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# **IMPACT OF LEVELS OF MANAGEMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF- ACTUALISATION AND JOB PERFORMANCE**

## **A Study of Industrial Managers**

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Motivation and job performance relationship is a topic that has been analysed widely in management literature. In this paper, the impact of management level on the primary relationship between self actualisation and job performance of industrial managers has been examined. The author concludes that the higher the rank of a manager in the organisational hierarchy, the higher the degree of positive relationship between self-actualisation and job performance. Both self-actualisation and job performance vary positively with the level of management.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of self-actualisation occupies a central place in the study of complex organisations. Chris Argyris, acknowledged authority on the psychological nature of management, suggests the presence of self-actualisation when the organisational member believes his occupational role permits opportunity for relatively full expression and expansions of individual potential. His studies indicate that when this integration, or fusion, between the individual and the organisation is absent, lowered self-actualisation is likely to introduce forms of adaptive behaviour, such as day dreaming, aggressive feelings, restricting output, postponing difficult decisions and tasks, and showing little interest in work<sup>1</sup>.

In recent years industry has become increasingly interested in achievement motivation, human potential, and self-actualisation, areas previously studied by the social scientists only. Today there is a joint frontier of business and psychology, and enlightened spokesmen from each discipline realise that what is good for psychological growth is also good for productivity and that both are necessary for an innovative organisational climate. The present study aims at studying motivational dynamics in terms of Maslowian self-actualisation need and its relationship with job-performance.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

An attempt has been made to examine the impact of 'levels of management' on the primary relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance of industrial managers.

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## IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

It is felt, in general, in all types of organisations and, in particular, in industrial organisations that there is a critical need to understand better how, why and when some employees perform well, others marginally and still others unsatisfactorily. Every year, crores of rupees are spent on training and developing employees to be more productive and to accept and handle greater responsibilities. Yet, despite the efforts of employers, there has been little progress in understanding the relationship between an individual's motivational needs and his demonstrated ability to perform on the job. This study is expected to be a step in this direction.

If such predictive relationships could be established even within the most generally accepted guidelines, it would not only help the organisations in their financial performance, but would also serve to reward the individual as well. More specific implications focus on procurement practices, promotional evaluations and training programmes.

## EXPLANATION OF THE TERMS USED :

- i) *Middle Management Personnel* included all those who fall in between the first-line supervisors and top-executives i.e. Directors and General Managers. In other words, managers between the first-line reporter and last reported in an organisation comprise middle management.
- ii) *Lower Management Personnel* included managers who are at the first level of supervision. In other words, managers who are first-line reporters in an organisation or its department, division or section comprise lower management.
- iii) *Job-Performance* is the execution of a specific duty, role or function within a given organisation measured in terms of eleven basic management skills i.e., knowledge, planning, results, delegating, leadership, motivation of subordinates, training, adaptability, communication, emotionality and growth.
- iv) *Self-Actualisation* means to become all that one is capable of becoming. Maslow expressed it : "what a man can be, he must be".<sup>2</sup> In other words, self-actualisation is the desire to become everything that one is capable of becoming. Individuals satisfy this need in different ways. In one person it may be expressed in the desire to be an ideal mother; in another it may be expressed in managing an organisation; in other it may be expressed athletically; in still another by playing the piano. In effect, self-actualisation is the person's motivation to transform the perception of self into reality.<sup>3</sup> Self-actualisation is equated with optimal functioning.<sup>4</sup>

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF-ACTUALISED PEOPLE**

Fifteen characteristics of self-actualised people emerged from Maslow's study. More specifically, any given self-actualiser (or one developing in self-actualised direction) may have more or less of each of the following characteristics :

- (1) He has more efficient perception of reality and more comfortable relations with it.
- (2) He has greater acceptance of himself, others and nature.
- (3) He is relatively spontaneous in behaviour and his behaviour is marked by simplicity and naturalness and by lack of artificially or straining for effect.
- (4) He is problem centered rather than ego centered.
- (5) He has the quality of detachment or a high need for privacy.
- (6) He has a higher degree of autonomy or independence of culture and environment. That is, he does not depend on extrinsic satisfactions for motivation; rather he is motivated by his continued growth, by a need to develop latent resources.
- (7) He has a continued freshness of appreciation for the basic goods of life with awe, pleasure and wonder.
- (8) He experiences on occasion what Maslow refers to as a peak experience<sup>a</sup>.
- (9) He has a genuine desire to help the human race. That is, he has a deep feeling of identification, sympathy and affection for the mankind.
- (10) He has deeper and more profound interpersonal relations than other adults.
- (11) He is democratic in the deepest possible sense. He not only recognises others regardless of education, political belief, race, colour or class but also finds it possible to learn from anybody who has something to teach.
- (12) He tends to readily recognise the difference between means and ends. Although primarily interested in the end, he can often enjoy the means as an end in itself. He is strongly ethical. He has definite moral standards ; he does right and does not do wrong.
- (13) He possesses an unhostile sense of humour.
- (14) He possesses relatively high degree of creativeness. He has a way of getting directly to the heart of a problem and finding a novel solution.
- (15) He strongly resists enculturation and maintains a certain inner detachment from the culture in which he is immersed.

If one were to take the fifteen characteristics listed above and set out to identify people as self-actualisers, one would probably be disappointed in that no single person at all times displays all these characteristics. The above characteristics resulted behaviourally in those individuals who are

able to resolve polarities or opposites or dichotomies better than the average population.<sup>7</sup>

### BASIC ASSUMPTIONS.

- (1) The need-gratification theory or hierarchy of needs as proposed by Maslow is a generally accepted workable foundation for the study of basic drives of human beings.<sup>8</sup>
- (2) Basic needs are operative throughout our society and may be found in human beings regardless of their occupation, station in life, or ethnic or cultural background.
- (3) Human beings seek to satisfy their basic needs continuously and their force can be measured at any one point of time.
- (4) Human beings express these needs not only in the choice of their occupation, but in their desire to grow and succeed within their occupational environment.
- (5) All human beings possess needs of self-actualisation in greater or lesser degree.
- (6) Biological, social and psychological needs inspire human beings to work and tend to gain priority over the other at one or the other point of time.

### THE SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 433 middle and lower lever managers employed in ten selected industrial organisations<sup>9</sup> located in and around Delhi. All the selected organisations were engaged in manufacturing activities and had been in business for the last 25 to 55 years.

The total number of managers who were distributed the set of the research instruments was 587. Of this total, 154 were eliminated for one or the other reason: either the individual did not respond to the questionnaire at all or having responded, the data on their questionnaires were either unintelligible or incomplete. Thus, the total usable sample amounted to 433 participants, or a testable response rate of 74 per cent.

For testing whether the 'levels of management' of the respondents have a meaningful impact on the relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance, all the respondents were divided into the following two groups:

Group	Levels of management	Participants	
		No.	Percentage
I	Lower level managers	201	46.42
II	Middle level managers	232	53.58
	Total	433	100.00

## **RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

### **1. PERSONAL ORIENTATION INVENTORY (POI)<sup>10</sup>**

Shostrom's POI was used for measuring the level of self-actualisation of the managers. The POI was constructed to measure the values and behaviour characteristics of the self-actualising person. The test was not exclusively based as the formulations of Maslow, but included the theories of Riesman, Glazer, Denny, May, Angel, Ellenberger, Pearl, Bach and Goldberg.<sup>11</sup>

The POI consists of 150 two-choice comparative-value-judgement items reflecting values and behaviour seen to be of importance in the development of the self-actualising individual. In responding to the POI, the respondent is asked to select the one statement in each pair that truly reflects his personality. An example of the POI item is:

I feel guilty when I am selfish.  
I don't feel guilty when I am selfish.

The POI items are scored twice, first for two basic scales of personal orientation, inner-directed support (127 items) and time competence (23 items) and second for ten sub scales each of which measures a conceptually important element of self-actualising.

For the purpose of this study, time-competence<sup>12</sup> and inner-directedness<sup>13</sup> scales were computed. In addition to these scales, a simple combination of inner-directed and time-competence was **also calculated** which serves the best "single" predictor of an overall measure of the POI.<sup>14</sup>

### **2. THE WPS SUPERVISOR - EXECUTIVE EVALUATION SCALES (WPS - ES).<sup>15</sup>**

The WPS-ES were used for evaluating the performance of the managers. Through WPS-ES, each manager of the sample was evaluated twice by himself and by his superior. Both used the same 110 WPS-ES statements. The 110 WPS-ES statements are grouped into 11 areas related to effective management. Each of the 11 areas has 10 statements; thus there are 110 statements in each WPS-ES.

The items in the appropriate forms of the WPS-ES are similar in all respects except for changes in pronouns. The grammatical changes were made to further personalise the self-rating form and to maintain an unmistakable distinction between the two forms. An example follows:

Item 2, WPS-ES Self-Evaluation: I have too much work to do.  
Item-2, WPS-ES Superior-Evaluation : He has too much work to do.

### **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION BLANK (BIB) :**

All the participants of the study were requested to furnish certain biographical and demographic information. The BIB was especially designed for this

research. Through this BIB data relating to the levels of management of the participants were collected.

## ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND RESEARCH RESULTS

Correlation technique was used for the analysis of the data.

Using the POI : "Overall Measures"<sup>16</sup> as the primary independent variables and considering the WPS-ES : Self-Rating: Composite and the WPS-ES : Supervisor-Rating : Composite as dependent variable, the following results were obtained (Table 1)

For Group-II : Middle level managers, self-actualisation was found significantly correlated with job-performance. Of the 6 possible correlation coefficients, 5 were found significant — 2 at the .01 level and 3 at the .05 level of significance. The POI : composite correlation with the WPS-ES/Self-Rating : composite revealed a significant positive correlation coefficient at the .01 level of significance of .22, yielding a coefficient of determination of .05. All the coefficients of correlation were found positive.

Similarly, for Group I : Lower level managers, also, a positive relationship was found between self-actualisation and job-performance. Of the 6 possible coefficients of correlation, 2 were found significant at the .05 level of significance. All the coefficients of correlation whether significant or non-significant were found positive. The POI : composite correlated with the WPS-ES Self-Rating : composite revealed a significant correlation coefficient of .17 at the .05 level of significance and yielded a coefficient of determination of .03.

The statistical results indicate that the management levels do have a positive impact over the relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance. Group II consisting of middle level managers has a relatively higher degree of positive relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance as compared to that of Group I consisting of lower level managers. This is in tune with the general expectations that as the status of a person goes up in a particular organisation his morale is boosted high and he becomes in a better position to use his potentialities to the fullest extent. This is reflected on relatively higher degree of relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance.

Secondly, for both the groups, self-actualisation is positively related to job-performance which is consistent with the earlier findings.<sup>17</sup>

In brief, higher is the rank of manager in the management hierarchy of an organisation, higher is the degree of positive relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance. In other words, both self-actualisation and job-performance vary positively with the levels of management. The supporting study made by Slocum, Jr. has pointed out that satisfaction of higher order needs (including self-actualisation need) is more closely related to top and middle managers performance than satisfaction of higher order needs for lower management personnel<sup>18</sup> Indian evidence along these lines is also available.<sup>19</sup> Even in the context of public sector undertakings, Dr. Laxmi Narain noted that the overall need satisfaction increases as one moves from lower to the middle and from the middle to the higher levels of management.<sup>20</sup>

Table 1  
 Self-Actualisation vs. Job-Performance  
 POI : "Overall Measures" vs. WPS-ES/Self-Rating : Composite and WPS-ES/Supervisor-Rating : Composite  
 Dependent Variables are : WPS-ES/Self-Rating : Composite and WPS-ES/Supervisor-Rating : Composite

	Correlated with : "POI : Overall Measures"								
	Time-Competence			Inner-Directed			Composite		
	r	r <sup>2</sup>	t	r	r <sup>2</sup>	t	r	r <sup>2</sup>	t
Group I (N = 201) :									
Self-Rating	.05	.00	.72	.18	.03	2.53 <sup>+</sup>	.17	.03	2.39 <sup>+</sup>
Supervisor-Rating	.04	.00	.55	.07	.00	.97	.07	.01	.99
Group II (N = 232) :									
Self-Rating	.16	.03	2.53 <sup>+</sup>	.20	.04	3.16 <sup>*</sup>	.22	.05	3.36 <sup>*</sup>
Supervisor-Rating	.05	.00	.70	.16	.02	2.39 <sup>+</sup>	.14	.02	2.18 <sup>+</sup>

\* Significant at the .01 level  
 + Significant at the .05 level  
 N = 433

## IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study could be considered only as a step forward in examining the impact of levels of management on the relationship between one of the highest forms of human needs, i.e. self-actualisation and performance on the job.

This research should be replicated before any hard conclusions are drawn for universal application. Similar researches and investigations should be conducted in a population sample of greater diversity and coverage.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES.

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Argyris, Chris, *Personality and Organisation*, New York : Harper and Brothers, 1957.
2. Maslow, Abraham H., *Motivation and Personality*, Second Edition, New York : Harper and Row, 1970. p. 46.
3. Luthans, Fred, *Organisational Behaviour*, New York : McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1977, p. 408.
4. Satapathy, A., *Self-Actualisation Among Teachers of Higher Secondary Schools in Delhi*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, I.I.T., Delhi, 1980, p. 2.
5. Maslow, Abraham H., *op. cit.*, pp. 153-174.
6. Peak experience is a tremendous intensification of any of the experiences in which there is loss of self or transcendence of it, e.g. problem centering, intense concentration, intense sensuous experience, self-forgetful and intense enjoyment of music or art. Further studies of peak experiences are set forth in : Laski, M., *Ecstasy*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1962. Maslow, A.H., *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences*, Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1964. Maslow, A.H., *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2nd Edn., New York : Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968.
7. Maslow, Abraham H., *Motivation and Personality*, 2nd Edn., New York : Harper and Row, 1970, pp. 178-180.
8. The hierarchy of needs theory was put forth by Abraham H. Maslow. A.H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 2nd Edn., New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970, pp. 35-58. He postulated that human needs exist in a hierarchy composed of five categories :
  - i) Psychological needs,
  - ii) Safety needs,
  - iii) Social needs,
  - iv) Esteem needs, and
  - v) Self-actualisation needs.

Maslow held that individuals move through the levels in the hierarchy in the order listed. First-level needs are satisfied first before going to the next level. As the individual satisfies needs at one level, the next higher level of needs asserts itself to occupy the individual's energies and efforts. Individuals vary in the extent of their progress along this continuum, and going gets harder as a person moves toward the ultimate goal — self-actualisation.
9. For reasons of maintaining confidentiality, the names of the companies and other details about them have not been given; only generalisations, findings and conclusions have been stated at relevant places in this article.
10. Shostrom, E.L., 'An Inventory for the Measurement of Self Actualisation', *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, xxiv (1964), pp. 207-218.
11. Knapp, Robert R., *Handbook for the Personal Orientation Inventory*, San Diego : EITS, 1976. p. 4.
12. Time competence scale measures the degree to which an individual lives in the

present rather than in the past or the future. Self-actualising persons are those living primarily in the present, with full awareness and contact, and full feeling reactivity.

13. Inner-directedness scale measures whether an individual's mode of reaction is characteristically "self" oriented or "other"-oriented. Inner, or self-directed persons are guided primarily by internalised principles and motivations while other-directed persons are, to a great extent, influenced by their peer group or other external forces.
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