

Impact of Career on Managerial Self-Actualisation and Job-Performance

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Managerial motivation and job-performance is a topic that has been analysed widely in management literature. In this paper, the impact of career on the primary relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance of industrial managers has been examined. The author concludes that career of industrial managers has a positive impact on their relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance. In general, longer the career, higher is the degree of relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance. This tendency, however, is observed only upto 20 years of career. After this, there is still a positive tendency of relationship; but the variation in this relationship is not in the same proportion as in the case of career.

I. INTRODUCTION

Among the numerous economic, political and human problems that confront the world to-day, questions concerning the enhancement of productivity have become of paramount importance.

Inflation is leading to inconsistent demands for wage and salary increases, despite the fact that every pay increase percolates through the economy to bring about increases in the price for goods and services. There is no escape from this vicious circle except by way of unemployment or increased productivity. The former is most undesirable, the latter is the obvious choice.

For raising productivity at the micro level, the basic task of management is that of maintaining an organisation that functions effectively. To achieve this, the management must harness the potentialities of every individual and group to the fullest extent possible by creating an environment in which every member of the organisation functions optimally. To realise this goal, management has to accomplish results in the field of managerial planning, effective organising of human and non-human resources, effective direction through leadership, motivation and communication, and effective control system followed by an efficient co-ordination net-work.

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The present study focuses on motivational dynamics in terms of Maslowian self-actualisation need and its relationship with job-performance of managerial personnel working at various levels in an organisation. The purpose of this study is to advance the state of knowledge in the area of people's motivation in industrial organisations. More specifically, the present study aims at defining the need for self-actualisation as it affects job-performance. An attempt has been made to examine the impact of 'career' on the primary relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance of industrial managers.

II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Maslow's investigations on self-actualisation did not actually start out as a planned research. He admired two of his teachers most, who were 'wonderful people'. He began to wonder why those teachers were so different from the 'run-of-the-mill' people in the world. Out of curiosity he made notes and descriptions about them separately. Gradually he realised that their modes of behaviour could be generalised into one common pattern. Then he selected many other prominent persons, both living and dead, from political and historical figures as well as from students, friends and acquaintances for study. To his surprise, he found from the characteristics of these selected persons that one and the same type of pattern was emerging. On the basis of these findings, he was

able to describe a syndrome which seemed to fit all of them.

Researches conducted in the past on self-actualisation were normative and personal in nature, but more recently, interest in this field has shifted away from a phenomenological perspective to a more descriptive and objective one (Shankar, 1988). The trend has been towards growth-oriented theories which are connected with the development of positive mental health or psychological growth. Researches on the various dimensions of self-actualisation are being extended to various other areas such as educational, industrial and social situations (Satapathy, 1980).

III. EXPLANATION OF THE TERMS USED

- (a) **Manager** is person occupying a position in a formal organisation, who is responsible for the work of at least one other person and who has formal authority over that person.
- (b) **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.
- (c) **Lower Management Personnel** included managers who are at

the first level of supervision. In other words, managers who are the first-line reporters in an organisation or its department, division or section comprise lower management.

- (d) **Self-Actualisation** means to become all that one is capable of becoming. Maslow expressed it : "what a man can be, he must be" (Maslow, 1970). 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 still another by playing the piano. In effect, self-actualisation is the person's motivation to transform the perception of self into reality (Luthans, 1992).
- (e) **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, emotionability and growth.
- (f) **Career** refers to an individual's experience over a period of time. It is the series of jobs that he/she performs in his/her life,

especially in the same area of work in which he/she progresses. For the purpose of this study, it has been measured in terms of total length of service in existing organisation as well as in other organisations.

- (g) **Peak experiences** are moments of great awe, of intense happiness or ecstasy. They are the subjective experiencing of what is recognised to be one of the high points of life, one of the most exciting, rich and fulfilling experiences which the person has ever had.

IV. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

- (i) 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 (Maslow, 1970).
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) Human beings seek to satisfy their basic needs continuously and their force can be measured at any point of time.
- (iv) 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.

- (v) All human beings possess needs of self-actualisation in greater or lesser degree.
- (vi) Biological, social or psychological needs inspire human beings to work and tend to gain priority over the other at one or others at one or the other point of time.
- (vii) The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), the psychological instrument used to measure self-actualisation does indeed measure self-actualisation as originally defined by Maslow who expressed, "much satisfaction" with it (the POI) (Shostrom, 1964).
- (viii) The WPS Supervisor-Executive Scales (WPS-ES) are valid for measuring job-performance (Shankar, 1988).
- (ix) The validity and reliability coefficients established for POI and WPS-ES are dependable for purposes of this study (Shankar, 1988).

V. MASLOW'S NEED THEORY

One of the most widely mentioned theories of motivation is the hierarchy of needs theory put forth by Abraham Maslow (Maslow, 1970). Maslow's theory rests on three assumptions : (1) people have a number of needs that require some measure of satisfaction, (2) only unsatisfied needs motivate behaviour, and (3) the needs of people are arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency, which means that as each lower-level need is satisfied, the

need at the next level demands attention.

The basic human needs placed by Maslow in an ascending order of importance are as follows :

- (i) **Physiological needs.** These are the basic needs for sustaining human life itself, such as food water, warmth, shelter, sleep, and sex. Maslow took the position that until these needs are satisfied to the degree necessary to maintain life, other needs will not motivate people.
- (ii) **Security, or safety needs.** People's desire for some sort of order and predictability in the world is reflected in safety and security needs. These are the needs to be free of physical danger and the fear of loss of a job, property, food, or shelter.
- (iii) **Social or belonging needs.** Whereas the first two types of needs deal with aspects of physical survival, social or belonging needs deal with emotional and mental well-being. Since people are social beings, they need to belong, to be accepted by others. Research has shown that fulfillment of people's needs for affection, a sense of belonging, and identification with a group are as important to their health as are food and safety. Although social needs are felt throughout childhood, they may become more intense during

adolescence, when the need to belong to a group becomes more important than family ties or what parents think. In adults, the need for belonging may surface as a desire to join various organisations professional associations, church groups, amateur sport teams, or social clubs.

- (iv) **Esteem needs.** According to Maslow, once people begin to satisfy their need to belong, they tend to want to be held in esteem both by themselves and by others. This kind of need produces such satisfaction as power, prestige status, and self-confidence.
- (v) **Self-actualisation needs.** Maslow regards this as the highest need in his hierarchy. The four categories of needs just described motivate people by their absence, that is, when people feel a lack of food and shelter, security, social relationships, or esteem. Self-actualisation needs, however, represent the need for growth and they motivate people by their presence. Self-actualisation is people fulfilling their potential or realising their fullest capacities as human beings. Because of the uniqueness of each person, the form or content of self-actualisation is an individual matter:

To sum up, Maslow held that individuals move through the levels in the hierarchy in the order listed. First level needs are

satisfied 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.

VI. TRAITS OF SELF-ACTUALISED PEOPLE

The self-actualised person is a "person who is more fully functioning and lives a more enriched life than does the average person. Such an individual is seen as developing and utilising all of his unique capabilities, or potentialities, free of the inhibitions and emotional turmoil of those less-actualising (Shostrom, 1980.) Thus, a self-actualiser is one who has developed, or is in the process of developing "to the full stature of which he is capable."

Fifteen traits of self-actualising people emerged from Maslow's study. In order to obtain a more complete image of what a self-actualiser is like it is valuable to review these characteristics in some detail. It should be added that this is a composite list and that any self-actualiser may have more or less of each of the following characteristics (Maslow, 1970):

- (i) **More efficient perception of reality and more comfortable relations with it**

The self-actualiser has the ability to perceive situations and people for what

they are largely because his perception is not as greatly influenced by wishes, hopes, fears, and cultural values. In conjunction with more efficient perception, he welcomes the unknown instead of adhering to the known. Also, he does not necessarily have the need to perceive the unknown in terms of the known.

(ii) **Acceptance of self, others and nature**

The self-actualiser finds it possible to accept himself and his nature even though discrepancies between an ideal and actual image are perceived. As Maslow puts it, "one does not complain about water because it is wet, or about rocks because they are hard, or about trees because they are green" (Maslow, 1970). Also, one does not necessarily complain about human nature. One perceives human nature as it is rather than one might prefer it.

(iii) **Spontaneity, simplicity and naturalness**

Self-actualising people are not entirely deliberate with regard to their behaviour, thoughts, etc.; but rather can be described as relatively spontaneous. Their behaviour is said to be simple and natural but not necessarily consistently unconventional. In fact, it is their thoughts, impulses, and consciousness that are unconventional instead of their behaviour. This primarily seems to result from recognition of the fact that the world of people in which the self-actualiser lives could not accept

consistently unconventional behaviour. To sum up, the self-actualising individual is conventional when it is expected, provided it is not important to the individual to behave otherwise. As a result, the self-actualising person is said to prefer situation and friends that do not demand conventional behaviour.

(iv) **Problem-centering**

Self-actualisers are problem - centered rather than ego-centered. In general, these people are occupied by some task or mission in life and consequently don't reflect much on themselves. This task is a task that they must do rather than one that they want to do. These subjects tend to focus on basic issues and eternal questions rather than highly abstracted, easily answered questions. Their horizon are said to be broader than those of the average man which in turn leads them away from trivial, petty problems. This seems to make self-actualising people more serene.

(v) **The quality of detachment**

The self-actualising person is not uncomfortable with solitude and isolation and in many cases actually prefers privacy to a greater degree than the average person. He has a high ability to concentrate, make self-decisions, be self-disciplined, and be a deciding agent rather than helplessly determined by other people.

(vi) **Autonomy : independence of culture and environment**

Self-actualising people do not depend on extrinsic satisfactions for motivation;

rather they are motivated by their continued growth, by a need to develop latent resources.

These subjects are independent of the good opinion of other people. They are also independent of the usual rewards associated with accomplishment and seem more responsive to self-development.

(vii) **Continued freshness of appreciation**

The self-actualised person has a continued freshness of appreciation for the basic goods of life with awe, pleasure and wonder. However, these intense feelings do not happen every time something is experienced but rather occur unpredictably. He derives strength, ecstasy, and inspiration from these experiences.

(viii) **'The peak experience'**

Feelings of limitless horizons opening up to the vision, the feeling of being simultaneously more powerful and yet more helpless than ever before—these are experiences of the self-actualising person. Mild peak experiences occur frequently in one type of self-actualiser while very intense experiences occur in others. The former non-peaking self-actualisers seem likely to be the social world improvers, politicians, etc., while the latter peaking self-actualisers are more apt to write poetry, music, philosophy and religion.

(ix) **'Gemeinschaftsgefühl'**

This word created by Alfred Adler, is used to describe the feeling of

identification the self-actualisers have for mankind. They are often saddened and even enraged by the shortcomings of the average person. However, there is still, in general an appreciation for the underlying kinship with people.

The self-actualised person, simply stated, has a genuine desire to help the human race. That is, he has a deep feeling of identification, sympathy and affection for the mankind.

(x) **Interpersonal relations**

The self-actualised person has deeper and more profound interpersonal relations than other adults. He is capable of more fusion, greater love, more perfect identification, and greater obliteration of ego boundaries. He has especially deep ties with rather few individuals. His circle of friends is rather small. The ones he loves profoundly are few in number.

(xi) **The democratic character structure**

Self-actualisers are democratic in the deepest possible sense. They not only recognise others regardless of education, political belief, race, colour or class but also find it possible to learn from anybody who has something to teach. They have strong sense of right and wrong, of good and evil. They are more likely rather than less likely to counterattack against evil men and evil behaviour. They are far less ambivalent, confused or weak-willed about their own anger than average men are.

(xii) Discrimination between means and ends

The self-actualiser 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.

(xiii) Unhostile sense of humour

The self-actualiser possesses an unhostile sense of humour. He does not find humorous the ridiculing of a single human or group as occurs in ethnic or political humour. He does enjoy poking fun at himself on occasion and respond readily to cartoons that focus on the human situation.

(xiv) Creativeness

The self-actualised subject possesses high degree of creativeness. His creativeness is like that of a child and may be considered as a fresh and naive way of looking at life. The result of this often is that other people perceive the self-actualiser as creative because he has a way of getting directly to the heart of a problem and finding a novel solution.

(xv) Resistance to enculturation

The self-actualising person resists enculturation. His behaviour seems to be less influenced by his culture than that of the average person. He identifies himself as a member of a world culture.

He is more ruled by laws of his own character than by rules of society.

If one were to take the above listed fifteen characteristics 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 (Maslow, 1970).

VII. THE SAMPLE

Managers who participated in this study were employed in 10 manufacturing organisations located in and around Delhi. For reasons of confidentiality, the identities of the companies are not being revealed. All the ten organisations selected for this study have been in business for the last 31 to 61 years. They were selected on the following basis :

Firstly, in order to maintain relatively close personal contact with the selected organisations and their respondent, research sites were confined to the selected places in and around Delhi.

Secondly, only the medium and large organisations were considered for the study, in order to obtain relatively a large sample of managers from each organisation.

Thirdly, to delimit the diversity of companies selected for research study, organisations are restricted to manufacturing companies only which

were in different industries or had different products, processes and markets.

All middle and lower level managers in the participating companies, with the exception of those who did not have subordinates for supervision were requested to participate. Absentees were ignored. The total number of managers who were distributed the set of 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 'career' of the respondents has a meaningful impact on the relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance all the respondents were divided into five groups (Table - 1) :

Table - 1

Group	Career*	Participants	
		No.	Percentage
I	Upto 2 years	38	8.78
II	3 - 5 years	61	14.09
III	6 - 10 years	87	20.09
IV	11 - 20 years	148	34.18
V	20 + years	99	22.86
	Total	433	100.00

* Total length of service in the existing organisation as well as in other organisations.

VIII. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

1. Personal Orientation Inventory (POI)

POI designed by Prof. Shostrom 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-actualised person. The test was not

exclusively based on the formulations of Maslow, but included the theories of Riesman, Glazer, Denny, May, Angel, Ellenberger, Pearl, Beach and Goldberg (Knapp, 1976).

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. Two examples of the POI items are :

- (a) I like everyone I know.
I do not like everyone I know.
- (b) I worry about the future.
I do not worry about the future.

The POI items are scored twice, first for two basic scales of personal orientation, inner-directed support¹ (127 items) and time competence² (23 items) and second for ten subscales³ each of which measures a conceptually important element of self-actualising.

For the purpose of this study, time-competence and inner - directed 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 (Damm, 1972).

The POI is a suitable instrument for measuring Maslow's concept of self-actualisation. Not only did Maslow himself consider the POI a meaningful device by which an individual's level of self-actualisation could be determined, but the statistical evidence appears to satisfy the requirements of validity and reliability. Shostrom, Bloxom and Tosi and Lindamood also concluded that POI is a "valuable diagnostic and research instrument as well as useful

therapeutic instrument" (Shankar, 1988).

2. The WPS Superior - executive evaluation scales [WPS - ES]

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 management⁴. Each of the 11 areas has ten 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-relating form and to maintain an unmistakable distinction between the two forms. An example follows :

Item 7: WPS - ES : Self-Evaluation:

I meet my production schedules.

Item 7: WPS - ES : Superior - Evaluation :

He meets his production schedules

Thus, the WPS-ES provides a new and penetrating approach for evaluating key personnel. The instrument, though in part related to specific job, is given only to managers (defined as those for whom others are working). It focuses on leadership abilities and personality

characteristics related to leadership effectiveness. Its main purpose is to facilitate the development of an operational understanding of a complex person : the self-evaluator. By operational understanding is meant an understanding of the self-evaluator in his day-by-day work as superior or executive. Once such an operational understanding develops, there should result more effective performance, possibly more responsible work assignments, perhaps additional or specialised training, and corrective changes of one kind or another.

Greater weight should be given to the self-evaluation (if evaluation is honestly done), since in nearly all cases the self-evaluator will know himself better than the supervisor/superior-evaluator. Even though supervisors are alert, well-informed and observant, it is very likely that they will miss many subtle nuances of attitudes, abilities, skills, emotions, shades of personality and work-performance. Nevertheless evaluations by supervisors/superiors are important, and when verified and justified can be of great value (Shankar, 1988).

3. Background information blank [BIB]

The BIB was specially designed for this research. All the participants of the study were requested to furnish certain biographical and demographic information. Through this BIB, data relating to existing organisation as well as in other organisation/s were collected.

IX. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Correlation technique was used for the analysis of the data.

Using the POI : "Overall Measures"⁵ as the primary independent variables and considering the WPS-ES: Self-Rating : Composite and the WPS-ES : Supervisor-Rating : Composite as dependent variables, the results as shown in Table - 2 were obtained.

Using the POI : Composite as the primary independent variable and considering the WPS - ES : Self-Rating: Composite as the primary dependent variable, for Group III : 6 - 10 Years, self-actualisation was found statistically significantly correlated with job - performance. The POI : composite correlated with the self-Rating : Composite revealed a correlation coefficient of .22 at the .05 level of significance yielding a coefficient of determination of .05. In all of the 6 possible correlations, 3 were found significant at the .05 level of significance. All the correlation-coefficient were found positive.

Similarly, for Group IV : 11-20 years, a tendency of positive significant relationship was observed between self-actualisation and job-performance. The POI : Composite correlated with the self-Rating : Composite revealed a correlation-coefficient of .25 at the .01 level of significance, yielding a coefficient of determination of .06. Besides this, one correlation-coefficient was significant at the .05 level and another correlation-coefficient was

significant at the .05 level of significance. All the correlation-coefficients were positive.

For the other three groups I, II and V, no correlation-coefficient reached either of the tested levels of significance. However, all the correlation-coefficients for these groups were positive.

The statistical results indicate that, in general, irrespective of the total length of service in the existing organisation as well as in other organisation/s there is a general tendency of positive relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance. This is consistent with the earlier findings (Shankar, 1988).

Secondly, as we move from Group I onwards, the relationship between self-actualisation and job-performance improves upto Group IV. Therefore, it appears that, in general, longer the career, higher is the relationship between self-actualisation level and job-performance. This is true upto Group IV : 11-20 years total service. After this the relationship shows a downward trend. It may be said that law of diminishing returns is applicable here. That is, as the total length of service increases, levels of self-actualisation and job-performance also increase in the same proportion upto an optimum point. After the optimum point is reached, further increase in the total length of service is not followed by an increase in the levels of self-actualisation and job-performance in the same proportion as in the case of

the total length of service in the existing organisation as well as other organisation/s. This is clear that upto 20 years of the total service, there is increasing relationship but after that the point of satiation reaches. Thus, there is curvilinear relationship between the career and self-actualisation and job-performance.

The present study could be considered only as a step forward in examining the impact of career 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

1. Inner-directed 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.
2. 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 who live primarily in the present, with full awareness and

Table - 2

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 ²	t	r	r ²	t	r	r ²	t
Group I (N = 38) :									
Self-Rating	.09	.01	.56	.11	.01	.68	.12	.01	.73
Supervisor-Rating	.09	.01	.56	.09	.01	.55	.10	.01	.62
Group II (N = 61) :									
self - Rating	.14	.02	1.07	.24	.06	1.93	.24	.06	1.92
Supervisor - Rating	.02	.00	.15	.04	.00	.31	.04	.00	.30
Group III (N = 87) :									
Self - Rating	.15	.02	1.36	.21	.05	2.03*	.22	.05	2.09*
Supervisor - Rating	.19	.04	1.83	.19	.04	1.83	.22	.05	2.04*
Group IV (N = 148) :									
Self - Rating	.13	.02	1.55	.26	.07	2.02*	.25	.06	3.09*
Supervisor -Rating	.02	.00	.30	.16	.03	1.98*	.14	.02	1.65
Group V (N = 99) :									
Self - Rating	.12	.01	1.21	.17	.03	1.65	.18	.03	1.80
Supervisor - Rating	.03	.00	.26	.14	.02	1.39	.13	.02	1.31

N = 433

* Significant at .01 level

+ Significant at .05 level

contract, and full feeling reactivity.

3. These scales measure the primary factors originally described by Maslow as characteristics of the self - actualising individual, i.e., self-regard, intimacy, spontaneity, independence, existentiality, nature of man, synergy, acceptance of aggression, self-actualising values and feeling reactivity.
4. The 11 areas related to effective management are : knowledge of the work, planning ability, results or productivity, delegating work, leadership ability, morale of workers, training ability, adaptability, communication skills, emotionality, and growth potential.
5. "Overall Measures" of POI consist of three scales : Inner-Directed, Time competence and composite of Inner-Directed and Time-Competence.

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