FROM WORK

What do workers want from their job? According to Eli Ginzberg in his Human Economy,

> *Workers want to earn enough from their work to meet the needs of their families, and to enjoy a rising standard of living. Secondly, they want reasonable assurance that if their performance is satisfactory they can look forward to holding their jobs and to the special benefits which will accrue to them by virtue of their long term with the organization .... They want their*

jobs to provide the satisfaction that comes from meaningful activity. Finally, workers expect that those who supervise and direct them will not infringe on their rights as human beings and as citizens[5].

In spite of all these fringe benefits, however, we do not need anyone to convince us that productivity in Nigeria is one of the lowest in the world. As reported in a recent study:

- Approximately 50 – 60 per cent of the Nigerian workers in the public service are under-utilised and wasted.
- Apart from the oil boom of the past decade, productivity gains in our public service remains one of the lowest in the world.
- Productivity increase is the key to most of our economic and social concerns-the oil glut, unemployment, runaway-inflation, etc. A nation with a sagging productivity is a nation in trouble.

If Nigeria is to survive, ways must be found to increase productivity significantly[6].

If we want to understand why people do not work in any society or organization, it is necessary to look up, not down. It is equally important to look at the problem of morale in the work-place and the general morale in society.

IV. HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN ORGANISATIONS: EMPIRICAL CASES

As we pass through the decade of the nineties, national moral is shaky. The front pages of our national dailies mark the grim phalanxes of run-away inflation, recession, scarcity, crime, corruption and bribery in high and low places and graduate unemployment. Chief Jerome Udoji, former President of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria summarized the situation this way:

It is silly to hire someone because he is your cousin or your friend's son, or your sycophant, put him in a job for which he is unskilled, unsuited, or untrained, and then wonder why nothing gets done. The administrative paralysis of neglect, lack of morale, indifference, sagging productivity, callousness and inefficiency could be explained in terms of the attributes of the underlying culture, attitudes and values.

Professor O. Oloko in 1977 conducted a job attitude and promotion survey among Nigerian workers. The survey revealed that promotion, status and prestige are shared out on the basis of nepotism, rather than merit – see Table 1

Perceived Paths to Promotion by Rank and File Workers at Muddy Water.

Question:
Around here, do you feel that a man gets promoted according to skill and how hard he works, or are people promoted for other reasons?

Table 1

Criteria for Promotion as Perceived by Rank and File Workers

Promotion Criteria	% of employees Perceiving Path	No Surveyed
Exclusively on Skill and effort : :	29	116
Mostly on skill and effort : : : :	22	92
Mostly for being Bosses favourites	49	197
Total : : : : : : : : : : : :	**100**	**405**

Source: O. Oloko, "Incentives and Reward for Efforts, in Management In Nigeria, Vol. 13, No. 5, June/July 1977, p. 65.

Table 2 reveals that the Nigerian worker does not perceive that his advancement depends much on how hard he works. The table further shows that 45 per cent of the 405 workers who were interviewed were promoted mostly for being the bosses' favourites, 29 per cent on skills and efforts while 22 per cent on mostly skills and efforts.

Table 1poses a more threatening picture. In the survey, respondents and supervisory workers were asked to record their perception of their own efforts "as path to success" by nationality; length of service, job title and education.

Table 2

Management and supervisory workers' perception of the fate of own efforts as path to success by Nationality, Length of service, Job title and Education.

Nationality	Fate	Own effort	No. of Respondents
Nigeria : : : : :	77	23	52
Non-Nigerian : : : : :	38	63	8
Length of Service			
Very Short : : : : :	35	65	17
Short : : : : :	73	27	15
Very Long : : : : :	100	0	15
Long : : : : :	85	15	13
Job Title			
Manager : : : : :	60	10	10
Engineer : : : : :	55	45	20
Supervisor : : : : :	88	12	25
Education			
High : : : : :	47	53	15
Secondary : : : : :	93	7	14
Primary : : : : :	86	14	22

Source: O. Oloko op. cit.

The 10.3 shows that 77 per cent of Nigerian manager's success is based on fate while 23 per cent attribute success to effort. The table also revels that the longer the employee serves in the organizations the more he attributes success to fate and that the less educated worker tends to rely more on fate than on efforts.

If these findings are representative of the opinions of Nigerian managers and supervisors, the future of this country is shaky. Instead of working very hard, an average Nigerian manager follows the road he believes led other to their gold mines. As reported by Pita Ejiorfor:

> *The Nigerian worker "assvages" fate and gods by offering sacrifices, wearing success charms, attending spiritual churches and joining secret societies and social clubs. He hovers around with his boss, sees him with work under his "townsman". The time meant for work is spent in lobbying*

As of now, there is hardly any organization that rewards officers on any objective criteria for salary increases, promotions or quality of assignments. Unless merit rating is 'closely' tied to valid measures of actual performance workers morale will continue to dampen and productivity will suffer.

The challenge facing each manager in Nigeria today is which way to go, is it to the capitalist West, to the East, to an industrialized Japans or to go caused a great deal of organized confusion. In the West, they follow the rationalization process – the most competent of all candidates normally gets a given job, to follow the principle of merit in awarding rewards to workers. In Japan, the system is essentially paternalistic. Individuals are employed for life. Individuals are not necessarily recognized for their skills but for their compatibility with the organization which they work for in many different capacities. Labour turnover is much less. They have more common interest in the progress of the organization as a whole.

In Japan, individual rewards are attached to (a) seniority (b) company performance (c) individual performance and (d) responsibility, with seniority being far more important than in the West. In the west, seniority is a far smaller factor, while skills or specialization is far more important. The attaching of importance to seniority and company performance reduces conflicts of interest within each organization, since it means that all will benefit from the progress of the organization as a whole.

A. Clear Objective and Positive Reinforcement

For any new behaviour to persist, it has to be consistently rewarded. The consistency and effectiveness of reward are a function of reinforcement. Positive reinforcement means that rewards are used to encourage people to perform in a desired manner. According to Wiard, there are three necessary conditions for successfully motivating employees:

1. Desired level of performance should be known and clearly stated.
2. People should be rewarded for specific increase in level of performance.
3. Rewards should follow desired performance as closely as possible.

This requires a system of communication that is related to the objectives of positive reinforcement. Accurate information systems are required in order to gauge performance and feed back results. In order for people to be encouraged and motivated to be productive, they must know where they stand.

B. Monetary Incentives

Interestingly enough, studies on money as a motivator for higher productivity arrive at some what ambivalent conclusions about its effectiveness. Income

satisfies a number of needs, both financial and psychological. The problem in understanding its function as a productivity motivator is that money covers a wide range of needs and difficulties exist in isolating its effect relative to other motivators. Whoever, in a society where the basic needs are not well satisfied, the size and importance of one's pay packet is highly important.

Within the past four years, Nigerian worker have been facing economic crisis. Their standard of living have suffered adversely as a result of run away inflation, unemployment and delays in salaries and worsening condition of service. In order to turn the Nigerian workers around, we have to put our searchlight on how to pay with performance;

C. Status

The term status refers to the esteem in which one is held by others. This usually is related to increases in compensation and involves promotions, impressive titles and a broad scope of responsibility for the work of others.

Other may include more attractive office space and carpets, beautiful secretaries and numerous special privileges.

D. Participation in Decision-Making

Under participative management the employers "confer" with management over decisions that affect them and their work. One of the first to use this system was Douglas McGregor who recognized that people tend to work harder when they feel they are part of the total organization. This is unduly recognized as desirable since people develop a sense of commitment when they participate in planning and making choices.

E. Flexible Working Hours (Flextime)

Flexible working hours has a favourable motivating effect on employees because it gives them a feeling of personal control and choice over their lives. It helps reduce frustration and boredom on the job.

F. Evaluation of Individuals

Most managers both in the public and private sector often appear to make the implicit assumption that man is basically bad an needs to be controlled. For example, the time clock used in many factories and sign-in registers in white collar jobs require employees to punch or sign in and out; the assumption is that people do not want to work and therefore will cheat their employers if they have a choice.

G. Openness Towards Others

In our culture, we tend to repress, hid or deny the existence of feelings. Managers and supervisors are concerned about losing control. At the same time, there is increasing recognition that emotions may be good for an organization since many of its objectives are emotional. For example, such virtues include high motivation, high morale, loyalty, teamwork, commitment and creativity tend to stem from personal feelings and are not necessarily rational.

In our culture, we tend to mark ourselves and play games with others. If our organizations are to increase productivity significantly, then every effort must be geared towards giving employees an opportunity to be more open about how they fell, how they think, and how they reach their conclusions. We have to move away from the use of titles, status to maintain power and prestige towards openness and accomplishment.

H. Suggestion System

The theory behind suggestion systems is that employees are capable of generating new approaches and ideas that will improve productivity. In order to draw this out, rewards are given to those who clearly develop good ideas. With the possible exception of few organizations in the country, we have not advances the establishment of a dynamic, well supported suggestion system.

Notes

[1]Sola Aina (2005) Managing the Human Capital in Nigeria, Fountain Training Consult, Lagos.

[3]Eli Ginzberg, The Human Economy, New York, McGraw Hill, 1976.

[7]Trevor M. Farrel, "Why People Don't Work in the Caribbean", Management in Nigeria, April 1981. pp. 34-44