

IMPORTANCE OF BELIEFS, ATTITUDES AND VALUES IN THE FRAME OF HUMAN RESOURCE MOTIVATION

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Abstract

The article deals with a complex and original field of analyse – the role that concepts such as beliefs, attitudes and values can entail in the modern human resources management techniques that are dealing with employee's motivation. Nowadays employees have a complex approach regarding motivation. Especially when we speak about big organisations such as multinational companies, we will find complex jobs having many tasks and a complicated network of inter-relations within the organisation. In such cases, as we speak about middle and top management positions, employee's motivation is relying on different types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic altogether. The substantiation of an efficient motivational strategy can be based on the link between beliefs, attitudes and values of the employees and their motivation development process.

Keywords: *human resources management, employee's motivation, beliefs, attitudes, values*

JEL Classification: M₄, J₄

Introduction

In terms of employees, it is in fact even truer in modern times that ever that self-actualisation of employees through a satisfying work environment, and supportive employer-employee relationship, is ever more important given that maximising productivity, and efficiency by successfully empowering a diminishing headcount of workforce is necessary for corporate survival and success in a depressed and competitive market.

Employees and customers alike are nowadays considerably influenced by the ethical principles of business in many market places. Concepts such as ethical leadership, corporate social responsibility, fair-trade, sustainability and other similar concepts are relatively new to many in the corporate world, and can be considered to have been largely driven to prominence by the consumer. There can in essence be an uneasy truce between the need for corporate growth and profitability on one hand, and the desire to promote employee well-being, responsible use of raw materials, energy and natural resources. It can clearly be seen that consumers have a significant role to play in influencing corporate behaviour, by demanding that the products they buy are both economical, of

sufficient quality, and are not too costly to the well-being of the employees of their producers, nor indeed to the environment.

The profit-centred business that has a traditional view over its activity, seeks to maximize the profit and return on investment, even if the methods and ways to make this profit are not ethical some times, regardless of the social effects that could arise.

In contrast, a business strategy build on ethical principles will strive to maximize profits and return on investment minimizing any social negative effects.

In this context, social and socially responsible include such related factors such as:

- The environment
- Sustainability
- Globalisation, for example exploitation, child labour, social and environmental damage anywhere in the world.
- Corruption and political issues
- Staff and consumer relations, for example education and training, health and safety, duty of care.

Typically the above issues have become more prominent in today's increasingly global economy.

There are, however, many ways to lead individuals, or teams, and given the right circumstances, each of these approaches can prove to be successful.

The skill in managing is often to adopt your approach to suit either the individuals you are delegated to lead and the circumstances or business situation you are looking to successfully negotiate.

In business this leadership style is loosely termed "transformational leadership" and is often the most effective approach to use, and yet often one of the most difficult to master since it involves you in sometimes suppressing your own in built natural style and tendency to "revert to type" if that approach is not the best fit in a certain situation.

Transformational leaders are characterised by their integrity, their clear vision of the future and how to get there with motivational goals and targets, their communication and management of delivering the desired outcome.

Beliefs, attitudes and values – conceptual framework

The concepts of beliefs attitudes and values are naming different sociological and psychological constructs considered by many specialists as being very important in the modern context of managerial and marketing scientific literature. In order to fully understand the potential that every of this concept can have related with the human resources management techniques and motivational strategies for modern organisations we will briefly present a short insight for each of the concept of above.

Beliefs represent mainly assumptions that everyone makes about himself, about others and about different phenomena that are occurring in their own environment.

Beliefs are about how we think things really are. Beliefs tend to be deep set and our values stem from our beliefs.

A belief is an internal feeling that something is true, even though that belief may be unproven or irrational. For example: I believe that crossing on the stairs brings bad luck or I believe that there is life after death.

Generally, beliefs can be divided into two different categories taking into account their way of expressing at the level of individuals mental: core beliefs and dispositional beliefs. Core belief are referring to things that individuals actively thought about, meanwhile dispositional beliefs are elements that appear when the person is not directly involved into the considered action. Specialists consider that beliefs are formed in many ways like:

- Internalization of other peoples beliefs during our own childhood.
- People may adopt the beliefs of a charismatic leader; even in the situation in which the leader beliefs are in contrast with their own previous beliefs. Moreover people will tend to have actions based on the leader beliefs even if these actions are not all the time in their own interest.
- The marketing promotional communication techniques as advertising can influence deeply beliefs, forming them or changing them through repetitive exposure to strong stimuli or emotions.
- The alteration of beliefs can occur also in the case of physical trauma
- In many cases, even if we take into consideration high level educated people we may find the situation in which they act influenced by their beliefs even if they are against their own interests.

When we analyse the nature of beliefs we may find that beliefs are different also from the point of view of the relation with the object of believing process: we may encounter beliefs about something and we may encounter also another type of beliefs – beliefs related with a person to believe in.

This type of beliefs are commendatory (when they refer to an expression of confidence in a particular entity or person) and existential claim (when someone beliefs in a person or entity in order to justify its existence).

Values express attributes of the reality surrounding us, regarding essential qualities like honesty, integrity, openness seeing as main values.

A value is a measure of worth or importance a person attaches to something; our values are often reflected in the way we live our lives. For example: I value my family or I value freedom of speech.

Values can be considered in the same time objective and subjective. The objective ones are referring to be physiologically determined while subjective ones are different from culture to culture, from individual to other individual. These types of values are in many cases aligned with the person's beliefs, referring to ethical/moral values, social ones or aesthetic ones.

Values can be considered also being milestones for the right course of action or outcome, and they can reflect one's personality being capable to influence behaviour and attitudes.

Attitudes can be considered the response that individuals have to others' actions and external situations, ways of conduct that people have learned having certain beliefs and values.

How we respond to situations and our behaviour can reflect our attitude. However we can control our behaviour in a way that does not reflect our beliefs and values. Which in order to embrace a diverse culture and behaviours as a successful manager we have to adapt our behaviour in a positive manner.

An attitude is the way a person expresses or applies their beliefs and values, and is expressed through words and behaviour. For example: I get really upset when I hear about any form of cruelty or I hate school.

Also attitude can materialize in a positive or negative evaluation regarding objects, phenomena, activities or ideas present in one's environment.

According to specialists attitudes are in most cases the outcome of a learning process (Doob, L. W., 1947).

Thus the formation of attitudes has been explained through theories like classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning and social learning. According as the individual evolves, attitudes can change depending on diverse experiences. Another interesting issue is represented by the fact that there are individuals that hold particular attitudes in time

Daniel Katz for example, writes that attitudes can serve instrumental or utilitarian, ego-defensive, value-expressive, or knowledge functions (Daniel Katz, 1960).

If we take into consideration the process of changing attitudes, we must be aware of the functions that an attitude can have for a particular person. Thus, attitudes have been classified into four different groups taking account of their functionality (Daniel Katz, 1960):

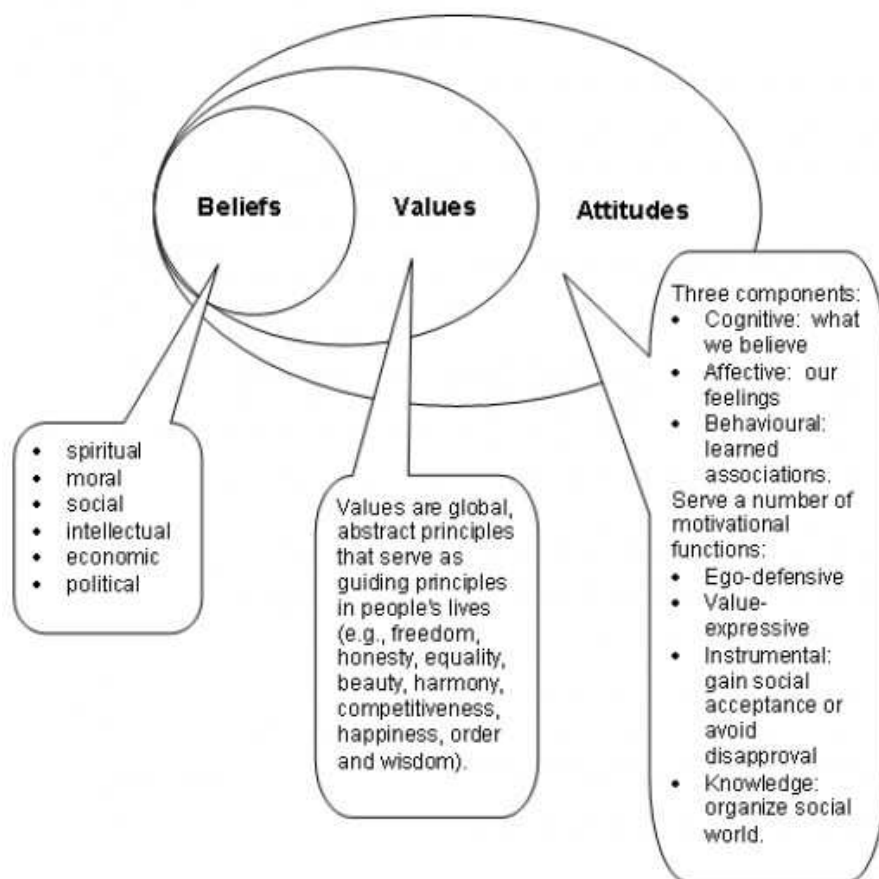
- Utilitarian: useful from the point of view of defining ways that people want to avoid certain things
- Knowledge: used by anyone to organize and interpret new information acquired
- Ego defensive: used to protect self-esteem of individuals
- Value-expressive: generally used for expressing values and beliefs essential for individuals

Taking account of various social roles that individuals can have, every one of them will be attracted by the ones that have the same core values and beliefs.

It is clear harmonising our value systems is what makes a successful relationship, be it personal, educational or professional our beliefs, values and attitudes are constantly interfacing with those of others as we can see in the figure above.

Still there is a difference between beliefs, values and attitude however they are all linked. Our beliefs and values can have an impact on our attitude and adjust our behaviour in situations.

Figure nr. 1. *The intercorrelation between beliefs, values and attitudes*



Source: <http://docmo.hubpages.com/hub/Teaching-and-Assessing-Attitudes>

The difference between Values and Attitudes:

- Values are belief systems that guide our behaviour
- Values decide what we think as right, wrong, good, or unjust
- Attitudes are our likes and dislikes towards things, people and objects
- Attitudes are responses that are a result of our values
- The cognitive component of attitudes is similar to values as both involve beliefs
 - Values are more or less permanent while attitudes are a result of our experiences and do change with favourable experiences
 - Manifestation of values is seen in the shape of our attitudes.

The difference between values and beliefs is related to the fact that values can change over time, as the individuals evolve and have a broader experience and beliefs on the other hand remain much more constant, the changing of beliefs being very improbable especially according to the age.

In order that a belief to change, the person has to live a very intense episode that can prove to her that the former belief is no more valid or has to change. The concept of beliefs and values are related with the one referring to the attitudes and opinions because the first determine and influence the latter.

The importance of beliefs, values and attitudes intercorrelation with employees motivation within the human resources management approaches

In nowadays complex business environment, employees have a particular evolution related with carrier and professional evolution choices. In this context, a managerial strategy designed to improve the level of employees' motivation have to take into consideration multiple variables that can influence the process of motivation on different layers. Thus, taking into consideration the effect that the conjunction between employees' beliefs, values and attitudes can have upon their motivation is a must.

A very interesting point of view arises when we speak about the motivation process at the level of middle and top managers. The job of managers is to lead and manage different types of employee's teams, with different structures and attributions. How their own beliefs, values and attitudes related with the motivational process of their own subordinates will interact with their management style and approach? There are in fact a myriad of diverse management styles which can be used to fit given situation and circumstances.

In the table below we can represent some of the main leadership approaches that can be used according to the managers beliefs, values and attitudes developed over time.

Table no. 1. **Main leadership styles approach**

Leadership style	Characterised by	Suitable situations	Positives	Negatives
Autocratic	Leaders have a lot of power over their team. Team members have little opportunity to make suggestions.	Routine and unskilled jobs	Efficient. Decision made Quickly.	Little job satisfaction. High staff turnover.
Bureaucratic	Leaders work rigorously to rule and ensure their staff do likewise.	Work involving safety critical tasks.	Effective where much of work is routine.	Inflexible Team members feel undervalued if their Input is not valued or utilised

Leadership style	Characterised by	Suitable situations	Positives	Negatives
Charismatic	Leaders inspire and energise their team and organisation.	Where a suitable individual exists to “carry” organisation forward.	Sense of belonging and euphoria will promote a sense of motivation.	Organisation will become reliant on that one individual with potentially dire consequences should they leave or take a wrong decision.
Democratic/ Participative	Democratic leaders usually are involving employees in decision-making process, but have the final word.	When quality and innovation is more important than efficiency or productivity.	Encourage creativity.	Decision making process may be slow. Some team members may not have the expertise required to provide good input, providing constant distraction and prevarication.
Laissez-Faire	Literally “leave it be” for example: allow people to work on their own.	Team members are experienced, skilled and self-motivated.	Empowers workers, giving them more job satisfaction.	Requires constant good quality feedback. Very reliant on quality of staff
People oriented	Focussed on developing the individuals within a team.	Where good teamwork and creative collaboration is required.	Creates teams that people want to be part of. Leaders friendly and approachable.	Leader may see team development as more important than operational goals.
Servant leadership	A leader who principally facilitates his team and “leads from behind”.	Where values and ethics are seen as important.	Creates a positive corporate culture High team morale.	May lose out in competitive situations or market places.

Leadership style	Characterised by	Suitable situations	Positives	Negatives
Task oriented	This type is focusing only on getting the job done.	Repetitive tasks with deadlines to meet.	Ensures deadlines are met. Effective with employees with poor time management skills.	Loss of focus on the individual democratic.
Transactional	Focussed on tasks, but with team members rewarded for tasks completion, or conversely penalised for non-performance.	Piece work production. Where employees react well to financial or other incentives.	Ambitious (or some may say greedy) employees motivated to increase output.	Little job satisfaction. Essential to manage quality when output is incentivised.
Transformational	Leadership style adapts constantly to fit current business needs.	Most, if not all, businesses.	Flexible focussing on needs as they arise.	Requires constant monitoring to ensure business needs are being fulfilled.

Despite the fact that the transformational leadership seems to be the most appropriate style which can meet the dynamics of present time requirements that are specialists who propose a more evolved approach.

Dr Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard created The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory. According to their opinion, successful leaders have to be capable to change their leadership styles taking into account the characteristics of the employees that they have to manage and the peculiarities of the tasks involved. Thus, a successful leader should be able to put more emphasis upon the task or on the relationship with the employees depending on requirements in order to have the task well done.

This can be applied to team leadership, according to Hersey and Blanchard; there are four main leadership styles (Hersey Paul, Blanchard H. Kenneth, Johnson E. Dewey, 2012):

- **Telling** – S1 these are the type of leaders that are telling to their people what to do and how to do it.
- **Selling** – S2 these are the type of leaders that can provide information and direction, but they do more communication with the follower. Leaders “sell” their message in order to motivate and stimulate employees to get their team work done.

- **Participating** – S3 these are the type of leaders that are more focused on the relationship with the employees and less on direction. The leader works together with the team, and shares his own decision-making responsibilities.

- **Delegating** – S4 these are the type of leaders that can pass most of the responsibility onto the follower or onto the group. The leaders will still monitor the progress done, but they are less involved in decisions.

Taking into account their characteristics, *telling style* and *selling style* are focused on getting the tasks done, meanwhile *participating* and *delegating* styles are more concerned with developing team member’s abilities to work independently.

According to Hersey and Blanchard, the use of a style or another is correlated with the level of the employees’ maturity. Thus they segment the level of maturity into four different segments or levels:

- M1 – employees that are the most immature. These types of employees don’t have neither the skills neither the knowledge necessary for doing the job by themselves. Also they lack the confidence of being capable to work on their own and need a constant pushing form the part of the manager

- M2 – employees a little bit more mature, that have the will to work by themselves but they still miss the necessary skills to complete their tasks successfully.

- M3 – at this level, employees are willing to work by themselves, are having more skills than the previous type but still they lack the confidence in their skills and abilities

- M4 – this group contains the employees that are able to work by themselves having a strong self-confidence and all the necessary skills and abilities to fulfil the tasks at a proper level

The Hersey-Blanchard model maps each leadership style to each maturity level, as shown below:

Maturity Level	Most Appropriate Leadership Style
M1: Low maturity	S1: Telling/directing
M2: Medium maturity, limited skills	S2: Selling/coaching
M3: Medium maturity, higher skills but lacking of confidence	S3: Participating/supporting
M4: High maturity	S4: Delegating

To use effectively this model, managers have to reflect over the maturity of their team members, put their beliefs at work, to define better their values and correspondent attitudes and act precisely in order to obtain the best motivational response from their employees.

Conclusions and future research directions

In business, a leadership style called “transformational leadership” is often the most effective approach to use. Transformational leaders have integrity, they inspire people with a shared vision of the future, they set clear goals, they motivate people towards these goals, they manage delivery, and they communicate well with their teams.

However, leadership is no “one size fits all” thing; often, a good manager has to adapt his style to fit a situation or a specific group. This is why it is useful to gain a thorough understanding of other leadership styles; after all, the more approaches the manager is familiar with, the more he can shape his approach to the situation.

In essence, employees should be treated well, and empowered such that they make maximum use of their strengths and thereby find their employment and role both satisfying and fulfilling. The powerful relationship that exists between inner beliefs, values attitudes and behaviour of the manager is also closely related to the same relationship mirrored from the point of view of the employee.

Future research could try to explore with qualitative type instruments this interesting and profound relationship, making clearer the possible positive relationship between the inner motivation of the managers and the motivation of employees.

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