

Building a Composite Approach to Employees' Motivational Needs by Combining Cognitive Needs

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Abstract : Measures of employee motivation at work are often based on the theory of self-determined motivation, which implies that human resources departments and managers seek to motivate employees in the most self-determined way possible and use strategies to achieve this goal. In practice, they often tend to assess employee motivation and then adapt management to the most important source of motivation for their employees, for example by financially rewarding an employee who is extrinsically motivated, and by rewarding an intrinsically motivated employee with congratulations and recognition. Thus, the use of motivation measures contradicts theoretical positioning: theory does not provide for the promotion of extrinsically motivated behaviour. In addition, a corpus of social psychology linked to fundamental needs makes it possible to personally address a person's different sources of motivation (need for cognition, need for uniqueness, need for effects and need for closure). By developing a composite measure of motivation based on these needs, we provide human resources professionals, and in particular occupational psychologists, with a tool that complements the assessment of self-determined motivation, making it possible to precisely address the objective of adapting work not to the self-determination of behaviours, but to the motivational traits of employees. To develop such a model, we gathered the French versions of the cognitive needs scales (need for cognition, need for uniqueness, need for effects, need for closure) and conducted a study with 645 employees of several French companies. On the basis of the data collected, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to validate the model, studied the correlations between the various needs, and highlighted the different reference groups that could be used to use these needs as a basis for interviews with employees (career, recruitment, etc.). The results showed a coherent model and the expected links between the different needs. Taken together, these results make it possible to propose a valid and theoretically adjusted tool to managers who wish to adapt their management to their employees' current motivations, whether or not these motivations are self-determined.

Keywords : motivation, personality, work commitment, cognitive needs

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