

What Motivates You?

Exploring organizational factors that influence employee motivation.

Department of Communication and Journalism ❖ Faculty Mentor, Dr. Mary Hoffman

Katie Allan; Rachel Debner; Ariana Hadjimarkos; Rachel Kisby; Roxanne Thorelli



Abstract:

This study investigated organizational factors that motivate employees. Organizational scholars are interested in understanding how expectations are communicated in the workplace and their effect on the motivation of employees. We sent qualitative surveys to three different departments of a large healthcare organization, asking questions about expectations, feedback, and motivation in the workplace. Results show that employees were motivated to tolerate task ambiguity if the culture was collaborative and focused on clear values and goals.

Literature Review:

- Role ambiguity occurs when an individual does not understand the expectations and behaviors of their position in an organization (Madlock & Chory, 2014).
- When leaders take a relational approach, members experience greater role clarity, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Gerstner & Day, 1997).
- Organizational Support Theory describes how employees decide their value in an organization in order to assess the outcomes of increased work effort. Employees assess their value by receiving feedback from managers and deciphering messages from employees through relationships (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006).
- 360° feedback is a specific way of giving feedback in which employees of an organization individually analyze one another in addition to themselves. Sources of feedback may include subordinates, supervisors, coworkers, or even external audiences (Brett, 2001).

Works Cited: Brett, J. F. (2001). 360° feedback: Accuracy, reactions, and perceptions of usefulness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(5), 930-942. | Gerstner, C. R., & Day, D. V. (1997). Meta-Analytic review of leader-member exchange theory: Correlates and construct issues. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82(6), 827-844. | Madlock, P. E., & Chory, R. M. (2014). Socialization as a predictor of employee outcomes. *Communication Studies*, 65(1), 56-71. | Shanock, L., & Eisenberger, R. (2006). When supervisors feel supported: Relationships with subordinates' perceived supervisor support, perceived organizational support, and performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(3), 689-695.

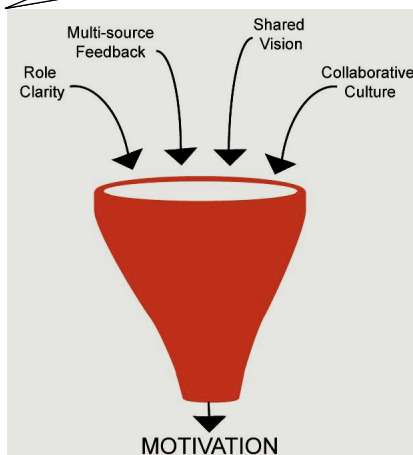
Examples of task ambiguity:

"Sometimes the lines of responsibility and accountability are blurred."

"..a few things [are] unclear as to whether or not I should be responsible for certain tasks."

Example of collaborative culture:

"If it needs doing, we get it done. We care about each other and try to find time to develop relationships to ensure an environment that people want to be part of."



Example of shared vision:

"The mission/values of the [organization] are very clear and are always at the forefront of what we do."

Example of role clarity:

"We are expected to perform beyond our job description... which is why we are the best at what we do."

Research Question:

- What organizational elements do employees report motivate them to meet expectations?

Methods:

Nine individuals from three departments in the organization completed responses containing two demographic and 12 short answer questions. We first individually coded the data and then analyzed it as a team.

Results & Conclusions:

- Employees expressed clear commitment to the organization.
- Employees expressed commitment to team.
- Employees valued multi-source feedback.
- Employees showed task ambiguity in results while also expressing role clarity.

Implications:

- Organizations should emphasize the mission and values to create a culture with clear overarching goals and expectations.
- Organizations should encourage collaboration and teamwork between members to foster motivation and commitment.
- Supervisors should practice relational leadership and promote meaningful interaction with and between all members in the organization.
- Supervisors should provide many and varied opportunities for feedback in their organization.

We thank the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs for supporting this research, and Learning & Technology Services for printing this poster.