USING MOTIVATION THEORIES TO ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY IN CEMENT MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Employees are the most important resources in any organization. They are needed to use inputs to enhance outcomes. Low productivity in manufacturing companies in Nigeria in general may be traceable to poor employee motivation. The objective of the paper therefore is to determine how certain theories of motivation could be applied to increase productivity in Cement Manufacturing Companies in Nigeria. The paper is theoretical in nature and draws from various literatures on motivation and productivity and concludes that motivation has a link to productivity since ‘motivated employees are productive employees’. The paper further suggests that relevant motivation theories should be applied to elicit and drive employee performance and increase the level of productivity in Cement Manufacturing Companies in Nigeria.

Keywords: Motivation, Theories, Productivity, Cement Manufacturing, Overview

1. Introduction

The problem of scarce resources and the challenges facing manufacturing companies have, in recent time assumed global dimensions. In companies that operate under these conditions of scarce resources and the need to enhance performance and productivity, managers as well as other industry stakeholders are further faced with the problem of how to motivate employees in such a way that their efforts would bring about motivation, job satisfaction and increase productivity in the workplace. The success and effectiveness of any organization depends to some extent on how well employees are motivated. Conventional human resource management theories in general and motivation theories in particular, suggest that motivated employees are satisfied employees and tend to be more creative, loyal, productive and committed to their employers as well as their tasks. Employees are vital to productivity. The effectiveness and efficiency of organizations to a large extent is dependent on employee motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and skills. Motivation is the driving force to pursue and satisfy one’s needs while job satisfaction is an employee’s (individual’s) emotional response to the current job condition or organization. Tietjen & Mayers (1998) observed that to make employees act in a desired manner has always consumed the thoughts of managers. Therefore, instilling motivation and job satisfaction within employees is a crucial task of management. Motivation and job satisfaction, they say, create confidence, loyalty etc and ultimately enhance employee and organizational productivity.

In Nigeria, human resource managers, Manufacturer’s Associations, Ministry of Labor and Productivity, Central Bank of Nigeria, National Productivity Council as well as psychology and organizational behavior literature have identified various factors that may account for low productivity in cement manufacturing companies to include: inappropriate technology, competition, insufficient raw materials and so on. Unfortunately employee motivation is hardly emphasized even though it seems that employee motivation constitutes an effective human resource best practice. In order to attract and retain talented, skilled and knowledge employees, they must be motivated so as to increase their performance contributions which subsequently may culminate into higher levels of productivity. Productivity as used in this context refers to the contributions of an employee to the goals of the organization.
In cement manufacturing companies, performance and productivity is enhanced through motivation (the willingness of an employee to exert efforts towards accomplishing task), ability (employee’s level of skills or intelligence to achieve the assigned task), tools and equipment (basic impacts and processing tools to perform work) and the situation (the operating environment). Therefore, to fulfill the above-mentioned conditions, it becomes imperative that employees in these companies in particular and in all organizations in general ought to be motivated by management using appropriate motivational strategies to bring about job satisfaction and enhanced production. It was on this basis that Drucker (1980. 230) emphasized that “the work of management is to make people productive” so as to achieve superior performance, and gain competitive edge in the organization. In doing so organizations do set their objectives on profitability, sales volume, delivery schedules, quality and so on which are often reflected in their mission and vision statements. These statements can only be achieved if employees are motivated to increase performance and productivity in the organization.

A cursory look at recent research works and literature indicate a positive correlation between motivation and the level of productivity in many organizations. Companies that motivate their employees can attest to the desirability of motivating their employees to enhance a higher level of productivity, retention of skilled and knowledge staff and so on. Such companies are world class and compete globally. Oloko (1997) opined that cement manufacturing companies in Nigeria: Dangote Cement Plc, Ashaka Cement Plc, Cement Company of Northern Nigeria, Plc Lafarge Cement WAPCO Plc and many others are yet to imbibe this human resource best practice of effectively motivating their employees to be satisfied with their jobs and so elicit the desired level of productivity from them. Employees in these companies work under very difficult conditions but they are not motivated (compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world like Cemex (Mexico), ACC Ltd (India), Star Cement Company (Middle East), Cementia AG (Zurich), Lafarge Group (France), Heidelberg Cement Company (United Kingdom) and so on. The resultant effect is that productivity is low and in most cases, they operate below capacity. (The Nation, 5th May, 2010).

The objective of this paper therefore, is to determine the relevant motivation theories that meet employee needs and trigger them to increase performance and productivity in cement manufacturing companies in Nigeria.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

Motivation is generally concerned with why people choose a particular course of action in preference to others and why they continue with a chosen action after over a long period and in the face of difficulties, problems or challenges. The concept of motivation is multifaceted and has various characteristics. Mitacheel (1982) for example, identified four common characteristics which underlie definitions and explanations of motivation. This includes: an individual phenomenon, intentional, multifaceted and prediction of behavior. Buchanan & Hueznski’s (2004) defined motivation as “the cognitive decision making process through which goal directed behavior is initiated, energized, directed and maintained”. Other researchers had earlier looked at motivation from the same perspective. For example, Steers & Peter (1983) and Baron (1991) stated that motivation is the internal processes that activate, guide and maintain behavior (especially goal directed behavior). Ryan & Deci (2000.54) explained that “to be motivated means to be moved to do something”. Recently, Butler & Rose (2011) described motivation as the course of movement, the inspiration behind activity, and the feeling within individual that makes him want to achieve personal need or expectation.

Motivation has therefore been the core of many studies up to now, and a significant number of researchers have been researching the term Ozturk (2012). By and large, motivation suggests goal oriented behavior directed at achieving an individuals’ goal or goals. Motivation is personal, it comes from within and therefore difficult to manage and control. It becomes a bit challenging to come up with one universally applicable theory, though long sought after, from a manager’s perspective. However, research also indicates that a person who is motivated works hard, sustains a pace of hard work, and has self-directed behavior.
toward important goals. When an employee work is unsatisfactory with low productivity, low motivation is often considered to be the problem. The underlying concept of motivation is some driving force within the individual by which they attempt to achieve goals in order to fulfill needs or expectations.

As earlier stated motivation is personal and comes from within the individual hence a number of theories are put forth for further explanations. To fully appreciate what constitutes motivation, two types of motivation extrinsic and intrinsic are first examined. According to Butler & Rose, extrinsic motivation is concerned with real, tangible rewards that are received by the employee while intrinsic motivation comes from within and is therefore psychological in nature (Mottaz, 1985). Essentially, motivation in the organization is concerned with three features of behavior: personal needs or wants, rewards or outcomes of behavior and how individual needs are met (Cooper, 1973). It is assumed that all individuals have an inherent set of needs that can be satisfied through their work. Through their performance in a job, the individual will be rewarded and will, in the process of the reward, have their personal needs met.

2.1 The Content theories of motivation

These theories of motivation, as described by Helriegel (1999), Mullins (2000) and Butler & Rose (2011) are concerned with identifying the essence and substance of what motivates an individual. They try to answer the question: what specific things motivate people? They are to some extent, described as universal theories because they can be applied to all individuals in different cultures. Some of these theories are explained below:

a. Hierarchy of needs theory: This theory is based on the premise that individuals are “wanting animals”, whose needs depend on “what we already have”. Maslow (1964) believed that people have instinctual basic needs and desire those needs to be met. These needs, although initially strong, can appear to become weak and therefore be easily repressed or ignored. These can be drowned out by learning, fear, and expectations. Maslow further argued that these needs, except in exceptional cases, are present in every human being.

As soon as a need is met, the desire for another need to be met will be stronger and take priority for the individual - it will no longer be a source of motivation. Psychologist Maslow’s proposition is that there is an order from a hierarchy of importance - to the needs that people have. Based on the preceding, Maslow suggests that are arranged hierarchically (levels or stages) from the lowest to highest. These stages are: the physiological needs, the need for safety, the need for love, the need for esteem, the cognitive needs, the aesthetic needs, the need for self-actualization (attainment of one’s full potential) and the self-transcendence needs (Daniel 2001).

Daft (1999 .405) further suggested that these needs can be fulfilled both on the job and off can job. The implication of the theories on the business world and on employees is clear - if management can find out which level each employee has reached, then they can decide on suitable rewards that are satisfying to the employee (http://www.tutor2u.net/business/people/motivation). Specifically, all the needs are based on two groupings: deficiency need and growth needs. Each lower need must be met before moving to the next high level and ones each of these needs have been satisfied, if at some future time a deficiency is detected, the individual will act to remove the deficiency (Huitt, 2007).

b. Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) Theory: This theory posits that there are three groups of core needs: Existence, Relatedness and Growth hence the label: ERG theory. Arderfer (1969) modified Maslow’s five levels of needs and compressed them into three levels as stated below:

i. Existence Needs: These include all material and physiological desires (food, water, air, clothing, safety, physical love and affection.

ii. Relatedness needs: These encompass social and external esteem, relationships with significant others like family, friends, coworkers and employers.

iii. Growth needs: These are internal esteem and self-actualization.

The thrust of the theory is that when needs in a higher category are not met then the individuals
redouble the efforts invested in a lower category need. The needs do not have to be met sequentially. If an individual cannot attain a higher need, the person then regresses and focuses on lower-level needs: the frustration-regression effort.

c. The Two-Factor Theory: This theory focuses on outcomes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg (1959), certain aspects of job cause satisfaction and therefore motivation, but certain aspects cause dissatisfaction. The theory identifies aspects of the job and organizational contexts that contributes to satisfaction and motivation. The two sets of outcomes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are separate entities and not opposites since the opposite of job satisfaction is not job dissatisfaction, but rather no satisfaction: and the opposite of job satisfaction is not job satisfaction but no dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 2003.91). Both are treated separately.

Factors that relate to job satisfaction have been referred to as satisfies or motivations. According to Weir (1976.76), in the original research, the following five factors stood out as “strong determinants of job satisfaction”. These factors are: achievement, recognition, works itself, responsibility, opportunity for advancement or promotion.

These factors create positive feelings among employees and are aspects of both job and organization contexts.

Factors that relate to job dissatisfaction (dissatisfies or haggler factors) pay, technical supervision, working conditions, company policies, administration and procedures, interpersonal relationships with peers, supervisors and subordinates, status, and security. They are non-task characteristics of the work environment. Factors that cause dissatisfaction must be fair and adequate or deemed to be fair. In order to motivate employees, the theory suggests that the intrinsic aspects of work need to be considered separately. Other content theories include Leaned needs theory, Incentives theory.

2.2 The Process theories of motivation

Process theories, in contrast with content theories, concentrate on how motivation occurs ie, how behavior is initiated, directed, sustained and stopped. It addresses the mechanism by which human needs changes. They focus on the direction, intensity and persistence of behavior. Donelly et al (1995) believe that in describing this theory, it should be noted that an individual’s behavior is made up of “conscious choices”. Some of the process theories are:

a. Equity theory: Equity theory as propounded by Adams (1963) suggests that individuals will compare the efforts that they make against the efforts made by those around them, that is to say individuals will compare them-selves to others in similar circumstances to them-selves similar work, hours, study fellowship etc and to the treatment that the others receive-pay, bonus, promotion etc and if there is similarity, the individual will sense a feeling of equity, However, if individuals believe that there is an input-outcome in equity (more work for less pay-than others), they will sense a feeling of inequity. They theory assesses an individual’s perceived fairness of an employment situation and find that there are perceived inequalities, he/she would change behaviour and may go further to take action to seek a redress of the in balance. This redress may be in any of the four ways: increase outputs (by working hander, attend training courses, or go for further education), decrease inputs (by working less, refuse to take as much responsibility, or be so obliging to help others), and increase outcomes (aim for extrinsic benefits such as requesting for more pay, extra holidays etc) and quit (resign from the job, absenteeism). Equity theory has helped organization address the issue of injustice, partiality, and unfairness.

b. Expectancy Theory: This theory suggests that motivation is driven by individual’s expectancy of the preferred outcome and the strength of the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual. Individuals, according to Vroom (1946) will consider what they expect to gain from a given situation, what effort they will need to expend, and whether it is worth it to themselves depending on their personal goals. Thus bringing about the concept of valance, instrumentality and expectancy (VIE). These components are further clarified below:

Expectancy: E->P, the belief of a person that his/her effort (E) will result in attainment of desired performance (P) goals. Instrumentality: P->R, the
belief of a person that he/she will receive a reward if the performance (P) expectation is met. Valance: the value of the reward according to the person (is the reward attractive to the person). In summary therefore: Expectancy x Instrumentality x Valance = Motivation.

c. Goal Theory: This theory proposes that motivation and performance will be high if individuals are set specific goals which are challenging, but accepted as achievable and where feedback is given on performance (Locke, 1968 and Latham & Yuk, 1975). The basic premise of this theory is that individual goals (intentions) play an important part in determining behavior. People strive to achieve goals in order to satisfy their emotion and desires. Goal theory further established four main propositions: challenging goal, specific goals, employee participation and knowledge of results (feedback).

3. Relevance of motivation theories to cement manufacturing companies in Nigeria

Scholars like Oloko (1977) Nwachukwu (2002), Okigbo (1991), Nwaroh (1991) and Akinmola (1993) the National Productivity Council (NPC) and other stakeholders in the industry have conducted researches on productivity and employee motivation in the manufacturing sector of the Nigerian economy. They have acknowledged the need to enhance productivity through motivation and job satisfaction. They have also acknowledged the presence of motivation theories in this sector. The answers these theories provide for solving managerial and productivity problems remain dilemmas. It is assumed that if resources are adequate, performance and productivity would increase if employees are well motivated. Specifically, Nwachukwu (2002) stated that most of the features of each theory have some relationships to employee’s performance and productivity in the Nigerian context. Increase level of compensation leads to more compensation which leads in turn to job satisfaction for many categories of employees.

Employees, irrespective of their cultures have needs which they expect organizations to help them meet. Unfulfilled needs create tensions that influence Employees behavior. Employees in cement companies in Nigeria also have needs. These needs includes: need for money, need for congenial associate need for recognition or praise for work done, need for growth, need for comfortable work environment, need for competent and participative leadership, need for socially responsible organization need for shelter, esteem, self-realization and fulfillment and the rest. They also need the organization to carter for their welfare, health problems, family problems and wellness issues.

However studies indicate that these needs are not always met. This is because, most of the cement manufacturing companies have: poor compensation structure characterized by poor salary and wages, constant organizational conflicts between management and unions, unethical management practices that make them socially irresponsible, undemocratic and non-participative leaders and so on. The resultant effect is that employees are hardly motivated to enhance the level of productivity in the sector. As stated earlier, majority of employees in this sector need money or cash compensation to motivate them. In Nigeria, cost of living is very high, corruption has taken a center stage and the rate of unemployment is equally very high. In some parts of the country, it is normal for a man to marry up to five wives having more than twenty children. This also brings about high cost of education and training. Business activities are low as well as savings. The costs of health services are also high.

Operating under these circumstances money becomes a motivator. Employees want money, they expect money and demand money. This tends to confirm Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory that money is important for satisfying lower-level needs. Further, Herzberg also acknowledged the fact that money as a hygiene factor prevents “disease” rather than promote “health” having lasting effect on unfavorable feelings. Money, as a motivator, is symbolic in different ways for different employees and for the same employee in different ways. As a symbol, money represent almost every other value or outcome that an individual is motivated to pursue - status, prestige, self-esteem, achievement, power, security, possessions - and so on. Money is a handy means of comparison with others. It is an individual’s personal scorecard in the game of work or in the larger game of life. In designing and effective compensation and motivational packages for
employees in the cement industry, money should be kept in proper perspective.

Motivated employees are likely to deliver higher productivity and influence others to work harder. However motivation is not a simple concept and different approaches motivate different employees. If a group of people is asked what would motivate them to work hard and asked to choose four from a list of 25 items, it is rare to find many people who will choose four that are the same. This is because people have different needs and expectations. Consequently, it is important that an organization that wishes to take motivation seriously will use a range of approaches that will encourage intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

4. The Concept of Productivity

Productivity, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as cited in Prokopenko (1992) is the effective and efficient utilization of all resources, capital, labour, material, information and time. Nwasike (1991) also agree that productivity is the efficiency with which inputs are used to produce the desired output. Low productivity of labour, which has entrenched itself as a permanent feature and hallmarks of the economies of many countries manifests itself in a number of visible indices some of which include poor quality of domestic outputs of goods and services which stifle exportation, lack of competitiveness of products in international markets causing persistent and wide deficits in the balance of payments, simultaneous existence of surpluses and shortages of skills (occasioned by low labour mobility), use of obsolete and low production technology, inadequate access to basic needs and necessities of life, generally poor physical and mental health conditions of the populace, poor industrial relations and poor human resources management.

Based on these visible low productivity indices, efforts have been made by various governments and other organizations to improve productivity. From developed to developing nations, efforts at promoting productivity are given priority in the national development schemes. Employee productivity

5. Link between motivation and productivity

Literature findings indicate that there is a link between motivation and productivity in the manufacturing sector. A motivated employee derives satisfaction from his job because his needs are met so increases the level of his productivity in the organization. Both the content and process theories, as earlier observed, tend to support the idea that a motivated worker consistently and willingly draws on his ability and uses it constructively for the assigned task in the organization. A motivated behavior is therefore seen in the intent with which the employee works. A motivated employee’s work attitude is wholesome and tends toward high performance and productivity in the organization. Productivity of an employee is a function of his satisfaction and motivation to produce.

According to Georgopolous et al (1957), this assertion depends on: the particular needs of the individual as reflected in the goals toward which he is moving and his perception regarding the relative usefulness of productivity behavior as an instrument or path to attainment of these goals. This implies that the level of productivity should be determined, stated and the appropriate motivation theory applied to all employees who are likely to be beneficiaries.

6. Case study

A number of cases have been put forward of show been practices in employee motivation in many organizations world-wide. Below in one of such cases:

Keystone Food: Using intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to enhance productivity

Keystone Food is a fast-food supplier and a good example of how to motivate employees. According to the Human Resource Manager, key stone has a “strong belief in engaging employees in everything that they do”. This belief underpins the many systems and strategies that it has to encourage a motivated workforce. Consequently, the majority of management are developed from within. The Manchester plan has a lifelong learning centre which staff are encouraged to use for all types of learning. For example, staff on the shop floor may choose to learn a language or computer
skills something that is not directly related to their work but will encourage a learning culture.

Keystone food is involved in the local community in that the Human Resource Manager is part of Heart for Hewood*, which include Human Resource Managers from different companies who encourage activities in the local community. For example, some staff have been involved in a literacy mentoring scheme which they go to local primary schools and listen to kids read for one hour per week. Keystone Food encourages health awareness days and blood donation, and runs campaigns like Respect at Work, which encouraged staff to value each other. The company clearly does its best to create a motivated workforce. Not surprisingly, the activity at keystone has been recognized in that it has won the award for people development from the Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transport.


The case above indicates some of the motivation practices embarked upon by Keystone Food to meet employee needs and enhance productivity. Keystone uses both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation strategies.

7. Conclusion

This paper deals generally with issue pertinent to employee motivation as global strategy in enhancing productivity with special reference to cement manufacturing companies in Nigeria. It considers the declining productivity in the industry and traces it to the inability of management to effectively motivate their employees. Specifically, both the content and process theories of motivation were examined. The paper highlights the fact that motivation theories cannot be utilized in isolation but holistically. In the Nigerian context, money is seen as one of the most important strategy in motivating employees. To Nigerian workers “money is everything” and so he loves it with passion. However, all the variables in the theories examined in the paper can be applied to elicit maximum performance from employees.

References