

An empirical investigation of Alderfer's ERG need theory on employees' motivation in fish canning factory in Galle, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Organizations need a productive labor force with the optimum level of job performance to achieve organizational goals. However, individuals will not be motivated to support the organization to achieve business result unless they have the opportunity to inspire their individual needs. Satisfaction of certain needs is the major driving force of employee motivation in order to improve their job performances. Therefore, main focus of this study was to investigate the impact of employee motivation (as conceptualized by Alderfer's ERG theory) on job performance of the workers in the fish canning factory in Galle, Sri Lanka. A questionnaire survey was conducted in March, 2014 using a purposive sample of 52 workers of fish canning factory in Galle. The items used to measure the constructs were either taken or adopted from the previous research studies. Wilcoxon signed rank test was applied to analyze the data using SPSS 13.0. The findings revealed that workers in the fish canning factory were not satisfied about their existence needs in terms of wages and fringe benefits. Therefore, to motivate the workers to perform well, management should increase the fringe benefits package including life insurance, free uniform etc. The producers were satisfied about their superior support. Nevertheless, they did not consider the relatedness needs arising from the co-workers. They were interested in growth needs satisfaction hence it is recommended to provide training and development opportunities to satisfy their growth needs. In conclusion, the workers in the fish canning factory have a higher performance intention if their satisfaction needs are fulfilled by the management.

Keywords: Motivation, Alderfer's ERG theory, Performance, fringe benefits

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Introduction

Organizations need productive and effective employees with optimum level of job performance in order to achieve organizational goals (Kopetman, 1986). However, the individual will not be motivated to support the organization to achieve business results unless they have the opportunity to inspire their individual needs. Satisfaction of certain needs is the major driving force of employee motivation (Kakkos and Trivellan, 2011). Recognize the relationship between employee motivation and job performance is vital to human resource management. According to Alderfer, man is motivated by three groups of core needs such as "Existence needs", "Relatedness needs" and "Growth needs"; therefore the concept is called as Alderfer's ERG theory. The

existence needs refer to human basic needs i.e. physiological and safety needs which are necessary for existence of the human being. The relatedness needs represent the man's desire to maintain important interpersonal relationships such as social acceptance, belongingness and status desires. The growth needs includes personal development, self fulfillment and self actualization. Identification and understanding of these specific needs offer insights into enhance job performance (*ibid*). Therefore, primary purpose of this study was to investigate how Alderfer's ERG needs satisfaction act as a motivation tool to produce a better job behavior of workers in fish canning factory in Galle.

Materials and Methods

A questionnaire survey was conducted in March, 2014 using a purposive sample of 52 workers of fish canning factory in Galle. The items used to measure the constructs were either taken or adopted from the previous research studies. A five point Likert-scale ranging from 'Strongly agree' (5) to 'Strongly disagree' (1) was used to measure the perceptions of the workers. Secondary data were collected from research articles and through the internet. Wilcoxon signed rank test was applied to analyze the data using SPSS 13.0.

Results

A series of variables has used to measure the perception of workers regarding the satisfaction of needs (in terms of existence needs, relatedness needs and growth needs) and performance intensions. Following table show the results of Wilcoxon signed rank test for measured perceptions.

Table 1: Wilcoxon signed rank test results

Variable	Mean	Z-Value	Remarks
Alderfer's existence need (pay)			
I get enough money from my job to live comfortably	2.20	-3.87*	Disagree
My pay is adequate to provide for the basic things in life	2.06	-4.24*	Disagree
Compared to the rates for similar work here my pay is good	2.48	-2.70*	Disagree
Considering the work required the pay is what it should be	1.98	-3.81*	Disagree

Alderfer's existence needs (fringe benefits)			
Our fringe benefits cover many of the areas they should	2.90	-.485	Not Significant
The fringe benefit programme here gives nearly all the security I want	2.36	-2.83*	Disagree
Compared to other places, our fringe benefits are excellent	2.50	-2.76*	Neither agree or Disagree
The fringe benefit programmers here is adequate	3.28	-2.18*	Neither agree or Disagree
Alderfer's relatedness needs (superiors)			
My boss encourages people to make suggestions	4.10	-4.83*	Agree
My boss takes account of my wishes and desires	2.94	-.356	Not Significant
My boss keeps me informed about what is happening in the company	4.24	-4.43*	Agree
Compared to other places, My boss lets me know when I could improve my performance	3.20	-1.18	Not Significant
Alderfer's relatedness needs (peers)			
Can count on my co-workers to give me a hand when I need it	3.72	-3.51*	Agree
My co-workers will speak out in my favour if justified	3.46	-2.07*	Neither agree or Disagree
I can tell my co-workers honestly how I feel	3.78	-4.02*	Agree
My co-workers welcome opinions different from their own	3.04	-.296	Not Significant
Alderfer's growth needs			

I always get the feeling of learning new things from my work	3.760	-2.570*	Agree
My job requires that a person use a wide range of abilities	4.120	-5.072*	Agree
My job requires making one or more important decision(s) every day	4.060	-4.674*	Agree
I have the opportunity to do challenging things at work	3.920	-4.622*	Agree
Performance intentions			
I often think of improving my job performance	4.26	-5.00*	Agree
I will actively try to improve my job performance in the future	4.36	-4.86*	Agree
I intend to do a lot more at work in the future	4.18	-4.33*	Agree
I will probably do my best to perform well on the job in the future	4.18	-3.88*	Agree

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings revealed that workers in the fish canning factory were not satisfied about their existence needs in terms of wages and fringe benefits. Therefore to motivate the workers to perform well, management should increase the fringe benefits package including life insurance, free uniform etc. They were satisfied about their superior support. Nevertheless, they did not consider the relatedness needs arising from the co-workers. They were interested in growth needs satisfaction hence it is recommended to provide training and development opportunities to satisfy their growth needs. In conclusion, the workers in the fish canning factory have a higher performance intention if their satisfaction needs are fulfilled by the management.

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