

PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYEES ON HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

¹Dr.S.Saraswathi, ²Elagandula Amani

¹Associate Professor, ²MBA Student

School of Management Studies

Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology

Hyderabad – 500 075, Telangana, India.

Abstract: Organizations would like to have their employee's motivated for better performance, but do not really understand what motivates employees. Organizations will succeed only when employees work presently and prepare themselves for future. There are needs to be met for employees, to succeed in the workplace. Motivated employee is a valuable asset who creates value for the organization. This study is aimed to examine the relative strength the employees attach to the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Data was collected through a questionnaire consisting of 20 items categorized under five needs of Maslow's hierarchy. The respondents consisted of software employees working in various software organizations. Convenience sampling is used for collection of data from 120 software employees. The results indicates that basic needs were given high importance by the employees followed by Esteem needs, Safety needs, Self-Actualization needs and Social needs. The main concern of the employees was special wages, bonuses, incentives, equipment's and using of their skills, and giving best to the job. Hence it is essential for an organization to motivate their employees towards achieving of organizational goals by fulfilling their needs.

Index Terms - Motivation, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Software Organization, and Employees.

I. INTRODUCTION

People in an organisation are considered as valuable asset. In the 21st century, human asset is considered the most important asset of any company (Hafiza, Shah, Jamsheed and Zaman, 2011). Without increased motivation of the employees, the organization may lose valuable employees and will be disadvantage in attracting best talent (Dessler, 2003). Presently there is no scarcity of manpower but scarcity of best talented manpower. Rewards can serve the purpose of attracting best talent, achieving human resource objectives and also obtaining competitive advantage (Bratton and Gold, 2007). Beck (1983) found that happy employee tend to be more motivated and will be faithful to a company which results in higher quality output. Caruth and Handlogten (2002) mentioned that reward systems are considered as forerunners of employee's motivation. Since the employees are the most driving force for organizational success, their continuous efforts could be realized by providing rewards for their best efforts.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Managers play a significant role in motivating the employees. Motivating implies that one person induces another person to engage in desired work behavior by ensuring that a channel to direct the motive of the person becomes available and accessible to the person. Pinder (1998) defined a term motivation as "a set of internal and external forces that triggers work related behaviours that determine its form, intensity, direction and duration." It is at the heart of how innovative and productive things are done at the workplace. A number of theories have been propounded to analyze why a person behaves the way he does. Maslow's Need Hierarchy is one among the theories which is considered for this study.

2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

The theoretical framework for this study is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This theory is based on the study of the person which includes one's self-awareness and choices (Schunk 2011). The hierarchy of needs is a pyramid in which the basic needs exist at the bottom, with the needs becoming more complicated as one moves from bottom to top.

Abraham H Maslow classified human needs into five categories: 1. Physiological needs 2. Safety needs 3. Social needs 4. Esteem needs 5. Self-actualization needs. Maslow regarded the first three needs (Physiological, Safety, and Social needs) as the lower order needs and the other two (Self actualization and esteem needs) as the higher order needs. Once a person's basic needs are met, they try to satisfy needs in the next level of hierarchy (Maslow, 1943; Schunk, 2011; Weiner, 1992). The fulfilment of one need will induce for next level (Maslow A, 1954).

2.1.1 Physiological Needs: These are lower-order needs and include the need for food, clothing and shelter. These are the basic needs to be satisfied before a person is motivated by higher-order needs.

2.1.2 Safety Needs: These are also called as Security needs. These are the needs for a secure and stable environment and the absence of pain, threat or illness.

2.1.3 Social Needs: These needs include the needs for love, affection, and interaction with other people. These needs are also called as belongingness needs or affiliation needs. The need of human beings to have interpersonal attachments is fundamental to the species (Baumeister and Leary 1995). Maslow (1987) acclaimed that when physiological and safety needs are largely accomplished people “hunger for affectionate relations”.

2.1.4 Esteem Needs: These needs include self-esteem through personal achievement and social esteem through recognition and respect from others. Maslow (1943) categorized the esteem needs into two components: (a) esteem for oneself and (b) respect from others. Esteem for Self: The term “esteem for self” is defined as a person’s attitudinal evaluation of and the respect he or she has for his or her own nature or character and the related feelings of one’s worthiness, merit, or value as a person (Oxford Dictionary and Guindon’s 2002 review of concept). Esteem from others: ‘Esteem from others’ is defined as what a person receives, i.e. the attitudinal evaluation and respect a person receives from people about that person’s nature or character and their related sensibility about that person’s worthiness, merit, or value as a person.

2.1.5 Self-Actualization Needs: It is the highest level of the hierarchy of needs. Maslow (1987) described it as “people’s desire for self-fulfillment, namely, the tendency for them to become actualized in what they are potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more what one idiosyncratically is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming”.

III. METHODS

The target population for this study included employees at different software organizations. Employees in this study were of different categories i.e. gender, age and experience. The structural questionnaire consisted of 20-items categorised under five needs of Maslow’s hierarchy i.e. Basic needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. The scoring for each item range from +3 to -3 points where +3 strongly agree, +2 Agree, +1 Slightly Agree, 0 Don’t Know, -1 Slightly Disagree, -2 Disagree, -3 Strongly Disagree. A questionnaire was administered by convenience sampling method among 120 employees. The respondents were asked to fill the data by giving their demographic information i.e. Gender, Age and experience. This study seeks to identify the employees’ perception and the relative strength they attach to Maslow’s hierarchy needs. Data was collected and analyzed by simple mean calculation.

IV. RESULTS

There were 120 respondents under the study. A 20-item instrument consisted of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Each need consists of 4 items. The responses and the results are presented below.

4.1 Basic Needs

Managers in organizations have to be aware of the extent to which the employees give importance to physiological need and at the same to know the care being taken in an organization. If employees are motivated by these needs, the concern for work will not affect them. Managers who focus physiological needs to motivate subordinates assume that people work primarily for money to fulfill the basic needs. According to Maslow, organizations must provide employees with a salary that enable them to afford adequate living conditions. In the below table the items 1, 4, 16, and 20 represents the Basic needs the employees attach their relative importance.

Table-1: Perception of Employees on Basic Needs

| Item | Statement | Mean Score |
|--------------------|--|------------|
| 1 | Special wage increases should be given to employees who do their job well | 2.54 |
| 4 | Supervisors should give a good deal of attention to the physical working conditions of their employees | 2.39 |
| 16 | Individual incentive bonuses would improve the performance of employee | 2.54 |
| 20 | Having good equipment to work with is important to employees | 2.57 |
| Average Mean Score | | 2.51 |

It is inferred from table-1 that the employees gave high importance to the equipment to work (mean 2.57) followed by physical working conditions of their employees (2.54) and incentive bonuses (mean 2.54). The least concern in the Basic need was about supervisor’s attention in the work place environment (2.39). Overall mean score for basic needs is 2.51 which indicate that employees agree and attach importance to Physiological needs.

4.2 Safety Needs

Safety needs occupies the second level of needs. They refer to the need for a secure working environment free from any threats or harms. The rationale is that employees working in an environment free of harm do their jobs without fear of harm. Managers

who are more concerned with providing employees with safety needs provide with instruments and gadgets that ensure security and physical safety at the work place. In the below table -2, item 2, 3, 9, 19 represents the safety needs.

Table-2: Perception of Employees on Safety needs

| Item | Statement | Mean Score |
|---------------------------|--|-------------|
| 2 | Better Job description would be helpful so that employees will know exactly what is expected of them. | 2.50 |
| 3 | Employees need to be reminded that their jobs are dependent on the company ability to compete effectively. | 2.00 |
| 9 | The company retirement benefits and stock programs are important factors in keeping employees on their jobs. | 2.24 |
| 19 | Job security is important to employees. | 2.73 |
| Average Mean Score | | 2.37 |

Table-2 represents the perception of the employee towards the safety needs. Based on the score of the Items, it can be inferred that employees have given more importance to job security (mean 2.73), next importance was given to job description (2.50) and the employees are least concerned about item 3 which is about the jobs dependent on the company ability to compete effectively. It is concluded that employees are more concerned about job security and description.

4.3 Social Needs

This represents the third level of needs. Maslow contends that when physiological and safety needs have been satisfied, social needs begin to motivate people. The workplace is viewed as an area where employees develop effective personal and professional relationships. In the below table, items 5, 7, 12, 15 represents the Social needs of Maslow. The questions are used to know the perception of the employees towards the Social needs.

Table-3: Perception of Employees on Social needs

| Item | Statement | Mean Score |
|---------------------------|--|-------------|
| 5 | Supervisors ought to work hard to develop a friendly working atmosphere among their people. | 2.43 |
| 7 | Indifferent supervision can often bruise feelings. | 2.02 |
| 12 | Management could show more interest in the employees by sponsoring social events after hours | 2.21 |
| 15 | The quality of the relationships in the informal work group is quite important | 2.00 |
| Average Mean Score | | 2.16 |

From the table-3, it can be interpreted that the employees gave high importance to the superior's effort in the work environment to develop better relations in the work-life (mean 2.43) and next preference was given to the sponsoring of the events by the Management and employees were least concerned about the item 'indifferent supervision can often bruise feelings' and the 'informal relationships in the organisation'. Employees opined that managers should try to provide congenial and warm work environment. They should be encouraged to interact with each other on and off the job. They have given low importance to employee bonding by organising social events like picnics, get together, cultural events and other celebrations.

4.4 Esteem Needs

Esteem needs represents the fourth level of needs. It includes the need for self-respect and approval of others. Organisations introduce awards banquets to recognize distinguished achievements. In the table-4, the items 6, 8, 14, and 17 represent the Esteem needs.

Table-4: Perception of Employees on Esteem Needs

| Item | Statement | Mean Score |
|---------------------------|---|-------------|
| 6 | Individual recognition for above-standard performance means a lot to employees | 2.77 |
| 8 | Employees want to feel that their real skills and capacities are put to use on their jobs | 2.34 |
| 14 | Employees want to be able to think of themselves as the best at their own job. | 2.22 |
| 17 | Visibility with upper management is important to employees | 2.42 |
| Average Mean Score | | 2.44 |

It can interpreted that among the items of the Esteem needs, employees opined that when the employees perform above the standards and having been recognised makes them perform better. Second concern was given to the visibility with upper management. The least concerns compared to other items were employees would like to think of themselves for the best for their job, and using of their skills for the job.

4.5 Self-Actualization Needs

Self actualization is related to self concept. The items 10, 11, 13 and 18 of the questionnaire are relating to self-actualization. The object of these questions is to know the perception of employees on development of skills, chance to be creative, achievement, promotions and pride in one's work etc. The responses are given in table-5.

Table-5: Perception of Employees on Self –Actualization Need

| Item | Statement | Mean Score |
|--------------------|---|------------|
| 10 | Almost every job can be made more stimulating and challenging | 2.08 |
| 11 | Many employees want to give their best in everything they do | 2.11 |
| 13 | Pride in one's work is actually an important reward | 2.33 |
| 18 | Employees generally like to schedule their own work to make job-related decisions with a minimum of supervision | 2.13 |
| Average Mean Score | | 2.16 |

The above table-5 shows the interest of the employees towards the self-actualization needs. The score of 'pride in one's work' is high (mean 2.33) followed by 'employees liberty to do work with minimum supervision' (mean 2.13), 'employees want to give their best' (mean 2.11) and 'job can be made challenging' (mean 2.08). This indicates that to the software employees pride is one of the important items compared to any other items of self-actualization.

4.6 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The means values of five needs of Maslow's are presented in table-6 to show the relative importance the employees attached to the needs.

Table-6: Motivational Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

| Need | Mean | Importance |
|--------------------|------|------------|
| Basic | 2.51 | I |
| Safety | 2.37 | III |
| Social | 2.16 | IV |
| Self-esteem | 2.44 | II |
| Self-Actualization | 2.16 | IV |

The mean scores in the motivational needs range were from 2.16 to 2.51. Data showed that the employees under study placed high importance to basic needs (mean 2.51), esteem needs (mean 2.43), safety needs (mean 2.36) and less emphasis on social needs (mean 2.16) and self-actualization (mean 2.16) [Table-6]. Hence the relative importance attached by the software employees is basic, esteem and safety needs.

V. CONCLUSION

This research is aimed to study the relative strength the employees attach to the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Study revealed that the basic needs, esteem needs and safety needs are of significance than social and self-actualization. Thus, it is found that the employees may not give importance to the needs in an order but based upon their interest the significance of needs may vary and the organization should emphasize the needs which the employees attach high importance in order to motivate them towards achieving organizational goals.

REFERENCES

- [1] Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497–529.
- [2] Beck, R. (1983). *Motivation: Theories and Principles* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- [3] Bratton, J., & Gold, J. (2007). *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice* (4th ed.). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [4] Caruth, D.L., & Handlogten, G.D. (2002). *Compensating Sales Personnel*, The American Salesman, 6-15.
- [5] Dessler, G. (2003). *Human Resource Management*. 9th ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- [6] Guindon, M. H. (2002). Toward accountability in the use of the self-esteem construct. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 80, 204–214.
- [7] Hafiza, S.N., Shah, S.S., Jamsheed, H., & Zaman, K. (2011). Relationship between rewards and employee's motivation in the non-profit organizations of Pakistan. *Business Intelligence Journal*, 4(2), 327-329.
- [8] Maslow A. (1954) *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954) in Stephen P Robbins (Ed), *Organizational Behaviour*, Prentice Hall of India Private Limited, 11, 2005, 170-172.
- [9] Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370–396.
- [10] Maslow, A. H. (1987). *Motivation and personality* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- [11] Pinder, C., (1998). *Work Motivation in Organizational Behavior*. Upper Saddle River, N J: Prentice - Hall.
- [12] Schunk, D. H. (2011). *Learning theories, an educational perspective* (6 ed.): Addison-Wesley.
- [13] Weiner, B. (1992). *Human motivation: Metaphors, theories, and research*. Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.