

PART I

Motivation and the Job Itself

A major emphasis in recent years in the study of behaviour in organisations has been in ways in which the individual can derive satisfaction from the job itself, rather than context factors such as pay. A number of writers, such as Herzberg (1968) have argued that only by improving motivators, intrinsic aspects of the job, can real improvements in productivity be expected. Improvements in extrinsic factors such as pay, it is argued, only have short-term effects at best. Herzberg has also argued that the consistent failure to find a relationship between satisfaction and productivity [see e.g. Brayfield and Crockett (1955)], arises because most satisfaction measures include extrinsic as well as intrinsic aspects of the job.

A number of theorists, such as Lawler, have questioned the causal relationship between satisfaction and productivity. Rather than assuming that satisfied individuals will work harder because they are satisfied, Lawler and others put forward an expectancy theory, in which performance will lead to outcomes which may or may not be satisfying. To the extent that the rewards from performance are valued, and can be perceived of as flowing from performance, there will be a relationship between performance and satisfaction. Expectancy theorists agree with Herzberg on the relative importance of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Expectancy theorists argue, however, that this is because extrinsic rewards are often less tied to performance than are intrinsic rewards such as satisfaction at skilful performance.

An advance in understanding the relationship between satisfaction and performance came with Hackman and Lawler's (1971) study, which analysed intrinsic aspects of the job in terms of four categories, job autonomy (increased responsibility), job variety (related to skill level), job identity (involv-

ing concepts of wholeness and meaningfulness of the job) and feedback of performance.

The paper by Bragg and Andrews examines the effect of increased participation in decision making (increased job responsibility by allowing individuals to have a say in decisions concerning the job). This paper shows that under favourable conditions, participation in decision making can improve productivity. This is of course, not an isolated finding: many studies have found that allowing individuals to participate in decision making has resulted in their taking on group decisions as their own and has increased motivation to achieve goals. It must not be thought, however, that participation in decision making is a universal panacea in solving all production problems. Participation must be in decisions which are seen as significant and important to the individuals concerned. The study of Bragg and Andrews, for example, had as its purpose the increased enjoyment of the job itself.

A second intrinsic aspect of the job is feedback on performance. Feedback influences performance in two ways. First it gives information to the individual so that he can modify his behaviour in the appropriate direction. Second it can act to motivate performance either by recognition of achievement or by allowing the setting of realistic goals. The paper by Hundal suggests that even in repetitive industrial work, feedback can act as an incentive. Meister (1976) in reviewing the literature on feedback, does note some conflict in the findings of studies on feedback, but argues that the evidence suggests that any feedback is more effective than none, that performance improves as feedback becomes more specific, provided that the added specificity is task relevant, and that feedback of the individual's performance is more effective than feedback of group performance.

The paper by Locke *et al.* on job enrichment is one which involved improvements in job responsibility, autonomy, feedback and variety. As a result of the job changes, increases in various aspects of productivity were found, indicating that job enrichment programmes can work. However, as Locke *et al.* note, some of the improvements could have come from better work methods brought about by job redesign, rather than by improvements in motivation. Indeed there was no improvement in job satisfaction, probably because improvements in productivity were not rewarded in a tangible way, i.e. by increased pay.

Whilst Locke *et al.* use interview material to suggest that this group of workers was extrinsically motivated, it is likely that even intrinsically motivated individuals will feel dissatisfied if there is no tangible reward for increased effort and productivity. As many reviewers, e.g. Warr and Wall (1975) have noted, whilst studies in the field of job enrichment are often scientifically questionable, it is likely that changes in job structure which involve changes in responsibility, autonomy, variety, feedback and meaningfulness do have positive effects on both productivity and job satisfaction.

A different, though compatible, approach to motivation is that of goal setting. A number of studies have shown that setting goals for individuals leads to higher achievement than not setting goals or setting vague goals such as 'do your best'. Setting difficult but attainable goals is preferable to setting very easy goals, presumably because the attainment of more difficult goals results in greater feelings of achievement. The paper by Latham and Baldes shows the practical effect of goal setting on performance, and the paper by Meyer *et al.*, in addition to considering the role of performance appraisal, and the problems of negative feedback, reports on the advantages of goal setting, particularly when the subordinate participates in the goal setting process.

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