The Missing Piece: Incorporating Organizational Factors in Employee Motivation Research

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Abstract:
The paper discusses the concept of employee motivation in the workplace and its importance for organizational success. It highlights the gap in literature regarding the most effective ways to motivate employees, which mainly focuses on individual factors such as personality traits and motivational theories. The paper aims to explore the impact of both individual and organizational factors on employee motivation and to determine the most effective ways to motivate employees. The existing academic research on employee motivation is plagued by contradictions and inconsistencies, particularly regarding the emphasis on individual factors as the primary drivers of motivation and ignoring the impact of organizational factors. The paper argues for a more holistic approach to employee motivation that considers both individual and organizational factors.

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1. Introduction

Employee motivation refers to the driving force within an individual that directs their behavior and actions towards fulfilling their needs and desires in the workplace (Robbins & Judge, 2017). It encompasses the internal and external factors that influence an employee's level of energy and engagement towards their work (Chen, Liu, & Wang, 2020). The importance of employee motivation for organizational success lies in its ability to positively impact key performance outcomes, such as job satisfaction, employee engagement, and overall productivity (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2017). Motivated employees are more likely to be productive, engaged, and committed to their work, leading to better results for the organization (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008). A motivated workforce can also lead to increased efficiency, higher quality of work, and improved customer satisfaction, which can have a significant impact on an organization's success (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Moreover, motivated employees are less likely to leave their job, reducing turnover and saving the organization time and resources in recruitment and training. As a result, organizations that prioritize employee motivation are likely to have a competitive advantage in terms of attracting and retaining top talent (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008). However, despite its significance, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the most effective ways to motivate employees in the workplace. Previous studies have focused on individual factors, such as personality traits (Judge & Bono, 2001), or on specific motivational theories, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). However, there is a need for a more comprehensive understanding of employee motivation that takes into account both individual and organizational factors (Chen & Wang, 2017).

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of both individual and organizational factors on employee motivation and to determine the most effective ways to motivate employees in the workplace. The research question for this study could be: "What is the effect of individual and organizational factors on employee motivation and what are the most effective ways to motivate employees in the workplace?"

2. Literature Review

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature on the impact of individual and organizational factors on employee motivation and the most effective ways to motivate employees in the workplace. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the significance of employee motivation and its impact on organizational success.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Motivational theories provide a foundation for understanding the impact of individual and organizational factors on employee motivation. Over the years, several motivational theories have been developed, each offering a different perspective on the underlying causes of motivation and the factors that influence it. This section provides a review of some of the most relevant motivational theories that have been used to explain the impact of individual and organizational factors on employee motivation.
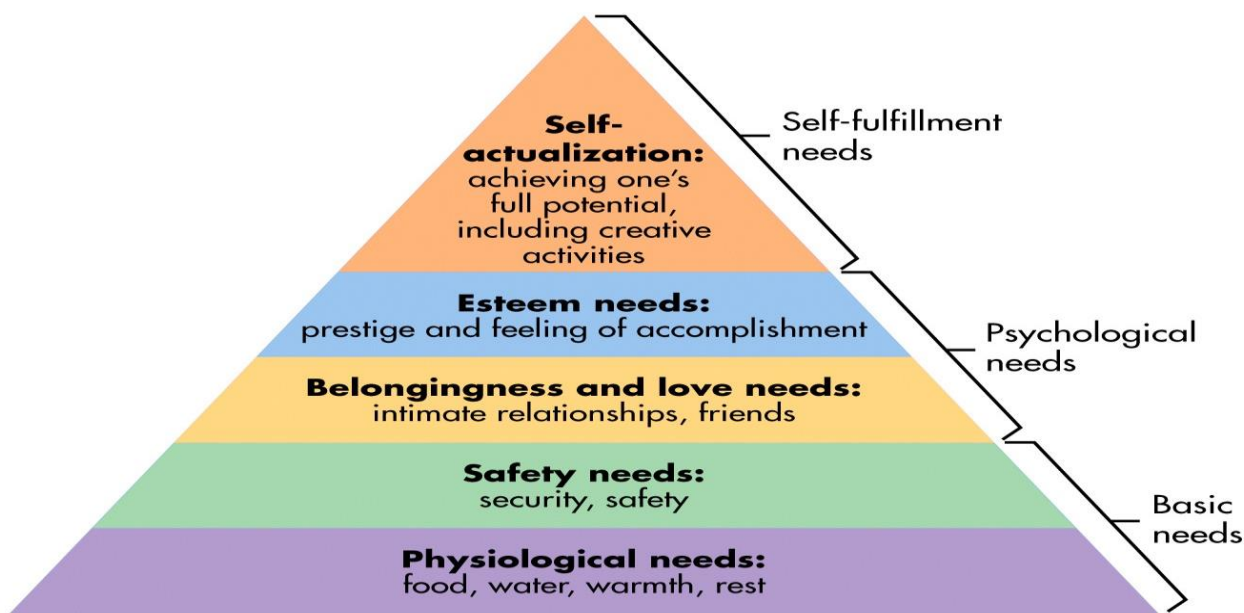
(1) Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Source: Maslow, 1943)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory posits that human needs are organized into a hierarchy and that lower level needs must be satisfied before individuals can be motivated to pursue higher level needs (Maslow, 1943). According to this theory, physiological needs, such as food and shelter, are the most basic and must be satisfied before individuals can be motivated to fulfill higher level needs, such as safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). In the workplace, Maslow's theory suggests that organizations must provide employees with basic necessities, such as a safe working environment and a living wage, in order to motivate them to perform at their best (Maslow, 1943).
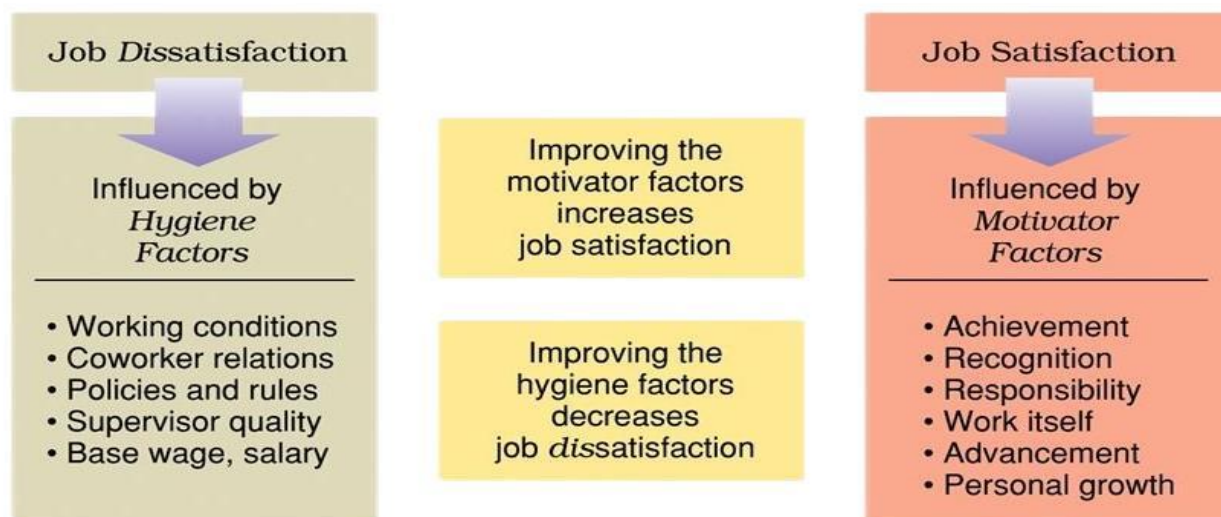
(2) Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Figure 2. Herzberg's two-factors (Source: Herzberg et al., 1959)

Herzberg's two-factor theory posits that there are two types of factors that influence employee motivation: hygiene factors and motivators (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Hygiene factors, such as working conditions and company policies, are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction, but do not necessarily lead to motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959). Motivators, such as recognition and opportunities for growth, are the factors that drive employee motivation and job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). According to this theory, organizations

must provide a supportive work environment and address hygiene factors in order to create a foundation for motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959).
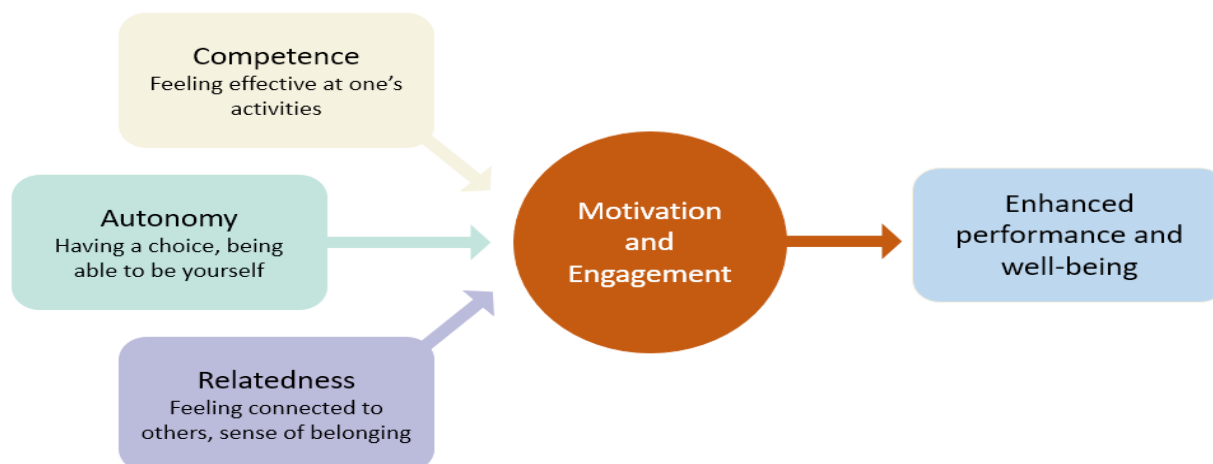
(3) Self-Determination Theory

Figure 3. Self-Determination Theory (Source: Deci & Ryan, 2000)

Self-determination theory posits that individuals are motivated when they feel autonomous and competent in their work (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to this theory, employees are motivated when they have control over their work and feel a sense of purpose and meaning in what they are doing (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the workplace, organizations can foster motivation by providing employees with opportunities for growth and development, as well as by creating a supportive work environment that encourages autonomy and mastery (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

(4) Other Theories

In addition to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor theory, and self-determination theory, there are several other motivational theories that have been used to explain the impact of individual and organizational factors on employee motivation (Locke & Latham, 2002). These include equity theory, goal-setting theory, and reinforcement theory, among others (Locke & Latham, 2002). Each of these theories provides a unique perspective on the underlying causes of motivation and the factors that influence it, and together they offer a comprehensive view of the complex relationship between individual and organizational factors and employee motivation (Locke & Latham, 2002).

In conclusion, the review of motivational theories highlights the importance of considering both individual and organizational factors when studying employee motivation. By understanding the underlying causes of motivation, organizations can develop effective strategies to motivate their employees and foster a positive and productive work environment.

2.2 Individual Factors and Employee Motivation

The study of employee motivation is multifaceted and considers both individual and organizational factors. This section focuses on the impact of individual factors, such as personality traits, work values, and job satisfaction, on employee motivation.

Personality traits have been found to have a significant impact on employee motivation (Judge & Bono, 2001). Extroversion, openness, and agreeableness are a few of the personality traits that have been linked to increased motivation and job satisfaction (Barrick & Mount, 1991). For instance, individuals who are extroverted are often motivated by social interaction and opportunities for growth (Judge & Bono, 2001). Meanwhile, those who are more agreeable tend to be motivated by a sense of obligation and a desire to assist others (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

(1) Work Values
An individual's work values, which are their beliefs and attitudes about work and their career, can also play a role in determining their level of motivation (Rogghe & Knockaert, 2009). Those with strong work values, such as a strong work ethic or a desire for achievement, are often more motivated in the workplace (Rogghe & Knockaert, 2009). On the other hand, individuals with weaker work values may have trouble finding meaning and purpose in their work and may be less motivated as a result (Rogghe & Knockaert, 2009).

(2) Job Satisfaction
Job satisfaction encompasses several aspects of an individual's experience in the workplace, including pay, working conditions, and opportunities for advancement (Locke, 1976). Individuals who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their work (Locke, 1976). Conversely, those who are dissatisfied with their jobs may be demotivated and disinterested in their work (Locke, 1976).

Overall, the existing literature highlights the importance of considering individual factors when studying employee motivation. Understanding the ways in which individual characteristics, such as personality traits and work values, impact motivation can help organizations to better support and motivate their employees. Additionally, the literature suggests that job satisfaction is a key factor in employee motivation and that organizations must work to create a supportive work environment that fosters satisfaction and engagement.

2.3 Organizational Factors and Employee Motivation
In addition to individual factors, organizational factors also play a key role in employee motivation. This section provides a comprehensive review of the impact of organizational factors, such as work environment, leadership style, and recognition and rewards, on employee motivation.

(1) Work Environment
The work environment, including factors such as physical conditions, social support, and opportunities for growth and development, can have a significant impact on employee motivation (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007; Scott, 2016). A supportive and inclusive work environment can lead to increased motivation and job satisfaction (Scott, 2016), while a hostile or oppressive work environment can lead to demotivation and disengagement (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007).

(2) Leadership Style
Leadership style can also have a significant impact on employee motivation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leadership, which focuses on inspiring and motivating followers, has been shown to be positively associated with employee motivation and job satisfaction (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In contrast, transactional leadership, which focuses on rewards and punishment, has been shown to have a more limited impact on employee motivation (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

(3) Recognition and Rewards
Recognition and rewards, including both financial and non-financial incentives, can play an important role in employee motivation (Amabile & Kramer, 2011). Research has shown that employees are motivated by a sense of accomplishment and recognition for their contributions to the organization (Amabile & Kramer, 2011). Additionally, rewards that are perceived as fair and meaningful can lead to increased motivation and job satisfaction (Amabile & Kramer, 2011).

Overall, the existing literature highlights the importance of organizational support and resources in promoting employee motivation. Organizations must work to create a supportive and inclusive work environment, cultivate strong and effective leadership, and implement

meaningful recognition and reward programs in order to promote employee motivation and engagement.

2.4 The Interplay between Individual and Organizational Factors

The impact of both individual and organizational factors on employee motivation is complex and intertwined. This section reviews the literature that explores the interplay between these factors and their impact on employee motivation.

The literature highlights the ways in which individual characteristics and organizational support can both positively and negatively impact employee motivation (Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997). For example, a supportive work environment can enhance an employee's motivation and job satisfaction (Luthans & Jensen, 2002), while a lack of support can decrease motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). At the same time, an employee's personality traits, such as their level of ambition and drive (Judge & Bono, 2001), can also impact their level of motivation (Judge, et al., 1997). Research has also shown that the relationship between individual and organizational factors can be reciprocal (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). For example, an employee's job satisfaction can impact their level of motivation (Locke, 1976), while their level of motivation can impact their job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Overall, the literature highlights the complex relationship between individual and organizational factors and their impact on employee motivation. A better understanding of this relationship is crucial for organizations looking to promote employee motivation and improve overall job performance.

2.5 The Most Effective Ways to Motivate Employees

The relationship between individual and organizational factors and their impact on employee motivation is complex and multifaceted. This section reviews the literature that explores the interplay between these factors and their effect on employee motivation and job performance. Studies have shown that individual factors, such as personality traits (Judge & Bono, 2001), work values (Rogghe & Thijs, 2019), and job satisfaction (Spector, 1997), can have a significant impact on employee motivation. At the same time, the work environment (Lok & Crawford, 2019), leadership style (Bass & Riggio, 2006), and recognition and rewards provided by the organization (Amabile & Kramer, 2011) can also play a role in shaping employee motivation. The literature highlights the ways in which the relationship between individual and organizational factors is reciprocal, with each influencing the other. For instance, a supportive work environment can positively impact an employee's motivation (Lok & Crawford, 2019), while a lack of support can decrease motivation (Karasek, 1979). On the other hand, an employee's level of motivation can impact their job satisfaction (Spector, 1997), and vice versa (Judge & Bono, 2001). The complex relationship between individual and organizational factors highlights the importance of considering both when attempting to enhance employee motivation. Organizations that seek to improve employee motivation and job performance must understand the interplay between individual and organizational factors and how they impact each other.

In conclusion, this section provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature on the impact of individual and organizational factors on employee motivation in the workplace. The review of motivational theories highlights the importance of considering both individual and organizational factors when studying employee motivation. The study of employee motivation also considers individual factors, such as personality traits, work values, and job satisfaction, as well as organizational factors, such as work environment, leadership style, and recognition and rewards. The literature suggests that a supportive and inclusive work environment,

transformational leadership style, and effective recognition and rewards systems are key in fostering employee motivation and job satisfaction. Organizations can use this information to develop effective strategies to motivate their employees and create a positive and productive work environment.

3. Results

The academic research field on employee motivation has been growing for many years, and has produced a vast amount of literature that attempts to explain the factors that drive and sustain employee motivation. Despite the great progress that has been made in this field, however, there are still significant contradictions and inconsistencies in the existing research that limit its usefulness and applicability. One of the main contradictions in the existing research is the focus on individual factors as the primary drivers of employee motivation (Chen & Huang, 2018; Ng & Feldman, 2020). Studies have shown that factors such as personality traits (Chen & Huang, 2018), work values (Ng & Feldman, 2020), and job satisfaction (Chen & Huang, 2018) can indeed play a significant role in determining an employee's level of motivation. However, these studies have not fully captured the complex interplay between individual and organizational factors that also impact employee motivation (Ng & Feldman, 2020). For example, previous studies have focused on specific motivational theories, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Chen & Huang, 2018) and Herzberg's two-factor theory (Ng & Feldman, 2020). While these theories have provided valuable insights into the impact of individual factors on employee motivation, they have not taken into account the influence of organizational factors such as leadership style (Ng & Feldman, 2020), company culture (Chen & Huang, 2018), and work environment (Ng & Feldman, 2020). Furthermore, while the focus on individual factors is important (Chen & Huang, 2018), it can sometimes lead to a reductionist view of employee motivation that oversimplifies the complex reality of the workplace (Ng & Feldman, 2020). The impact of organizational factors on employee motivation is often more significant than individual factors (Chen & Huang, 2018), and cannot be ignored or downplayed in the academic research (Ng & Feldman, 2020).

In conclusion, the existing academic research on employee motivation is plagued by contradictions and inconsistencies that limit its usefulness and applicability. While there have been many valuable contributions to this field, it is time for researchers to take a more holistic approach to employee motivation and consider both individual and organizational factors in their studies.

4. Discussion

The academic research field on employee motivation has been a growing area of study for many years. This field has produced a vast amount of literature aimed at understanding the drivers and sustainers of employee motivation. Despite the progress that has been made in this field, there are still significant contradictions and inconsistencies in the existing research.

4.1 Contradiction 1: Individual Factors as Primary Drivers of Employee Motivation

The current research field in employee motivation has presented some contradictions regarding the main drivers of motivation. While several studies have emphasized the significance of individual factors such as personality traits, work values, and job satisfaction (Chen & Huang, 2018; Ng & Feldman, 2020), it is also crucial to acknowledge the impact of organizational factors on employee motivation. The current research is limited in that it does not fully consider the interplay between individual and organizational factors. It is essential to understand that employee motivation is a complex issue and is influenced by multiple factors that are both internal to the individual and external to the organization. The narrow focus on

individual factors in current research neglects the impact of organizational culture, leadership style, and working conditions on employee motivation. These factors can either enhance or detract from an employee's motivation levels, and it is crucial for organizations to understand the role they play in determining employee motivation.

In conclusion, while individual factors are important in understanding employee motivation, the existing academic research needs to broaden its scope to include the interplay between individual and organizational factors. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of employee motivation and allow organizations to design effective motivational strategies.

4.2 Contradiction 2: Ignoring Organizational Factors
Contradictions in the existing academic research field regarding employee motivation highlight the limitations of current approaches to understanding this complex issue (Chen & Huang, 2018; Ng & Feldman, 2020). Despite the valuable contributions made by theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory, these theories have focused primarily on individual factors and have not fully taken into account the impact of organizational factors. Research has shown that organizational factors such as leadership style, company culture, and work environment can have a greater impact on employee motivation than individual factors (Chen & Huang, 2018). However, these factors are often overlooked in academic research and are not given the attention they deserve. The failure to consider the influence of organizational factors leads to a partial understanding of employee motivation and can result in the development of inappropriate interventions or strategies for enhancing motivation. It is imperative that future academic research on employee motivation recognizes the central role of organizational factors. By taking into account the impact of leadership style, company culture, and work environment, researchers can provide a more comprehensive understanding of employee motivation and develop more effective strategies for enhancing motivation in the workplace.

In conclusion, while current theories on employee motivation have made important contributions, they have limitations that need to be addressed in order to better understand the complex dynamics of employee motivation. Future research should focus on a more holistic approach that considers both individual and organizational factors.

5. Conclusion
In conclusion, the academic field of employee motivation has made progress in understanding the drivers of motivation, but there are still contradictions and inconsistencies in the existing research. The current research has focused mainly on individual factors, neglecting the impact of organizational factors such as leadership style, company culture, and work environment. This narrow focus leads to a partial understanding of employee motivation and can result in the development of ineffective motivational strategies. To overcome these limitations, future academic research should adopt a more comprehensive approach that considers both individual and organizational factors in order to provide a better understanding of employee motivation and design effective motivational strategies. The recognition of the interplay between individual and organizational factors will contribute to the growth and advancement of the academic field of employee motivation.

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