

**LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES ON MOTIVATION DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC SITUATIONS**

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**Abstract**

In the new normal world, motivating employees is a very difficult leadership task since the performance and abilities of employees have direct relation with motivation. This chapter focuses on the leadership challenges during the pandemic from the perspectives of employee motivation. The COVID 19 Pandemic crisis has been a calamity of tragedy and misfortune for individuals and organisations alike. However, its impact is relatively more on organisations, as it puts an additional burden on leaders and HR people to show competence and lead from the front in the face of adversity. Leaders have been forced to unlearn conventional leadership strategies and adapt to newer styles of motivation while dealing with their employees as an aftermath of the pandemic. Organisational growth, flexibility and future stability will be provided by leaders who can inspire trust, take advantage of the present opportunities, work around threats. The journal concludes by discussing how leaders and their employees can contribute a motivating work context and how they might benefit during the pandemic.

**Keywords:** Work from Home, Leadership, Motivation, Awareness

**Introduction**

COVID-19 has now become a global pandemic. Changes also occur in almost all aspects of human life in a very short time, one of which is a change in the way of working. Like it or not, office employees must learn to adapt to sudden changes, namely by adopting new work patterns remotely from their homes or what is known as work from home (WFH). Activities carried out with Work from Home (WFH) include office administration work, meetings, discussions, as well as online coordination with work partners from employee's home. Several media that can be applied are voice calls, chat / text messengers, and audio / video conference calls. In addition, employees can also do video conferencing by using Google Meet, Microsoft Team, Zoom, Skype and so on. Based on the Online WFH Implementation Survey conducted by [1], related to workload issues, 60.1 percent of respondents said they did not agree that the WFH scheme was said to have a lighter workload. On the other hand, around 40 percent agreed and strongly agreed that working from home has a lighter burden. Indeed, not all work can be done and coordinated online. For some companies / institutions that have business processes in the field, they need to make appropriate modifications and innovations. For some jobs, especially those related to services, employees still have to come to the office at certain times. Attendance is related to the role of the position, type or scope of work and other operational reasons, such as the availability of data, hard copy documents, work procedures, and so on.

In its implementation, in WFH, there are still several types of work that cannot be done optimally, due to inadequate facilities when working at home, poorly stable internet connection, limited communication and coordination with various parties, to a less conducive home atmosphere. Significant differences are felt by employees, such as changes in working hours pattern that are usually set by institutions, now they have to make adjustments to their own working hours to make it more effective. This policy has implications for related workers, especially the Covid-19 disaster which made the economic condition relatively not good. In addition to work as employees, they also

have to look for additional income considering that a number of new policies regarding salaries and rewards for employees have changed. This also has an impact on decreasing employees' motivation, whereas motivation is a process of achieving goals and objectives which include three models, namely intensity, direction, and persistence. But basically, motivation is present in any effort to achieve goals

### **Review of Literature**

Motivation: The term motivation is derived from the Latin word *movere*, meaning "to move." Motivation can be broadly defined as the forces acting on or within a person that cause the arousal, direction, and persistence of goal-directed, voluntary effort. Motivation theory is thus concerned with the processes that explain why and how human behavior is activated.

Early explanations of motivation focused on instincts. Psychologists writing in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries suggested that human beings were basically programmed to behave in certain ways, depending upon the behavioral cues to which they were exposed. Sigmund Freud, for example, argued that the most powerful determinants of individual behavior were those of which the individual was not consciously aware.

According to *Motivation and Leadership at Work* (Steers, Porter, and Bigley, 1996), in the early twentieth century researchers began to examine other possible explanations for differences in individual motivation. Some researchers focused on internal drives as an explanation for motivated behavior. Others studied the effect of learning and how individuals base current behavior on the consequences of past behavior. Still others examined the influence of individuals' cognitive processes, such as the beliefs they have about future events. Over time, these major theoretical streams of research in motivation were classified into two major schools: the content theories of motivation and the process theories of motivation.

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Abraham Maslow developed the hierarchy of needs, which suggests that individual needs exist in a hierarchy consisting of physiological needs, security needs, belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Physiological needs are the most basic needs for food, water, and other factors necessary for survival. Security needs include needs for safety in one's physical environment, stability, and freedom from emotional distress. Belongingness needs relate to desires for friendship, love, and acceptance within a given community of individuals. Esteem needs are those associated with obtaining the respect of one's self and others. Finally, self-actualization needs are those corresponding to the achievement one's own potential, the exercising and testing of one's creative capacities, and, in general, to becoming the best person one can possibly be. Unsatisfied needs motivate behavior; thus, lower-level needs such as the physiological and security needs must be met before upper-level needs such as belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization can be motivational.

Applications of the hierarchy of needs to management and the workplace are obvious. According to the implications of the hierarchy, individuals must have their lower level needs met by, for example, safe working conditions, adequate pay to take care of one's self and one's family, and job security before they will be motivated by increased job responsibilities, status, and challenging work assignments. Despite the ease of application of this theory to a work setting, this theory has received little research support and therefore is not very useful in practice.

### **Alderfer's Erg Theory**

The ERG theory is an extension of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Alderfer suggested that needs could be classified into three categories, rather than five. These three types of needs are existence, relatedness, and growth. Existence needs are similar to Maslow's physiological and safety need categories. Relatedness needs involve interpersonal relationships and are comparable to aspects of Maslow's belongingness and esteem needs. Growth needs are those related to the attainment of one's potential and are associated with Maslow's esteem and self-actualization needs.

The ERG theory differs from the hierarchy of needs in that it does not suggest that lower-level needs must be completely satisfied before upper-level needs become motivational. ERG theory also suggests that if an individual is continually unable to meet upper-level needs that the person will regress and lower-level needs become the major determinants of their motivation. ERG theory's implications for managers are similar to those for the needs hierarchy: managers should focus on meeting employees' existence, relatedness, and growth needs, though without necessarily applying the proviso that, say, job-safety concerns necessarily take precedence over challenging and fulfilling job requirements.

**Leadership:** Leadership can be defined as a process by which one individual influences others toward the attainment of group or organizational goals. Three points about the definition of leadership should be emphasized. First, leadership is a social influence process. Leadership cannot exist without a leader and one or more followers. Second, leadership elicits voluntary action on the part of followers

### **Transformational Leadership**

Beginning in the 1970s, a number of leadership theories emerged that focused on the importance of a leader's charisma to leadership effectiveness. Included within this class of theories are House's theory of charismatic leadership, Bass's transformational leadership theory, and Conger and Kanungo's charismatic leadership theory.

These theories have much in common. They all focus on attempting to explain how leaders can accomplish extraordinary things against the odds, such as turning around a failing company, founding a successful company, or achieving great military success against incredible odds. The theories also emphasize the importance of leaders' inspiring subordinates' admiration, dedication, and unquestioned loyalty through articulating a clear and compelling vision.

Transformational leadership theory differentiates between the transactional and the transformational leader. Transactional leadership focuses on role and task requirements and utilizes rewards contingent on performance. By contrast, transformational leadership focuses on developing mutual trust, fostering the leadership abilities of others, and setting goals that go beyond the short-term needs of the work group.

Bass's transformational leadership theory identifies four aspects of effective leadership, which include charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and consideration. A leader who exhibits these qualities will inspire subordinates to be high achievers and put the long-term interest of the organization ahead of their own short-term interest, according to the theory. Empirical research has supported many of the theory's propositions.

### **Substitute For Leadership Theory**

Kerr and Jermier introduced the substitutes for leadership theory in 1978. The theory's focus is concerned with providing an explanation for the lack of stronger empirical support for a relationship between leader traits or leader behaviors and subordinates' satisfaction and performance. The substitutes for leadership theory suggest that characteristics of the organization, the task, and subordinates may substitute for or negate the effects of leadership, thus weakening observed relationships between leader behaviors and important organizational outcomes.

Substitutes for leadership make leader behaviors such as task-oriented or relationship-oriented unnecessary. Characteristics of the organization that may substitute for leadership include formalization, group cohesiveness, inflexible rules, and organizational rewards not under the control of the leader. Characteristics of the task that may substitute for leadership include routine and repetitive tasks or tasks that are satisfying. Characteristics of subordinates that may substitute for leadership include ability, experience, training, and job-related knowledge.

The substitute for leadership theory has generated a considerable amount of interest because it offers an intuitively appealing explanation for why leader behavior impacts subordinates in some situations but not in others. However, some of its theoretical propositions have not been adequately tested. The theory continues to generate empirical research.

### **Objective of Study**

- The primary goal of this study is to identify leadership difficulties in terms of motivation and its impact on staff performance.
- Understanding the productivity and performance of many elements after allowing their employees to work from home during the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- Understanding the factors affecting motivation in the new normal world.

### **Leadership Challenges During Pandemic**

During the COVID-19 epidemic, the majority of employees worked from home (WFH), and much attention was paid to their experiences, including their well-being and performance. However, little consideration has been dedicated to how managers react to WFH and how this may affect their ability to perform in their new job as distance managers. In the initial days of the Danish national lockdown, an international survey was distributed and data was collected in spring 2020. Their analysis revealed 12 aspects where managers found their work during lockdown to be more challenging than employees, based on Danish responses from 1053 employees and 290 managers of knowledge work who had limited prior experience in distance management. The implications are that research and practice should consider the well-being and performance consequences of WFH not only for employees but also for managers, as their experiences differ, and the managers express challenges in their leadership. The following are the areas where leadership crisis found .

### **Effective Communication**

Communicating effectively with employees seems to be a common-sense and essential approach for leaders who want to get the job done. However, communication, more specifically, the use of Motivating Language can be a valuable managerial tool that can inspire employees to become more engaged in, and more satisfied with, their work.

It is not only the content of the message that is vital in effective communication; it is also the manner in which the message is conveyed that is critical to workers' job performance and happiness. Understanding motivating language and how to apply it can help managers work effectively with their employees. Indeed, high-quality manager employee relationships that emphasize these interpersonal communicating tactics are linked to employee work satisfaction. Because of the global impact of the epidemic, the majority of employees work from home. Effective leader employee communication is a major difficulty.

### **Attitude of Leaders**

Attitude motivation is the practice of motivating people by influencing their thoughts and behaviors. Attitude and motivation are closely linked and can act as strong motivators of whether a team will work together effectively and achieve their business goals in a timely manner. In fact, a positive

attitude can directly impact the trajectory of your career, as you will be more motivated to work hard, try new things and further contribute to an organization's success.

An attitude is a state of mind, while motivation is the reason you have for behaving in a certain way. Your attitude can improve or decrease your motivation. If you build a positive attitude within your workspace, you'll notice that all the members of the team are motivated to be more productive, communicate more effectively and produce more effort for the good of the organization.

### **Work Knowledge**

Knowledge that resides in employees is the most important source of these hard-to-imitate resources which gives competitive advantages. It is the employees themselves who are adding value to the organization through their creativity, commitment and skills

Usually employees increase their knowledge by sharing and discussing with their coworkers. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic situation most of employees are doing work from home and facing challenges in communication with coworkers. Leaders are facing challenges increasing knowledge of workers through this remote means of communication. However periodical online training and discussions will help leaders to increase work knowledge and thus motivating workers.

### **Uncertainty**

More employees are working from home due to COVID-19, and the disruption in workflow could prove detrimental to job performance, according to a UCF study. The abrupt shift to remote work poses new challenges, such as juggling tasks and mastering new technologies. New research suggests these challenges may hurt employee performance when experienced inconsistently. If workers cannot anticipate big projects or assignments, they are more likely to perform poorly and act out on the job.

The COVID-19 pandemic offers a particularly timely context in which to examine these issues. One month after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, a large-scale survey of U.S. employees by a leader in on-demand mental health care revealed that 69% of employees reported that this was the most stressful time of their entire professional careers (Ginger, 2020). Given the great uncertainty in the workplace caused by the current COVID-19 pandemic, identifying ways to facilitate creativity under such challenging conditions is a critical issue for organizational leaders to manage.

Given that 83% of employees have reported experiencing stress at work, and have cited stress as a major source of psychological and physical problems (American Institute of Stress, 2017), it is not surprising that workplace stress has been afforded increasing attention from organizational behavior researchers. The COVID-19 pandemic has made workplace stress even more salient, as economic and social pressures mount (Ginger, 2020). In this study we examine a particularly timely component of workplace stress: perceived work uncertainty, defined as perceptions about the degree of uncertainty in relation to job characteristics and the broader work context (Leach et al., 2013).

### **Finding of the Study**

The challenges COVID-19 presents to leaders are not new. These include communicating in a crisis; making decisions with incomplete information available; effectively leading up, down, and across; taking an offensive versus a defensive posture; and taking the time to care for one's self. What is different is the size and scale of the COVID-19 response, combined with the real-time scrutiny of decisions.

### **Conclusion**



Overall, the findings from this review suggest the leadership crisis are directly connected to the new work tasks and the loss of social interaction, which emphasizes a need to address organizational support to reduce the challenging conditions for both employees and managers. With this in mind, it is important to recognize that becoming a distance manager requires changes in leadership through learning and adapting to the new ways of working where the learning process requires activities targeting the managers—not leaving it up to individual managers to develop new leadership capabilities. In conclusion, it is important that organizations consider the well-being and performance consequences of WFH not only for employees but also for managers, as their experiences differ, and the managers express challenges in their leadership.

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