

EVOLUTION AND NATURE OF THE CONCEPT OF MOTIVATION

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Abstract: *This report examines the evolution and nature of the concept of motivation. It performs a theoretical analysis of the definitions of motivation and attempts to give a scientific definition of the phenomenon of motivation for practising the military profession. The results of the analysis will enable commanders to understand more clearly military motivation in order to effectively manage their subordinates.*

Keywords: Motivation, Evolution, Management, Personnel

1. Introduction

In today's sophisticated and changing security environment, methods, techniques and tools are being deliberately sought and applied to provide qualified, motivated, highly productive and loyal staff capable of achieving the organisation's goals in the medium and long term. Effective personnel management means managing thinking objects, which is the biggest challenge in an organisation. Most time and energy is spent managing the people who carry out the organisation's activities. It is often said that an organisation is as good as its staff.

Unfortunately, the abilities, skills and knowledge of the staff are very rarely used to their full potential. The reasons given by the current managers are different, but rarely does anyone recognise the truth that they lack the knowledge and will to take specific actions in this direction. This is not an easy task, given that the organisation fulfills its goals not through staff in general, but through specific people with well-defined professional, qualification and personal characteristics. In addition, work behaviour is managed through a complex

motivational mechanism that, in a certain way, generates action or inaction to meet specific needs and interests. The person in the labour process thinks and creates, improves his qualities and potential and improves his labour capacity. People need to understand what is expected of them, they need to be explained, persuaded, to gain their trust, empathy, hearts and minds. The purpose of this article is to study the evolution and nature of the concept of 'motivation' by analysing some of the existing literature and attempting to give a scientific definition of the phenomenon of motivation for pursuing the military profession.

2. Evolution of the concept of motivation

The term 'motivation' is derived from Latin and means 'move', 'set in motion'[1]. In the dictionary of foreign words in Bulgarian, the interpretation of 'motivation' is referred to as: 'a set of motives that determine an activity or action', and 'motive' should be understood as: 'impetus, cause, reason for an action'[2]. Therefore, motivation is the reason, the incentive, and the power that

makes people act in a certain way in order to achieve their goals. The motive, in turn, is a conscious impetus for action to satisfy a person's need.

The analysis of existing literature shows that motivation has a complex structure and is inherent only to the individual or personality, characterised by a high degree of consciousness[3]. It is a process of pushing oneself and others into an activity that leads to the attainment of personal and organisational goals [4]. This means that in order to achieve a certain level of motivation, the individual must allow himself / herself to be motivated by the influence of a set of external and internal factors that facilitate the motivational process.

The first methods of motivation date back to ancient times and are strongly intertwined throughout human history and culture. Many examples show how some leaders are still influenced and use these ancient motivational approaches. Many historical documents, such as the bible, ancient myths and legends contain examples showing how a certain monarch or power-holder rewards a hero or threatens him with a sword over his head [4]. In both cases, the hero is motivated for a certain act or behaviour, first by a threat of death or punishment, second by a possible reward. The further back in time we go, the more clearly we can see that people were quite poor and grateful for everything that allowed them to survive or feed their families.

In Western Europe, the situation did not differ significantly until the end of the 19th century, with the economic and social conditions of life being extremely difficult until the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. However, when the School of Scientific Management emerged in the early 20th century, Taylor and his contemporaries realised the ineffectiveness of wage 'earning on the verge of starvation.' Society was still poor despite new technological advances, which led Taylor to

formulate a new concept of 'sufficient daily earnings' [4]. Gradually, he introduced as a way of motivation the extra payment for excess output, leading to an impressive increase in labour productivity at that time.

Initially, the 'carrot and stick' motivational approach produced impressive results, which is why many executives still feel nostalgic for it. Subsequently, however, in the first half of the twentieth century, as a result of technological progress, production increased its efficiency, and hence, the standard of living of working people began to raise. The more the standard of living improved, the more the government realised that a 'strong stick' was not always a sufficient incentive for hard work. This led to the need for management experts to begin the search for new solutions to the problems through psychological motivation.

One of the few educated people well-versed in scientific management and psychological achievement was Elton Mayo. He and his contemporaries were confronted with a number of problems posed by the industrial crisis in America. His first experiment was conducted in a textile factory in Philadelphia in 1923. The results showed that traditional material incentives could not cope with productivity and high staff turnover, which in one of the factory's workshops reached 250% a year. With the help of the guide, Mayo began experimenting applying different resting schemes, and later bonuses for over production. The results were impressive – production increased sharply and staff turnover declined. On this basis, he concluded that the solution to the problems of productivity and staff turnover could be addressed by improving working conditions and bonuses.

Subsequently, Mayo conducted many more experiments until 1943, concluding that human behaviour was based on psychological factors. In addition, informal groups and leaders play an essential role in shaping work behaviour; thus, managers

need to encourage their formation and to address the problems of workers with human understanding. Labour should not create the feeling that employees are being exploited by management. It needs to better understand the human factor in the organisation and improve its communication with it. In this way, Mayo builds a new approach to 'human relations' that contributes to the development of management theory and lays the foundations for contemporary work motivation.

3. Nature and characteristics of motivation

Motivation is one of the main approaches used by managers to increase the effectiveness of organisations. Its relevance is growing especially at times when it is necessary to simultaneously remove the disturbing effects of the environment and find ways to maximise the potential of human capabilities.

According to Victor H. Vroom, one is motivated for a certain action because he hopes that when he performs it, he will move to a state of affairs that will be more satisfying than the previous one, i.e. he will achieve his goals [5]. The specific goals of different people vary considerably, even when they work together and strive for a common organisational goal. Each person's work is aimed at achieving certain goals that he or she believes will satisfy their needs for food, security, belonging, status and self-fulfilment.

Need is a relatively stable mental state of the person, characterised by attraction to things and phenomena experienced as a necessary condition for its existence [1]. Unmet needs cause an individual to take action to meet them. They become a major motive – an incentive that drives people to act in one way or another.

Motive is a conscious impetus that triggers an action to satisfy a specific human need. Arising as a consequence of a certain similarity, the motive is more or less its

reflection. People do something, choose a certain behaviour, make a certain effort to achieve the desired results and satisfy their needs.

Given the great number of interpretations of various authors for motivation, we will look at some of them.

According to Michael Armstrong, motive is 'something that initiates a movement; motivation is what drives people to act and behave in a certain way; to motivate people means to focus them in a certain direction and take the necessary steps to get there'[6]. Porter and Steers describe motivation as 'a force that fulfils three functions: it energises or drives people to act, directs behaviour toward specific goals, and supports the efforts made to achieve those goals'[7].

Catherine Bartell and David Martin believe that: 'motivation is the force that energises behaviour, gives direction to that behaviour, and emphasizes sustaining trends'[8].

From the point of view of personnel management, James Donnelly, James Gibson, John Ivanchevich defines motivation as 'all these circumstances of internal harassment which are described as desires, aspirations, urges, etc. It is an internal state that activates or moves'[9].

According to John Eider, 'in such a managerial position, motivation means giving a person a motive or incentive to perform one action' or another'[10].

So far, it can be summarised that all of the following interpretations view motivation as something that drives a person out of a certain state and prompts him or her to take action to reach another state. All this has its own explanation, and in search of it many researchers turn to psychology for help.

Marin Paunov defines motivation as 'a set of mental processes that determine the strength and direction of behaviour and induce the directing and maintenance of voluntary purposeful actions'[11].

Psychology looks at motivation, linking it most closely with an individual's behaviour in terms of its parameters and the causes that provoke different types of behaviour.

In addition, the theoretical model of motivation aims to explain human behaviour and why the person selects exactly one of the possible variants in a given situation and follows it for a relatively long time, despite the difficulties and obstacles that arise. Psychological mechanisms are sought which on the one hand form sustainable motivational behaviour, and on the other, can change it.

The analysis of psychological literature shows that the essence of motivation has the following four characteristics:

- motivation is closely linked to the individual and is inherent only to him or her;
- motivation, as a psychological entity is characterised by a high degree of consciousness; therefore, it is formed in the person intentionally and purposefully;
- motivation has a complex structure in which there are two main dimensions – the first one is related to the stimuli for the activity of the individual and the second one – related to the choice of a certain type of behaviour;
- by studying motivation, one can predict the likely behaviour of an individual in a given situation [3].

Therefore, motivation is an intrinsic psychological entity inherent and specific only to the individual and characterised by a high degree of consciousness.

An important part of an individual's motivational behaviour is the mechanisms of his or her control related to volitional regulation. Due to the high level of awareness and understanding of the goals in choosing a behaviour, volitional regulation of the future choice becomes possible. It is the power of volitional response that allows or prohibits a certain type of negative or positive behaviour. On the other hand, the value of future activity is also taken into account when choosing a certain type of behaviour. It is directly related to the individual's pre-built value system. There is a dependency that states that 'the higher the position that a value occupies in the

individual value system, the more it influences the behaviour of the individual. This means that the greater the subjective importance of the activity carried out, the more motivated the individual will be for its implementation'[3]. The value system itself is formed differently for each individual. It depends both on family upbringing and the environment and on the education of an individual. Therefore, the more training an individual gets, the more his or her value system changes and evolves, shifting values at different value levels. Hence, the significance of the activities and the motivation for choosing a behaviour changes. In other words, the motivation for choosing a particular behaviour is also directly related to the person's level of education. Therefore, it can easily be observed that the behaviour of a poorly educated worker in a particular situation would be significantly different from that of an employee with at least higher education. This determines the use of different approaches for motivation with each individual person, depending on his level of education.

From the point of view of the organisation, Semerdzhiev defines motivation as: '...desire to make significant efforts to achieve organisational goals, which is determined by the opportunities available to meet individual needs'[12]. Achieving organisational goals requires personal incitement, which, however, is driven by one's own motives and will lead to the achievement of certain personal goals. The role of the leader is to present organisational goals in such a way that they overlap with personal ones.

Motivation also has a bearing on the military. Moreover, it dates back to ancient times when commanders tried to motivate their troops before the battle to secure victory. For this reason, motivation is widely popular and has undergone a major evolution over time. Today, an extensive set of regulations regulate its interpretation and application in the military, but this in

no way solves the problem of reduced motivation for service, but only provides guidance for its enhancement.

In the concept of building and enhancing the motivation of the personnel of the Bulgarian Armed Forces, motivation is formulated as 'the moral-psychological state of a person and the military staff, which is the final product of the purposefulness, organisation and consistently conducted educational work with the servicemen and civilians of the Bulgarian Armed Forces.' [13]. This definition gives us reason to believe that securing a motivated state is the primary task of commanders and superiors of all levels to be able to create conditions that shape the purposeful behaviour of subordinates to achieve organisational goals.

According to the US Army Leadership and the Profession Doctrine ADP 6-22, motivation is '... the will and initiative to do what is necessary to accomplish a mission. While motivation comes from within, others' actions and words affect it. A leader's role in motivation is at times to understand others' needs and desires, to align and elevate individual desires into team goals, and to inspire others to accomplish those larger goals, even if it means risking their lives. At other times, such as time constrained or dangerous situations, the leader gets subordinates to do things quickly and explain the reasons why later'[14].

This definition clearly shows the emphasis placed on leadership activity to achieve motivation. Here, however, it is much

clearer how to achieve it – by understanding individual needs and integrating them with organisational ones. This can only be achieved if there is excellent awareness of both the organisation and its goals and each of its members with his/her associated set of needs and personal characteristics.

4. Conclusions

Motivation emerged in ancient times and has always accompanied human evolution. Whereas in the past leadership decisions depended on a minimal number of variables, today their number is large, and their nature is different.

The gradual emergence of more and more factors affecting global security raises the need to consider each one of them and to seek solutions to multiple problems. In this process, the role of the human factor is becoming increasingly important, which raises the question of its adequate management and motivation.

The theoretical analysis of the literature related to work motivation gives us reason to suggest the following working definition of motivation in exercising the military profession.

Motivation for military service is the willful mental state of servicemen, consciously directing their behaviour toward specific actions to achieve their intended goals. It is intrinsic, but it is influenced by external influences that military leaders must use to manage their subordinates and fulfill organisational goals.

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