

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION: AN UNDERCURRENT IN ORGANISATIONAL WORKING

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ABSTRACT

Employee motivation has always been a tedious task. The study tries to find out the constructs of intrinsic motivation in the light of various theories of motivation. It is an effort to understand the need and significance of intrinsic motivation by discussing its merits over extrinsic motivation. It also undertakes the related issues like spirituality, leadership accompanied by productivity. This research paper focuses on various dimensions which need to be considered for promoting intrinsic motivation in an organisation. An attempt has been made to know the limitations of intrinsic motivation. Finally, it gives some suggestions to mitigate those limitations along with the suggestions for the future researches.

Keywords: Employee, Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Leadership, Organisational Culture, Productivity, Spirituality

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a drive which channelizes willingness in a worker to work with all his potentials and energies in a particular direction. Increasing competition, workaholic environment and mounting work stress eventually making an employee feel nostalgic, stand-alone and dissatisfied; thus arise the need of motivation which may rekindle their interest and maintain their concentration. However, in the recent years, it has been noticed that money, incentives and perks have considerably failed to check attrition and thereby drawing the attention of employers towards the needs and significance of intrinsic motivation in organisational parlance; further leading to a continuous search of methods to make a task a more satisfying and enriching experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intrinsic motivation is defined as motivation, which comes from rewards inherent to a task or to the activity itself. It is intact with the work and aims at getting satisfaction and innate happiness from the work. The rewards are joyment-based, i.e. referring to a satisfying flow of activity, or prosocially-oriented, i.e. derived from the wellbeing of others (Osterloh, 2006)^[22] Intrinsic motivation has been shown to be associated with better learning, performance, and well-being (Benware & Deci, 1984; Valas & Slovik, 1993,^[6,26] Ancona warns organizational environments in the 21st century are chaotic and require rapid response from highly committed, productive, intrinsically motivated learning organizations with self-directed, empowered teams that are flexible, flat, networked, diverse, and global (Ancona et al., 1999).^[2] Herzberg (1966) ^[13] described tasks as intrinsically motivating when they are characterized by key “motivators” such as responsibility, challenge, achievement, variety,

and advancement opportunity. In Hawthorne effect Mayo emphasizes that workers could be motivated by acknowledging their social needs and making them feel important. As a result, employees were given freedom to make decisions on the job and greater attention was paid to informal work groups. His model has been judged as placing undue reliance on social contacts within work situations for motivating employees.^[15] Hackman and Oldham (1976)^[11] assert task variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from the task as key task characteristics that generate internal motivation. Maslow (1943)^[20] and Alderfer (1969)^[1] discuss some needs which are strongly related to intrinsic motivation. Maslow's esteem needs, social needs (which Alderfer named need for relatedness) self-actualization needs are associated with intrinsic motivation; apart from this Alderfer's need for growth is also inclined to the same.

Intrinsic Motivation And Related Theories

Intrinsic motivation is a kind of motivation which emanates from the task itself and does not depend on any external force to win the willingness to work in a particular direction. It aims at inner satisfaction and fulfilment attained by performing a particular work.

Following are some theories which include intrinsic motivation fully or partially -

Platonic theory of motivation

Eminent philosopher Plato propounds a tri-partite theory of the soul, which consists of three parts: reason, spirit and appetite. All parts of the soul have desires, however not all desires are the same. Desires take many different forms and have many different responses or results.^[24] Being based on the concept of soul it asserts on intrinsic motivation.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's need hierarchy states five needs : physiological needs, safety needs, social needs esteem needs and self- actualisation needs. Out of these five needs social needs, Esteem need and Self actualisation needs advocate intrinsic motivation.

Alderfer's ERG theory

It posits three needs - existence, relatedness, and growth. The existence need comprises of basic material existence requirements. Relatedness need refers to the sense of belongingness. Growth need is related to the need of personal growth and development. Thus the second and third needs emphasize on intrinsic motivation.

Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory (SDT), developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, focuses on the importance of intrinsic motivation in driving human behavior. The factors that encourage motivation and development are autonomy, competence feedback, and relatedness and thus this theory affirms the significance of intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation and the 16 basic desires theory

Prof. Steven Reiss has proposed a theory that found 16 basic desires that guide almost all human behaviors.^[25] The 16 basic desires that motivate human actions are:

- Acceptance, the need for approval
- Curiosity, the need to learn

- Eating, the need for food
- Family, the need to raise children
- Honor, the need to be loyal to the traditional values of one's clan/ethnic group
- Idealism, the need for social justice
- Independence, the need for individuality
- Order, the need for organized, stable, predictable environments
- Physical activity, the need for exercise
- Power, the need for influence of will
- Romance, the need for beauty
- Saving, the need to collect
- Social contact, the need for friends (peer relationships)
- Social status, the need for social standing/importance
- Tranquility, the need to be safe
- Vengeance, the need to strike back and to compete

The above needs are internal motivators; they come from the inner drives and thereby advocate the role of intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic Motivation versus Extrinsic Motivation

Comparison of Intrinsic motivation and Extrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is satisfaction oriented. Satisfaction is a function of task characteristics and individual values (Locke, 1976) ^[19] Deci, Koestner, and Ryan's (1999a) assert that "tangible rewards tend to have a substantially negative effect on intrinsic motivation"^[8]. Even extrinsic rewards that exceed the value placed on them may realize diminishing returns beyond some point, and intrinsic "rewards" in the task can have negative effects if they exceed the person's abilities or desires (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). ^[7]

Table1. Basic Differences between the Two Forms of Motivation in Organization

Serial No.	Basis	Intrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation
1	Orientation	Inner – self & spirituality	Trade & commerce
2	Drives	Self- driven	Driven by external forces
3	Parties involved	One party: the self	Employer & employee
4	Outcomes	Satisfaction, fulfilment	Monetary rewards, perks plus workaholic tendency, stress

Reasons for the failure of Extrinsic Motivation

1. It is not suitable in long run

2. From the employer's perspective it is burdensome
3. It fetches decreasing returns
4. It hinders intrinsic motivation

The Paradox

Many a times extrinsic rewards may hamper intrinsic motivation as the workers will always do the work only for some external force and in the absence of the same they may not work willingly and efficiently. However, sometimes extrinsic rewards may work positively for intrinsic motivation; for example it may be possible that in the beginning a worker is unwilling to do a work, on providing extrinsic motivation like higher salary and incentives he may get willing and later on he finds the work interesting and develops a passion for the same; he may find his latent skills and talents. In such a case extrinsic rewards play a supportive role for the intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic rewards can, depending on circumstances and individuals (Harackiewicz & Sansone, 2000) ^[12], support intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic Motivation and Leadership

Intrinsic motivation promotes greater coordination and flexibility as it works as a lubricant in organisational working by providing autonomy accompanied by accountability; thereby reducing the need of interference of the leaders. However it requires a lot of patience on the part of leaders as in short run it may not give expected returns; reason being it may be introduced to the employees for the first time and they may require time to assimilate the same. Therefore, to exercise intrinsic motivation transformational and charismatic leadership is needed. The theory of transformational leadership was developed by Bass (1985 & 1998) ^{[4] [5]}. Transformational leaders are willing to empower rather than control their followers. This empowering process is thought to increase followers' self-efficacy and capacity for self-determination (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1998). ^[16] The traits of transformational leadership also have roots in internal motivation as it emphasizes on greater autonomy, innate willingness in workers and a self-generated interest in them. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1996) ^[17] showed that having a charismatic leader is associated with perceiving one's work as more interesting. It provided a firm base to a more holistic leadership that integrates the four fundamental arenas that define the essence of human existence—the body (physical), mind (logical/rational thought), heart (emotions, feelings), and spirit (Moxley, 2000). ^[21] Further the visionary leadership style and affiliative leadership style propounded by Daniel Goleman (2001) ^[10] is also significant in this regard. A visionary leader would be able to understand the far reaching impacts of intrinsic motivation, internalise it and implement the same. Such leadership would allow ample room for the short term intricacies of intrinsic motivation and have patience to wait for long run results. Further, the affiliative leadership brings more cohesion in relations and tasks, it encourages team work and a sense of belongingness with the work, peers and others and with the organisation as a whole, resulting into a check on attrition, stress and unhealthy competition, all leading to set a firm base for intrinsic motivation.

A leader who nurtures, empowers and believes in the potential of employees can build an innovation- friendly environment. He accepts the mistakes as natural steps towards progression, thereby reducing the stress of failure and punishment among employees.

Intrinsic Motivation and Spirituality

As intrinsic motivation originates from the inner-self; it is closely related to spirituality. Spirituality preaches about the eternity of the soul; it talks about the journey of a soul life after life and its continuous learning in every birth, thus it moulds a person to develop a sense of learning in every task without the least expectation of the reward. Epics like Shrimad Bhagwad Gita preach to work for the sake of work stating that “Karmanye vadhikaraste mam faleshu kadachanam” meaning that a person has a right to work and make efforts without thinking of the outcomes or rewards; thereby emphasizing the significance of intrinsic drives. The leader and follower both need to be intrinsically driven and spiritually motivated. Spiritual leadership through vision, hope, faith, and altruistic love thus provides the basis for strong intrinsic motivation through task involvement and goal identification because it meets the higher order needs of individuals, such as self-efficacy, and provides a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000).^[9] They act as a source of help, one can lean on them for support, and they unreservedly give themselves to their service (Horton, 1950).^[14]

Therefore, for the sustainability of intrinsic motivation the first and foremost requirement is that the leader himself should be having the spiritual values, then only can he understand and make his followers understand the significance of self-motivation and inner drives and positive motivators. The central idea is that nobody can give what one does not possess.

Intrinsic Motivation and Productivity

Intrinsic motivation is directly proportionate to productivity. Enhancing intrinsic motivation means infusing a worker-friendly feel in the organisational atmosphere which would be accompanied by greater responsibility and answerability; ultimately leading to qualitative output in long run. The negative forces which affect productivity are- lack of autonomy, repetitive tasks, monotonous methods and greater power distance in organisations. Intrinsic motivation aims at mitigating all these darker aspects and it kindles the inner drives and thereby increases the level of focus on work in the organisation. It motivates employees to develop their own ways and methodologies to increase production. Baek, et al. (2010)^[3] have shown the influences of self-evaluations, job autonomy and intrinsic motivation on in-role job performance. Perry, Mesch, & Paarlberg, (2006)^[23] state that specific and challenging goals can lead to higher levels of performance, productivity, and creativity which in turn is linked with an overall stronger commitment to the organization. Accomplishing goals that challenge employee creativity and problem-solving skills can improve performance, enhance employee self-confidence, and improve job satisfaction which is much more important than a one-time monetary award. Kuvaas and Dysvik (2009)^[18] studied the perceived investment in employee development, intrinsic motivation and work performance. Intrinsic motivation was found to moderate the relationship between perceived investment in employee development and organisational citizenship behaviour. This moderation revealed a positive relationship only for employees with high levels of intrinsic motivation. Moreover, the workers feel a sense of control over their work which further has positive impact on the level of dedication and quality.

Particularly at learning stage and at the time of training intrinsic motivation is of paramount importance as it makes them cherish different dimensions of a job, related challenges, diversities and technicalities which would culminate into greater understanding of the job and productivity therein.

Further productivity should not be considered in quantitative terms only; qualitative aspect is also equally important. Only a passionate and self driven worker can contribute to both these aspects consistently. None of these two aspects can be ignored while considering a long run existence, growth and sustainability.

Paving Way to Intrinsic Motivation in Organization

- a. Employee empowerment and autonomy
- b. Giving challenging task
- c. Boosting a sense of belongingness and relatedness
- d. Reasonable freedom of choice of tasks
- e. Flexibility in timing and per day target (particularly in service sector)
- f. Encouraging learning and development
- g. Providing build-in support
- h. Giving ample scope to creativity and innovation
- i. Provision for task interchange and task variety
- j. Feedback should be discussed with employees

Effects of Intrinsic Motivation**Employer's perspective –**

- Control on attrition
- Lesser burden of supervision and monitoring
- Ease in talent management

Employee's perspective

- Identifying own latent skills
- Reduction in work stress
- Getting a sense of fulfillment, enrichment and development
- Freedom of creativity

Organizational perspective

- Productivity enhancement
- Cohesion in organisational relations
- Development of new methodologies
- Development of an organizational culture which promotes autonomy and innovation

The Other Side of Intrinsic Motivation

- Refusal by workers to perform a task in which they do not find intrinsic motivation

- Autonomy in work generally does not meet out high expectations as it can be misused
- Employees may get workaholic by engrossing themselves in the work and methodologies of their choice and interest.

CONCLUSIONS

- Intrinsic motivation is an investment without any cost in general
- The impacts of intrinsic motivation are visible in long run
- Extrinsic rewards may have positive and negative impact as well on work and productivity.

As intrinsic motivation touches almost all the aspects of the organisation like spirituality, stress, productivity, leadership, employee satisfaction and other behavioural aspects; it can definitely be called an undercurrent in organizational working, it can be finally concluded that it is pragmatic, qualitative and significant in the organisation parlance.

SUGGESTIONS

- Research may be done on the role of intrinsic motivation in public sector
- Intrinsic motivation may be studied in the light of spirituality
- Role of extrinsic rewards in enhancing intrinsic motivation may be studied further.

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