McClelland's Theory of Motivation

Structure

1. Objectives
2. Introduction
3. McClleland's Need Theory of Motivation
4. Achievement Need
5. Power Need
6. Affiliation Need
7. Application of McClleland's Need Theory of Motivation

1. Objectives

At the end of the session learners will be able to

- Explain McClleland's Need Theory of Motivation
- Explain the concept of Achievement Need
- Explain Charecteristics of Achievement need people
- Explain the concept of Power Need
- Explain Charecteristics of Power need people
- Explain the concept of Affiliation Need
- Explain Charecteristics of Affiliation need people
- Apply McClleland's Need Theory of Motivation in Organizational Set up

2. Introduction

David McClelland in his book , "The Achieving Society" identified three motivators that he believe every person has: a need for achievement, a need for affiliation and need for power. People will have different charecteristics depending on their dominant motivator. According to McClelland these motivators are not inherent but rather learned. We develop them through our culture and life experiences.

3. McClleland's Need Theory of Motivation

David mcClelland's Human motivation theory gives a way for identifying people's motivating drivers. This theory helps one to give praise and feedback, effectively assign suitable tasks and keep people motivated.

Let us try to understand this from following scenario.

Scenario

Ms. Anita is a head mistress of New English High Schoo. One of her colleagues, Ms. Seema, recently created a report that was so thorough and well-written that the board of directors asked Ms. Anita to make sure that Ms. Seema was praised for her efforts. So, at school's monthly staff meeting, Ms. Anita stood up in front of the group, and congratulated Ms. Seema on her accomplishment, and for the good impression she made for the team. However, instead of enjoying and appreciating the attention, Ms. Seema looked uncomfortable.

What went wrong?

After reading the above given scenario, you must have realized that managing a group of people with different personalities is not easy. But if you're leading a team then it's essential to know what motivates your teammates, how they respond to feedback and praise, and what tasks fit them well.

Using McClelland's theory in the above example the person would be in the position to structure feedback for other person. Ms Seema's motivational driver is affiliation, which means she never wants to stand out in crowd so the feedback given by Ms Anita would have been far effective and appreciated if she had praised her in private.

McClelland's three motivators are as follows.

4. Achievement Need (n-Ach)

According to McClelland , achievement oriented people are highly motivated to achieve goals in life; they have a high drive for achieving targets and they are performance oriented. Desire to do better, solve problems, master complex problems.

Scenario

Mr. Deshpande, a school principal is sitting in his cabin. He has called all the teachers for a review meeting to see whether the set annual day celebration preparations are done. He instructs the teachers and clearly gives a rude warning to all those teachers who have not shown any progress in the preparation of annual day celebration. He also told them If they do not accomplish the task given to them they will lose confidence and faith by him and he will not give them any additional responsibilities in future. Mr Deshpande exhibits which need?

Here it can be seen that the principal seems to be an achievement oriented individual and he does not bother about his rude behavior with his teachers. His drive for achievement has made his image as a discourteous and merciless boss amongst the school fraternity.

The people who possess achievement motive take moderate risk in their profession. They avoid Low risk and high risk. They avoid low risk because there are few chances of getting acknowledgement for their efforts. And in high risk, they see major part of the outcome is 'chance' than their efforts. Hence, they prefer to take moderate risk

where they get acknowledgement. These people tend to work alone or with other successful persons.

The n-Achievement individuals seek accomplishment of realistic but challenging or thought-provoking goals, and progress in the job. They feel a strong need for feedback. Sense of accomplishment motivates them.

Charecteristics of Achievement need (n-Achievement) people

People needing achievement display the following behaviors:

- Strive to find solutions of problems
- Has a strong need to set and accomplish challenging and thought provoking goals.
- Self motivated and insists on getting rapid feedback on their performances to asses their progress
- Takes calculated risks to accomplish their goals
- Wants to take challenging job and takes personal responsibility for getting things done
- Wants to feel successful at doing something over which they have control.
- Task centered
- Future oriented
- Prefer to work alone
- Performs to internal standard of excellence
- Take responsibility for results of behaviour
- Set moderate achievement goals
- Prefer to set performance standards for themselves
- Prefer non routine tasks to routine assignments

5. Affiliation Need (n-Aff)

Another motive mentioned in McClelland Need theory of motivation is affiliation motive. According to McClelland, affiliation oriented people like to work in a group and tend to stick to the group norms or work cultural norms. They feel the need to be loved and accepted in the group.

Let us try to understand this need in the context of above scenario.

Scenario

Mr. Deshpande, a school principal is sitting in his cabin. He has called all the teachers for a review meeting to see whether the set annual day celebration preparations are done. He asked the teachers about annual day preparation and when he came to know that the task assigned are not being accomplished he did not scold them or gave warning. On the other hand he explained them the need to accomplish the task given in a friendly manner.He suggest them ways for accomplishing the tasks

assigned. He also asks the teachers if they require any help in accomplishing those tasks assigned to them. Mr Deshpande exhibits which need?

The boss in this case is not achievement oriented but is more affiliation oriented and believes in maintaining long close personal relationships and values people than accomplishment of tasks assigned.

Individuals with a high need for affiliation strive for building and maintaining relationships with people. They value people more than accomplishment of goals and objectives. They are fit for fields such as public relations and human resources where interaction with people and understanding of human resources is highly appreciated.

The n-Affiliation person has a need for friendly relationships and is motivated towards interaction with other people. These people are team players. Individuals having the need for affiliation look for companionship, social acceptance, and satisfying interpersonal relationships.

Characteristics of Affiliation need (n-Affiliation) People

People needing affiliation display the following behaviors:

- Take a special interest in work that provides companionship and social acceptance
- Strive for friendship
- Prefer cooperative situations rather than competitive ones
- Desire relationships involving a high degree of mutual understanding
- Doesn't like high risk or uncertainty
- Focuses on "establishing, maintaining, and restoring positive affective relations with others"
- Want close, warm interpersonal relationships
- Seek the approval of others, especially those about whom they care
- Like other people, want other people to like them, and want to be in the company of others
- Prefer work that provides significant personal interaction; they perform well in customer service and client interaction situations
- Wants to belong to the group
- Will often go along with whatever the rest of the group wants to do

Individuals with affiliation need do not make the best managers because their desire for social approval and friendship may complicate managerial decision making.

6. Power Need (n-Pow)

Power motive is the third motive mentioned in David McClelland Need theory of motivation. According to McClelland Power oriented people desire to control others and influence others' behavior. They want to make an impact on others, influence others, change people or events, and make a difference in life.

Those with a strong power motivation are often divided into two groups: personal and institutional. People with a personal power drive want to control others, while people with an institutional power drive like to organize the efforts of a team to further the company's goals. Those with an institutional power need are usually more desirable as team members. Managers with a high need for institutional power tend to be more effective than those with a high need for personal power.

There are Two ways of expressing the Need for Power

i. Dominance, physical aggression, exploitation- View situations from a win-lose perspective.- Have approach that he / she must win and the other party must lose.

ii. Persuasion and interpersonal influence-Tries to arouse confidence in those he or she wants to influence, clarifies group's goals and persuades members to achieve those goals, emphasizes group members' ability to reach goals,tries to develop a competence belief in group members.

McClelland felt this type of power behavior characterized effective leaders in organizations.

Let us try to understand this need in the context of above scenario.

Scenario

Mr. Deshpande, a school principal is sitting in his cabin. He has called all the teachers for a review meeting to see whether the set annual day celebration preparations are done. He asked the teachers about accomplishment of tasks assigned for annual day preparation and when he came to know that the task assigned are are not being achieved he scold them and gave warning. The boss showed dominating and power oriented behavior. He wants everybody to listen to him. He did not pay attention to any suggestions given by the other teachers in the meeting and he doesn't want to listen any excuses given by the teacher for not completing the assigned tasks. He forced his own decision on others. Mr Deshpande exhibits which need?

In this case he exhibits the power need. The Person with high need of power is 'authority motivated'. This drive generates a need to be influential, effective and to make an impact. These individuals exhibit a strong need to lead. They strive hard for their ideas to succeed. There is also motivation and need towards increasing personal status and prestige.

Characteristics of Power need (n-Power) People
People needing power often demonstrate the following behaviors:

• Wants to control and influence others

• Likes to win arguments

• Enjoys competition and winning

• Enjoys status and recognition

• Enjoy being in charge

- Influence others
- Enjoy winning
- Tend to be more concerned with prestige and gaining influence over others than with effective performance
- Like to win arguments
- Focuses on controlling the means of influencing the behavior of another person
- Have strong effects on other people
- Actively searches for means of influence
- Means of influence includes anything available to the person to control the behavior of others
- Risk taking
- Present oriented
- Assesses situations for change
- Use superior-subordinate relationship or external rewards to control the behavior of another

All three types of people are important for successful organizations. Strong Need for Achievement managers keep an organization going. Strong Need for Power people bring dramatic change and innovation. Strong Need for Affiliation people develop healthy and cooperative environment in the organization.

A high need to achieve does not necessarily lead to being a good manager, especially in large organizations. People with high achievement needs are usually engrossed in how well they do individually and not in influencing others to do well. On the other hand, the best managers are high in their needs for power and low in their needs for affiliation.

7. Application of McClleland's Need Theory of Motivation

Manager should be capable of identifying the need of others.Managers should motivate individuals according to their needs.

Let's take a closer look at how to manage team members who are driven by each of McClelland's three motivators:

> **Achievement need**

People motivated by 'achievement' need prefer challenging, but not unachievable tasks.They work very effectively either alone or with other high achievers. So it's essential to provide feedback and let them be aware about their triumphs and mistakes as well for further improvement. To satisfy this need in the workplace employees must be able to take on responsibility and set their own goals. They must be given freedom to recognise their achievements and accomplishments.

People with high Achievement need should be given challenging projects. They should be given feedback, appreciation and recognition for their work.

When providing feedback, give achievers a fair and balanced appraisal. They want to know what they are doing right and wrong so that they can improve.

➢ **Affiliation need**

People motivated by 'affiliation' work best in a group environment, so engage them in teamwork rather than asking them to work alone if or whenever possible. This can be achieved in the workplace when employees are encouraged to have strong relationship with one another. To accomplish this organizations can sress bonding activities and strong 'WE' culture. As such individuals dislike uncertainty and risk do not assign them task with high risk. While providing feedback, give it personally. People with high affiliation need should be given task in team/group. They should be given feedback in private rather than in front of others.

When providing feedback to these people, be personal. It's important to give balanced feedback. Start appraisal by emphasizing their good working relationship and your trust in them. Remember that these people often don't want to stand out, so it might be best to praise them in private rather than in front of others.

➢ **Power need**

People with a high need for power can work best when they're in command of the situation. Such individuals enjoy competition. They can be proved very effective in negotiations or in situations where the objective is to convince others. While providing feedback, be direct with these team members. Fulfilling the need for power in the workplace means allowing employees to pitch ideas and give inputs that might influence the organization. People with need for power should be allowed to make decisions on their own and ensure that they have some kind of influence. People with high power need should be given leadership roles whenever possible.They should be motivated by offering career development opportunities.

Those with high need for power work best when they are in charge because they enjoy competition. They do well with goal oriented projects or tasks.