Employees' perception of how managers motivate their subordinates

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EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION OF HOW MANAGERS MOTIVATE THEIR SUBORDINATES

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Abstract

• This study analyses the impact of leadership on employee motivation. Focus is placed on the employees' perception of how managers motivate their subordinates.
• A qualitative approach, was adopted using Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI) with 8 participants, and examined data using Thematic Analysis.
• Results showed that all participants shared similar experiences captured under three main themes, namely explicit communication; implicit communication and relationships at work.
• Research concluded that leadership did have an impact on employee motivation and a great emphasis was placed upon the relationship between employee and superior.

Introduction & Aims

This research focuses on work motivation theories, which allow researchers to understand what motivates employees' within an organisation, as well as how to improve employee efficiency in the workplace. The considered theories with emphasis placed on recognising the role of leadership were the Goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2002), Herzberg motivator-hygiene theory (Herzberg, 1974), Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), Equity theory (Adams, 1963) and the Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964).

Employees who are motivated to perform are typically more productive by investing more of themselves in their work (Salvendy, 2012). These employees' who are productive will contribute to the success of the organisation as well as their personal development. This shows the importance of leaders within organisations understanding employee motivation and the impact this has within their team. Time and money is invested into employees to increase an individual's ability to fulfil their job role.

• This research aims to show the impact of the relationship between employee-superior and the employees' level of motivation.
• Main focus of the research which is to investigate the factors that motivate employees' and how leaders impact this motivation from an employee perspective.
• Semi-structured interviews were utilised to gain rich data of participant experiences within their organisations.
• A qualitative approach using thematic analysis was used on the data to answer the research question.

Method

Design
• Adopts a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews.
• Thematic analysis is used as a method for identifying and analysing themes within the data.
• Research complied with the code of ethics prescribed by the British Psychological Society and their ethical guidelines.

Participants
• The number of participants were eight (N=8).
• Mixture of both male & female participants working in customer care roles.
• All participants were required to have worked for 6 months+
• Purposive sampling used

Materials
• Interview schedule which consisted of open-ended questions all answering the key research question.
• Participants were given a participant information sheet, consent form and demographic questionnaire.
• A recording device was used to record each interview in audio format to be transcribed for data analysis.

Procedure
• Each participant was informed of the purpose of the study and what would happen with the information they provided in their interview.
• Participants were given participation information sheets and consent forms to sign.
• Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes
• After all the interviews were concluded, they were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis.

Results

THEMES

Explicit communication
1. Financial incentives
2. Promotion

→ Showed that employees were motivated by action leading to a reward such as commission based programmes or promotion.

Implicit communication
1. Self motivation
2. Recognition at work
3. Feedback from superior

→ Showed that motivation was innate within employees who valued recognition and feedback which led to self-motivation.

Relationships at work
1. Team work
2. Superiors

→ Showed that relationships at work impacted motivation positively and negatively. This theme relates directly to leadership and motivation.

Conclusion

Findings suggest that leaders do have an impact on employee motivation with most participants accepting the importance of a strong relationship between employee and superior. Research also showed that employees were equally motivated by intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation.

Future research can focus on the perspective of the leader in keeping their employees' motivated and the obstacles they may face. The research should be further developed by assessing how different leadership styles affect employee motivation within different occupational backgrounds.

References

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