



Review Article

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Contributions of The Psychology of Motivation for The Understanding of The Job Performance

Nestor Raul Porras Velasquez*

Psychologist from the National University of Colombia, Colombia

*Corresponding author: Nestor Raul Porras Velasquez, Psychologist from the National University of Colombia, Professor and university researcher, Colombia.

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze the contributions that motivation theories have produced for the understanding of the job performance of people at work. Initially, a reflection on the need to locate the question of motivation for work or motivation at work is presented. Then the concept of motivation is addressed in quite broad terms and the best-known classification of the theories of human motivation in the work context is exposed. Finally, some reflections on the applications of these models in the management of human resources in our country will be presented.

Keywords: Psychology of work and organizations; motivation and job performance

Introduction

As has been mentioned on previous occasions [1-5], job performance is a complex psychological reality. For this reason, the analysis, description and evaluation of a person's performance, in the organizational context, implies taking into account a set of contextual psych sociocultural variables that have a cause or effect relationship with said performance in the position, such as the have mentioned [6-11].

According to Porras Velásquez [12], work performance is an effect, among other motivation variables. In this sense, Porras Velásquez & Parra D'aleman [13,14], point out that the actions carried out by people in their work involve internal, external and context factors.

Many times, we have heard phrases like this: "the most important thing in life is to be motivated to achieve what one sets out to do". However, when they ask us: What motivates you to work?

Why do you work? Does your company motivate you to work? How do they motivate you to work? Do you feel motivated to work in this company? Would you work without motivation? Does money motivate you? Why do some people persist in some tasks and get discouraged in others? Etc.

All these questions and others are frequent in the world of work and are almost always addressed to specialists in the management and management of human resources. In particular, the questions have an addressee: the psychologist who works in any type of organization/company, regardless of whether they are private or public, whether they are large or small, whether they have a strategic plan for human development and an incentive plan or not. What is important in this case is that the professional psychologist in the field of organizations have a solid theoretical, conceptual and methodological foundation that allows them to propose intervention strategies, based on the understanding of

basic psychological processes, in accordance with their training and expertise.

In this sense, some of the explanations that have been proposed for the phenomenon of human motivation throughout the history of this academic discipline are presented below.

Motivation to Work or Motivation at Work

Suarez [15], states that: “man has always needed reasons to work. That said reasons are found inside or outside of work; and that throughout the history of humanity there are very diverse reasons for carrying out this work. However, with the emergence of the industrial revolution, the needs to work changed significantly with respect to the period of artisan work.

In this sense, it is evident today that there are many reasons why people say they work. For some people, work is a source of economic resources, an activity that allows them to organize their time, a possibility of social exchanges, a source of fulfillment and personal growth, a stimulus for their creativity, etc. However, almost everyone chooses to work because of the explicit and implicit rewards that this activity provides. However, people experience different levels and types of motivation to work. Consequently, there are several psychological theories about motivation at work.

In the second case, the best way to have motivated staff is by offering them opportunities for personal growth, providing the required support to the company's staff and finding the means to satisfy them. When a person looks at work not only for a means to survive, but also for the opportunity to grow, they are waiting for the opportunity to do so, which is why all their efforts are directed towards this goal. Unfortunately, in some organizations this possibility is not taken into account. and the economic incentive is privileged as compensation for the effort made or the work done.

As can be seen in the aforementioned, it is necessary to approach a conceptualization of the phenomenon of human motivation in the workplace to understand this issue more globally.

The Concept of Motivation

For Mankeliunas [16], it is nothing new that, currently, the term motivation has several meanings that correspond to different points of view. Nor is it true that common language gives this term a broad sense, sometimes of “cause” or “condition” of certain behaviors. For this reason, for this author, the scientific meaning of motivation refers to: “a force of the organism that drives it to act and to pursue certain objectives; that is, motivation is a process that causes certain behavior or that modifies one that already exists. From a psychological point of view, behavior is always motivated, whether it is directed toward a previously set goal or not. All behavior is determined by energy transformations caused by internal or external stimuli”.

In the same perspective and with great clarity, Mankeliunas [16], points out that both common and scientific language refer to the same reality with different or, on occasions, identical terms; Likewise, its contents are part of the common knowledge of man. Question ways of solving problems provide a certain level of insight

into the motivational process. The scientific method has specified the answers offered by reality and behavior, which has determined the content of this publication, and the results obtained through the application of the scientific method have allowed us to find certain common elements at the different levels of the motivational process.

On the other hand, if we look for the etymological origin of the term, motivation is a term that comes from the Latin motus, motio which means moved, movement, which indicates that the individual moves towards a goal. In this way, motivation can be defined very broadly as a process internal or external to the person that energizes and directs behavior.

For Robbins & Judge [17], the question of what motivation is can be answered by giving a definition such as the following: “motivation is defined as the processes that affect the intensity, direction, and persistence of the effort made by an individual to achieve goals.” an objective”. For these authors, there are three key elements of the motivational process: intensity, direction and persistence. Intensity refers to the energetic of a person's intent. This is the element that characterizes most definitions when they talk about motivation. However, these authors consider that a high intensity is unlikely to lead to a favorable outcome in job performance, unless the effort is channeled in a direction that benefits the organization. Therefore, we must bear in mind that both the quality of the effort and its intensity, the effort that we must look for, is the one that is directed towards the goals of the organization and is consistent with them. Finally, they point out that motivation has a dimension of persistence, which is the measure of the time during which someone maintains their effort. In other words, motivated people stay on a task long enough to reach their goal.

Klein [18], affirms that: “traditionally, work motivation has been described, within the literature on organizational behavior, as a set of psychological processes that cause the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behavior”. In this case, we can understand that motivation is defined by psychology as a state or internal process that activates, guides, and maintains behavior.

In a classic study on this psychological phenomenon, Hebb [19], briefly proposed that: “the term motivation refers: 1) to the existence of a sequence of organized phases, 2) to its direction and content, and 3) to its persistence in a given direction or to its stability of content”.

Finally, for Reeve [20], motivation is “a hypothetical cause of behavior caused by environmental conditions (for example, food deprivation), or inferred from behavioral, physiological or self-report expressions”. Based on the above definitions, and for the purposes of this document, the following definition is proposed as a partial synthesis: motivation is an internal state that activates, directs, and maintains a person's behavior toward specific goals or ends; It is the impulse that moves the person to carry out certain actions and persist in them to their culmination. Motivation is what gives energy and direction to behavior, it is the cause of behavior [21,22].

Theories of Motivation

Although we recognize from the outset that there are several explanations for work motivation. That is, on the variables that motivate people to carry out a task in the workplace. We will take the most used classification to group the different theoretical proposals that are: content theories and process theories. As a synthesis, the first ones try to analyze and describe the specific aspects or factors that motivate people to work. While the latter focus more on describing the aspects that start, maintain and direct work behavior [23,24].

Among the content theories we find the following:

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory.
Herzberg's two-factor theory
McClelland's theory of social needs
Alderfer's theory of ERG.

Within the theories of the process, we find the following:

Vroom's expectation theory
Adams's equity theory
Locke's theory of goals

With the knowledge of these seven (7) theoretical proposals, I consider that it is enough for students and professionals of psychology in the field of organizations to propose research and interventions closer to the foundations of the scientific discipline in which we are trained. And not simply stop at holding little workshops to motivate workers at the express request of the middle managers and managers of the companies in which the professional practices are carried out [25].

Conclusion

In the first place, although it is true that there are various theories that attempt to explain people's motivation, very few have been developed to specifically explain motivation at work. Hence the importance of undertaking research that hires and empirically validates the proposals made in other countries.

Second, it is important that the professional psychologist with a well-developed critical sense understands that the popularity of a psychological theory in the applied field of human resource management does not constitute its theoretical support. Consequently, it is necessary to clearly distinguish between the descriptive value and the explanatory value of each of the previously reviewed theories.

Thirdly, it is convenient for psychologists to go deeper and question a little more concept such as: motives and motivation, desire and need, satisfaction and motivation, among others. One of the many factors that affect a person's job performance is motivation [26].

Finally, it is worth reflecting on the importance and ethical implications of motivating others (workers, employees, workers), as if motivation were an external matter and imposed on the human

being to produce more than they can consume. Consequently, I propose the following questions to answer individually initially: Who motivates the psychologist at work? What is the best strategy to motivate a psychologist to work? Why are they demotivated so easily? Psychology students in the classroom? What reasons does a student have for choosing to delve into the psychology of work and organizations in current working conditions?

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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