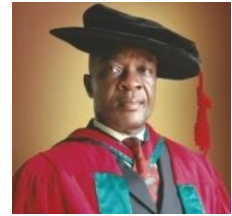


The Hawthorne Experiments: Workers Motivations and Positive Experiences

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ABSTRACT

The notion of concern for people does not start and end with good remuneration but goes further to include quality relationships, leadership and autonomy to associate with informal groups in the workplace. These are part of workers needs that require management's positive attention as measures of promoting workers motivations and positive experiences'. The Hawthorne experiments remain the forerunner toward consideration for people at work and the important need for motivation. Due to human nature, people feel more motivated when they have the feeling of love, and acceptance by others in groups. They also try to demonstrate positive experiences when they get recognition and feel a sense of self-worth. Thus, promoting workers' motivations' and positive experiences' would involve a great strength in taking their needs into account and working toward enhancing their self-confidence and potential, thereby reflecting the dignity of labour, by projecting workers' in terms of the knight in shining armour. The exploratory investigation research design was adopted in this study and it was found that workers' motivations' lead to positive experiences' in the workplace. The study recommends that management should tirelessly explore ways of co-operation with labour as a measure of promoting workers' motivations' for performance.

Keywords: *Knight in shining armour, Human side of the enterprise, Leadership, Relationships, Behavior, Abraham Maslow, Listening, Sense of self-worth.*

JEL: M10, M12

1. INTRODUCTION

As a fallout of the management-labour relationships consequent upon scientific, administrative and bureaucratic management approaches, the human relations component emerged in a continued search to enhance both organizational output and worker satisfaction. This was against the background that the earlier models placed more emphasis on worker productivity and efficiency without a corresponding interest on their welfare. The Hawthorne idea was therefore, a definite attempt toward finding a work method that considers the interest of labour. This experiment initiated in 1920s at the Eastern Electric Company, near Chicago, USA, ran through the 1930s and was led by Elton George Mayo. The major experiments carried out in the Hawthorne studies were; the experience on illumination, the relay-assembly test room experiments, the interview programme, the bank-wiring and observation room experiment. The experiment on illumination was done to evaluate if the lighting system has anything to do with worker productivity. Thus, experiments were conducted which proved that the lighting system has nothing to do with productivity. The second experiment on the relay-assembly test room was carried out to find out the effect of group dynamics on worker productivity. The result of this experiment was positive because productivity increased substantially within the experimental group. The interviewing programme as the third experiment was done to determine the connection between off-the-job experiences and on-the-job performance. The interviews provided

valuable information about informal organizational arrangements in the plant and the influence of peer socialization and pressures. The bank-wiring observation experiment was to demonstrate the role of informal groups in an organization. The result of this experiment showed that there was no significant correlation between group dynamics and productivity. The Hawthorne studies point to the assumption that management cannot treat workers as interchangeable machine tools but must understand them in their human complexity. As a result, the main arguments of the Hawthorne experiments are that: the informal organization and informal peer groups play a crucial role in organization behavior and productivity, the conception of the worker as rational economic man who is primarily, motivated by pay incentives is inadequate and short-sighted, rather, the worker should be thought of not only in terms of his work role, but also a total person, and also that factors outside the work environment significantly affect performance on-the-job. To this extent, Bozeman (1979) believes that employee job satisfaction involves a wide variety of needs, motivations and rewards; and satisfaction with the job and the work environment are important determinants of performance (Bearley, 1983, Jones, and Crandall, 1991, Neher, 1991, Ugoani, 2015).

1.1 Problem of the Study

Getting workers to have positive experiences has led to many other studies after the groundbreaking Hawthorne studies aimed at solving the problem of worker satisfaction and positive experiences. There appears to be no immediate solution because there are numerous desires or insatiable wants required to appease human wants. For example, people often want their freedom to do what they consider important, but total freedom from control may result to problems for both the individual and the organization. Therefore, Theory X was based on the assumption that people naturally do not like work, and should be controlled or forced to work. On the other hand, Theory Y was based on the assumption that people do not dislike work, but require motivation to do so. Another challenge is the inability of managers to appreciate workers' characteristics in terms of personality, attitudes, values, motivations and group behavior patterns.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study was designed to explore the relationship between Hawthorne experiments and worker positive experiences in the workplace.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The result of the study will help students and scholars in the social and management sciences to appreciate the important effect of the Hawthorne studies on workers positive experiences.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The Hawthorne experiments led by Mayo are generally credited as the major impetus for the human relations management theory. This general acceptability is based on the focus over the style of supervision as an important factor in increasing workers' job satisfaction, motivation, communication and group behavior. The conceptual framework of this study as in figure 1 attempts to lend credence to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. For example, the need for basic comfort relates to basic physiological needs such as food, sex, sleep, and the rest, that are fundamental to human positive experiences. People need assurances in terms of safety, freedom, job security, among other factors to have positive work experiences. Cordial relationships both at work and at home are crucial factors that have influence on human experiences. There is always the need to be accepted by others, to love and be loved by both family and groups. When people experience any form of hatred or derecognition it brings the

hangover of negative experiences both at home and at work. Respect for people reflects the need for self-esteem, as people want to be seen as competent, to be trusted with higher responsibilities. Good organizational leadership recognizes this factor generally perceived as central toward workers positive experiences. When people feel self-actualized, they become concerned with their autonomy for both work and leadership positions. People who feel self-fulfilled or self-actualized are often capable of independent action, self-satisfaction in their work, which eventually acts as a motivator. At the most fundamental level, the Hawthorne experiments with regard to human relations and motivation seek the best way of motivating workers towards greater performance through a thorough understanding of their needs and expectations. The Hawthorne experiments had huge bearing on Maslow's theory because both focus on how to satisfy organizational goals, often growth, profit and performance, while human goals are frequently recognition and job satisfaction. Halloran (1978) states that studies of motivations try to discover what incentives that will cause workers to work and increase their productivity as assets. He emphasizes that motivation is a process that can be understood in its simplest form as a three step process. One there is an internal need; two, a behavioural action or direction to satisfy that need; and three; the accomplishment or the satisfaction of that need (Sternberg, 2000, Ugoani, 2018, 2019^a, 2019^b, 2020^a).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Investigations into possible ways of increasing productivity began on very logical lines about the beginning of the 19th century, through the pioneering work of Fredrick W. Taylor and others. These people studied the subject and focused on certain relevant aspects including the worker, his job, the tools and equipment at his disposal as well as the working conditions. The result of these investigations was the introduction of monetary incentives, new or revised methods and techniques, the application of time and motion studies, standardized rest periods, new types of working tools, revised work layout, and increased division of labour or specialization. These efforts had a primary motive of improving productivity or efficiency of labour without correspondingly improving the conditions of the laboring class. As this was posing a serious problem between management and labour, a quarter of a century later the Eastern Electric Company, near Chicago, USA, invited Professor George Elton Mayo, to examine the problem and to give a solution. This led to the research into human behavior at the workplace and which lasted for many years. The results of the investigations became an important revelation in management and are known as the Hawthorne experiments. The evidence proved that, besides wages and working conditions, other factors directly associated with human relations had a significant effect on productivity. Consequently, the importance of human relations was recognized, and Mayo's research eventually led to a vast range of research on a broad spectrum including the popular study of Abraham H. Maslow, and others which still continuous today. Maslow's Needs Theory acknowledges that human beings or workers are more productive where their needs are met. This validates the findings of Mayo that motivation brings the organization to life through the upsurge of drive in each individual who is motivated. Thus, it becomes apparent that in addition to the motivational aspects of pay, the relationships aspects of leadership, and participation are essential elements, along with teamwork, which should motivate dynamic groups towards positive work experiences and improved productivity. This rests on the assumption that a motivated group will be far more productive as a team and can make a more positive contribution far exceeding the normal contribution of individuals, each one being treated in isolation from the performance point of view. The highlight of the Hawthorne experiments vis-à-vis workers positive experiences is that while the scientific management approach heavily focused on the technical aspects of work design, the human relations movement emphasized the importance of

the human element in job design. The human relations investigation revealed that in addition to the physical and technical aspects of work, worker motivation is critical for increasing productivity. This provided the impetus for Abraham Maslow who developed his human Needs Theory, and which Douglas McGregor refined to develop his Theory X and Theory Y. These theories represent the two ends of the spectrum of how employees view work and the view of management; that workers are inherently lazy. In other words, whereas Theory X assumes that the average worker is lazy, dislikes work, and will try to do as little as possible, on the other hand, Theory Y emphasizes that workers are not inherently lazy. Given the chance, they will do what is good for the organization. The Hawthorne studies thus, provided the basis for the departure from the mechanistic approach of the classical management theory to a behavioural approach. This approach recognizes that the individual is not solely motivated by money. He is also motivated by social and psychological factors which produce positive behavior. In pursuit of workers positive experiences, William Ouchi developed Theory Z, with the features of life-time-employment, employee problem-solving, consensus-building, and individual decision making and responsibility (Stevenson, 2002; Templar, 2015, Mintzberg, 1998, Ugoani, 2019c).

2.1 Maslow's Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow's model considers different motivational human needs to be ordered in a hierarchy and this suggests that before more sophisticated, higher order needs can be met, certain primary needs must be satisfied. The model, as in figure 2, is conceptualized as a pyramid in which the more basic needs are at the bottom and the higher level needs are at the top. The most basic needs are primary drivers; needs for water, food, sleep, sex, and similar others. The model suggests that human beings need a safe, secure environment, so as to function or perform effectively. Physiological and safety needs compose the lower-order needs. Maslow's model shows how human motivation progresses up the pyramid from a basis in the broadest, most fundamental biological needs to the higher order needs. Feldman (2007) after his own studies, emphasizes that Maslow's model of human needs is important for two reasons: it highlights the complexity of human needs, and two, it emphasizes that until more basic biological needs are met, people will be relatively unconcerned with higher-order needs (Fulop, et al, 1999, Ugoani, 2020^a). This brings up the idea that motivation is necessary to stimulate a worker to greater happiness and productivity. For example, a worker is expected to be loyal to his employer as long as the objectives of such employer or organization are not in conflict with the implicit objectives, interests or the set values of the worker. Therefore, to achieve workers motivation and positive experiences, it becomes necessary to observe workers behavior, and finding ways of influencing such behavior toward a certain desired direction. This is important because understanding and influencing human behavior rest on knowledge of human nature and human needs. Human beings are not *angels*, and there is loud agreement in the management literature that human behavior is often not without motivations. Human beings by their nature are influenced by different factors and therefore, also motivated in different degrees. This basically suggests that the human personality is composed of multiple elements which are related and, to bring a degree of balance. For example, human beings feel a need for acceptance and, by affiliation with some group or groups work together, and forming a broad philosophy and a general set of values which influence their actions and decisions on matters concerning them. This tends to give credence to McGregor's popular self-fulfilling prophecy in the sense that the assumptions would influence a manager's own behavior in some subtle ways which would in turn tend to motivate subordinates to act in ways that may be consistent with the manager's assumptions. In other words, the manager's behavior would act selectively upon the *repertoire* of various behavior styles available to subordinates to elicit actions that conform to the manager's own beliefs. Through this

approach, managers become aware of their own behavior and the assumptions underlying it, in an attempt to develop managerial styles that have a more constructive influence on worker motivation and behavior. Since the idea of the human relations theory of management was popularized and brought to its academic zenith by the work of Mayo through the Hawthorne experiments, psychologists continue to show great interest over the effect of motivation on worker positive experiences. Because of this relevant historical perspective, many people believe that motivation has very strong ties of certain features that are built into certain individuals, especially, desirable elements such as zeal, drive, enthusiasm, determination, commitment, and loyalty toward the accomplishment of goals. With the recognition that behavior is adaptable and largely related to circumstances, management is now disposed to focus on the importance of the assumptions which people make about the process of human influence, the nature of work, and the nature of human nature itself. Therefore, in recognizing that human behavior is often a response, instead of an inevitable action from some inner drive, management is also increasingly concerned with the extent to which she can deliberately motivate workers toward achieving organizational objectives. Thus, for workers positive experiences and more productivity, management, more than ever before, is inclined to agree that workers motivation is very likely to invoke actions which produce a more positive change in behavior than a mere *desire* by an individual to behave in certain ways. According to Akanwa (1997) for the Nigerian worker his dignity and honour are everything to him, and he is ready to go to any length to have it. This simply means that the best way to motivate a Nigerian worker toward positive experiences and greater productivity is through a thorough understanding of his way of life (Heil, et al, 2000, Ugoani, 2020^b, Maslow, 1987).

2.2 Types of Motivation

Motivation at work can take place in two ways. First people can motivate themselves by seeking, finding and carrying out work, or being given work, that satisfies their needs or at least leads them to expect that their goals will be achieved. Secondly, people can be motivated by management through such methods as pay, promotion, praise, *etcetera*. The two original types of motivation are *intrinsic motivation* and *extrinsic motivation*. *Intrinsic motivation* is the self-generated factors which influence individuals to behave in a particular way or to move in a particular direction. Among these factors are responsibility, a feeling that the work is important and having control over one's own resources; autonomy, meaning freedom to act, scope to use and develop skills and abilities, interesting and challenging work opportunities for advancement. On the contrary, extrinsic motivation relates to what is done to or for people to motivate them. This includes rewards, such as increased pay, praise, or promotion, and punishments such as disciplinary action, withholding pay, or criticism. Extrinsic motivators can have an immediate and powerful effect, but it will not necessarily last long. On the other hand, the intrinsic motivators, which are concerned with the *quality of working life*, are likely to have a deeper and longer-term effect because they are inherent in people and not imposed on them from the outside. Intrinsic motivation is the first starting point of *workers positive experiences*. This has much to do with the process theory of motivation. In the process theory, the emphasis is on the psychological processes or forces that affect motivation, as well as on basic needs. It is also known as cognitive theory because it is concerned with people's perceptions of their working environment and the ways in which they interpret and understand it. According to Guest (1992^b), the process theory provides a much more relevant approach to motivation that replaces the theories of Maslow and Herzberg, which he suggests, have been shown by extensive research to be wrong. Guest's suggestion must have been influenced by his understanding that process or cognitive theory can

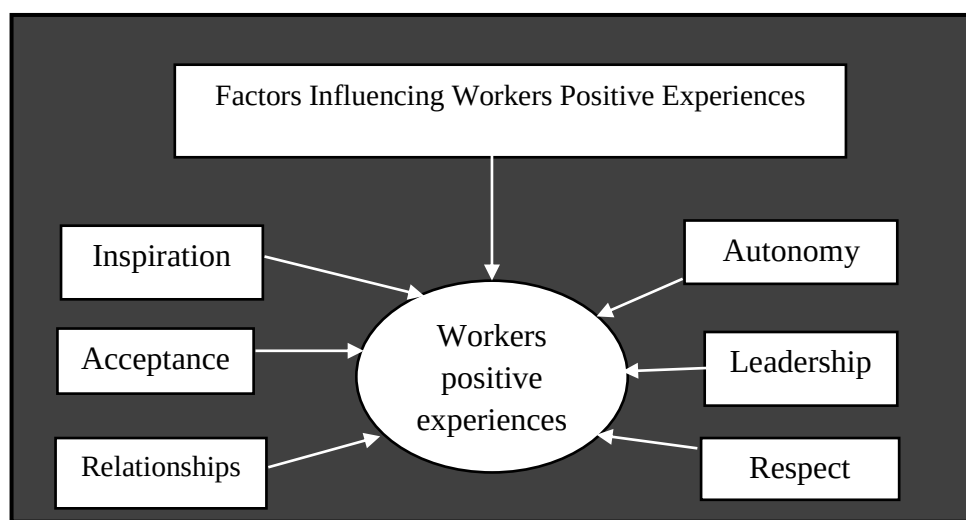
certainly be more useful to managers than needs theory because it provides more realistic guidance on motivation techniques (Guest, 1992^a)

3. METHODOLOGY

The exploratory investigation research design was adopted for this study. The purpose of this type of research is to develop conjectural statement about the relationships of two or more variables and may involve exploring relevant literature. Investigating relevant literature means obtaining secondary data from other published materials. Such secondary data could be secured from academic publications, public publications, private publications, books, and other important documents. This review of previous works throws more light regarding the meanings, and importance of the relationships between and among the variables of interest (Obodoeze, 1996).

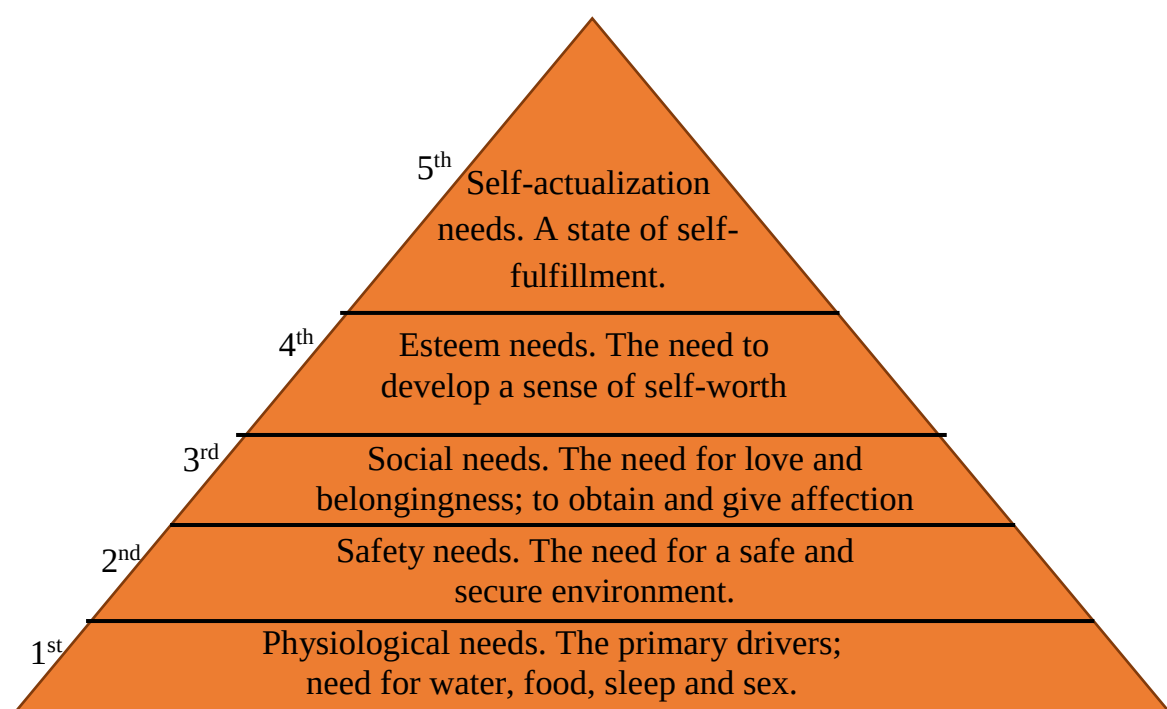
4. PRESENTATION OF RESULT

Figure 1: Hawthorne Experiments and Workers Positive Experiences Model



Author design (2023)

Figure 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model



Adapted from Feldman (2007)

4.1 Discussion

The Hawthorne experiments remain as the most credible impetus toward worker positive experiences and improved performance. Emphasizing the need for fostering collaborative approaches between labour and management, as well as open communications and leadership, suggests that satisfying workers needs and improving their productivity can thrive best on building mutuality and reciprocity in the workplace. This means that managers must *manage* or *lead* to improve, to motivate, and to collaborate with workers and thereby trying to satisfy their needs so as to enhance both job satisfaction and productivity. The role of managers in promoting workers positive experiences and productivity is crucial in any organization. Although a manager is no super human being, he is actually an employee who forms a part of the organization's management hierarchy and is accountable for executing important delegated authority over human, financial and material resources so as to achieve the goals of the enterprise. To this extent, managers are responsible for meeting the needs of the workers, respecting their individuality, satisfying the need for autonomy and freedom of association, building relationships and trust in the workplace, communicating, practicing and promoting the corporate values, ethics, culture, and change, for organizational success. As shown in figure 1, promoting workers positive experiences, requires inspiration, leadership, acceptance, building relationships and respect as well as autonomy to join informal groups. This postulation gives credence to Maslow's classic Needs Theory, as shown in figure 2. Maslow believes that people are more motivated when their needs are satisfied. For example, acceptance relates to the need for a sense of belonging, and respect relates to the need for self-worth, among others. In this discussion involving workers motivations and positive experiences, leadership as shown in figure 1 becomes imperative. For example, as Northouse (1997) opines, leadership is a process which involves influence, it occurs within a group context, and it means that an individual influences other group members toward the attainment of group or organizational goals. This definition suggests that the leader in many ways motivates workers to act in such ways necessary so as to achieve group or organizational goals. Within this broad context, motivation becomes being driven by internal rather than external factors and to be involved in a continuous striving for improvement. The major link between leadership and motivation suggests that motivations are socially or culturally bound, and to some degree, transformational leadership fits into it by defining the environment for the followers. Motivation is closely tied to work because work is central to human life. Human beings invented tools, thus increasing their capacity for work, and people have always defined themselves by their work. In the business world for example, the word *motivation*, is used to describe the drive that impels an individual to work. Thus, a truly motivated individual is the one who wants to work. Halloran (1978) suggests that both employees and employers are interested in understanding the concept of motivation. According to him, if workers know what strengthens and what weakens their motivation, they can often perform more effectively to find more satisfaction in their job. Employers want to know what motivates the employees so that they can get them to work harder. Therefore, the motivation to work is integral both to goal achievement and to job satisfaction. In this case, both employees and employers must understand the value of motivation. From this analysis, this study proved that The Hawthorne experiments have huge influence over workers motivations and positive experiences. This new result supports Hollyforde, and Whiddett (2002) that motivation is central to positive work experiences and performance. This is the interest of the study.

4.1 Recommendations

- i. Organizations should always explore areas of co-operation between labour and management with the aim of improving workers' motivations for performance.
- ii. Managers at all levels of the organization should endeavor to lead by example to promote workers' positive experiences.
- iii. Workers have the need for acceptance and also the need for self-worth which management should promote to enhance their motivation.
- iv. The idea of motivation should be appreciated by both the employees and the employers because it helps in building mutuality.
- v. Respect for employees involves building trust which is catalytic toward workers motivations and the achievement of enterprise objectives.

4.2 Implication for Management

Top organizational leadership has the responsibility of implementing research recommendations for improved performance and organizational sustainability. This is because helping organizational people in reaching their full potential is closely tied also toward achieving the full potential of the organization itself.

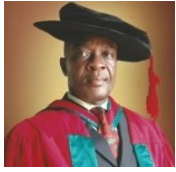
5. CONCLUSION

Motivating, respecting people and leadership are among the key drivers to good people management. Leadership promotes motivations from the earliest stages of pay to the higher stages of self-actualization, or *endaimonia*. This is true because leadership is a process which involves influence it occurs within a group context, and it involves goal achievement. It is a motivating factor for workers because they look up to leadership to define their environment and for creating the necessary opportunities for positive experiences. Defining the environment requires the application of a leadership style that recognizes the readiness level of workers to perform. For example, knowledge workers of the 21st century and beyond do not need supervision but co-ordination and inspiration to execute tasks and to have positive experiences. Workers' readiness to perform is often defined in terms of ability, capacity and willingness. The level of capacity or ability includes the experiences, knowledge and skills a worker possess in relation to the actual work at hand, and the level of willingness encompasses the extent of commitment or self-confidence to perform. Enhancing workers loyalty and positive experiences is also a measure of the leadership behavior in terms of relationships. The relationship behavior or supportive leadership behavior refers to the degree to which leaders define what is to be done and then engages in a two-way or multi-way communication, which emphasizes listening, facilitating and related supporting behavior that promotes workers motivations and positive work experiences.

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Biography



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