

# Application of Motivation Theory to Build Team Dynamics: The Selection of the Need-to-Achieve Theory

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**Abstract:** *Motivating members in the team is a challenging task for the organization because the motivation can affect an overall organization's productivity. However, the performance of motivating members in the team will be either effective or ineffective depends upon an implementation of appropriate strategy and motivation process. The organization should always recognize that all team members have different needs according to their individual characteristics, needs, experiences, financial situations, family backgrounds and others. Therefore, in the same organization, same department or same position there will be differences. Consequently, the organization must pay attention and study how each member in the team is motivated to perform his or her job efficiently. Also, the organization should now change their critical role from being only controller or commander to advisor or consultant so that everyone in the team and organization can fully perform their task with their highest potentials. The need-to-achieve theory was selected in this article since it can explain the need of all human. As a result, the organization will have a good team dynamic and generate the effectiveness to the organization and, at the end, can gain competitive advantage.*

**Keywords:** Motivation, Need-to-Achieve Theory, Team Dynamics Building, Teamwork

## Introduction

Organizations around the world now have encountered with the fierce business competition and fast evolution in the design of work, business consolidation, and innovation perspectives which it creates the needs for skill diversity, high level of expertise, rapidity the response and adaptability for the changing organizations in order to obtain competitive advantages (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999). Being competitive, it is extremely essential for many organizations to have clearly defined strategies and policies directing the members of the organizations with the right paths to meet the goals and to respond the constant changes in market (Siriwan, Ramabut, Thitikalaya & Pongwirithon, 2013). Consequently, the organizations attempt to improve the organization operation by considering using teamwork (to work as a team) rather than just one person. Working as a team can help create synergy and uniqueness which finally can positively affect organization. By working as a team, the team members must work together. Everyone in the team has to think and combine individual resources, coordinating knowledge, skill and effort in order to resolve the task demand and gain the success of the job (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Working in team is not just to consider to work only for their own, but to work for the entire team. Being a good team, the members in the team should create a trust working atmosphere, relying and engaging each other. When the team is efficient, the benefits will be for the team and the organization, these include reducing the cost of work, creating more quality work, organizational commitment and organizational performance (Hackman, 1987). A good teamwork often requires the purpose of working together, management system, quality members with ability to work with responsibilities, powerful team leader, good leadership (Keawchaon & Chuntuk, 2017) and good followers. The team will be effective when there is a good motivation to work. In order to propel the team, the motivation in the organization is

crucial and accounted as a challenging tasks which require high effort and ability of the managerial holders. The key to succeed in motivating people properly and appropriately, therefore, is to gain the interactive attention to motivation by the organization executives who are able to know and understand well on their employees or team members. The questions the organizations should keep recognizing include “What are the motivations to make their workforce to utilize the full of talent and behave as desired by the organization?”, “What influences or motivates employees to make that decision properly?” and “Why is it important for human resources to continue to show desirable behavior toward the organization?” (Chienwattanasook, 2013).

Robbin and Judge (2007) described the definition of motivation as a process that causes a person to use his or her own efforts, to be patience and to have an aim at setting the goals and obtain what they want. Generally, Robbin and Judge (2007) stated that motivation is the use of existing efforts to achieve particular goals or needs. The needs typically have been theoretically studied and defined by many academicians including Maslow who has defined the needs in level consisting of physical needs, safety and security needs, social acceptance needs, praisal needs and self-actualization needs. These needs by Maslow must be accomplished in certain degree before moving to another level. For example, people perhaps need to fulfill the living factors (physical need) before moving to seek out for friends or social acceptance. Another academicians who proposed the “need” definition can be Lepper, Greene and Nisbett (1973) who advocated about the four motivation theory derived from instinct and extinct sources. Also, Schneider and Alderfer (1973) had proposed three needs including existence need, relatedness need and growth need. Moreover, the need-to-achieve theory by McClelland and Atkinson (1953) was revealed and it advocates that human has three aspects of needs including need for achievement, need for power and need for affiliation. These needs are driven by motivation and combined with motivation, influencing people in a group to behave as one behavior. To meet these needs, it is important to note that the executives should be aware of difference in all personnel’s characteristics, personality, basic habits, childhood experience, and their economic status. In the same organization, personnel who work in the same position may have different motives. Therefore, the executives must pay attention to how each person is motivated and then apply the knowledge about the motivation theory to their employees appropriately, effectively and ethically.

From the aforementioned phenomenon, this article has objectives to provide an introduction to the application of motivation theory in building team dynamics as well as concepts and theories related to motivation and teamwork. The knowledge gained from this article can help organizations to increase efficiency in teamwork as well as to develop people in organizations so that they can work together effectively.

### **Concepts and theories about motivation**

Motivation means the power to push people to behave in a way to response the temptation and set the direction and goal of such a behavior. Highly motivated people will attempt to work towards the goal without relinquishment. But, people with low motivation will not express their behavior in keeping up with goals or even discontinue his/her performance to reach the goals. In addition, motivation may also mean the desires to do something. Motivation can be divided into two parts including positive motivation and negative motivation (Robbins & Everitt, 1996). In the meantime, Robbin and Judge (2007) also described the definition of motivation as a process that can help person to utilize their own efforts, patience and intention to achieve the goals that they want. In science, motivation refers to the "desired behavior" that may

be triggered by dopamine and diphtheria injected into the central nervous system (Berridge & Kringelbach, 2013). Commonly, there are several theories attempting to explain about the motivation through studying motivation for over a century. In this study. They have been compiled and presented as follows.

### **Maslow's hierarchical need theory**

Maslow (1943) discovered the theory of human motivation which it is called the hierarchical needs. Maslow believes that everyone has needs and their needs must be fulfilled. By designing a hierarchy of need, there are five levels of need including physical need, safety and security need, social acceptance need, appraisal need and life accomplishment need. The need under Maslow's theory must be fulfilled level by level. The first level is the physical need. This need requires the basic survival fulfillment such as medicine, food, water, clothing, relaxation and housing. The second level is safety and security need. This need requires person's environment is safe, not harmful to oneself, family and friends with either life, property or mind. In addition, the security under this need can also include stability in life both financial security and work security. In this level, people will keep doing everything to avoid future uncertainty. These securities can be planned and predicted in advance, for example, people who are working in the organizations needs to find out the sources financial benefits by working harder. The third level is the social acceptance need. In this need, people will desire of being a part of the society as well as working socialized environment context. People demand to be recognized by others, especially those around them. The fourth level is the praisal need. This need will exist when the need of social acceptance is achieved. People will have the feeling of being praised or respected by others from what they have done or accomplished. In this level, the need can be considered into two aspects including self-reliance and social-reliance. The last level is self-actualization need or life accomplishment. This level of need is accounted as the most crucial and difficult to reach. Being in life accomplishment can generate the feeling of success in life and it seems that the life is perfect. Maslow believes that no one can achieve this level and that is rationale the people are attempting to improve and utilize their abilities with the aim to each it. Based on these needs, this is important to explain the concept of motivation. (Baldoni, 2005).

### **The four motivation theory**

The four motivation theory is one of theories that can be used to explain about the motivation. This theory consists of external motivation, internal motivation, introjected motivation and identified motivation. Internal motivation means the internal motives arise from the inner-self. This is an incentive for seeking to do for self-satisfaction, not for fear of it. It can be rewarded from what has been actioned or done and there is no need for external factors to control behavior. In the meantime, the external motivation refers to external factors consisting of provocative or inspirational aspects. Align with this, the reward will be bestowed when there is an action on it. Meanwhile, the introjected motivation means similar to the internal motivation which refers to the temptation from oneself. However, it behaves differently in the point that the introjected motivation is the motivation that behaves in certain way in contradiction of negative result, perhaps generating negative emotion or guilty. Lastly, the identified motivation is the motivation to express self-importance. These four-factor motivation theory can help understand more about the motivation of people. By definition, these four factor motivation is complex. When the external motivation increases, the internal motivations reduces. For instance, when the organization will offer more rewards to the team members who can produce more works, the team members may not work harder as they are expected because the rewards may not be the

desired consequence. In fact, there should be a combination of both internal and external motivation (Lepper, Greene & Nisbett, 1973).

### **ERG theory**

Schneider and Alderfer (1973) expanded the ERG theory from Maslow's hierarchical needs theory. The ERG theory is based on the assumption that there are three main types of needs: existence need (E), relatedness need (R) and growth need (G). The existence need (E) is the essential need for survival such as demanding food, water, housing, clothing, a good working environment, compensation and benefits. This need is comparable to the physical need and safety and security need of the Maslow's hierarchical need. The relatedness need (R) is a desire to have relationship with society around them, such as companionship, supervisory work, subordinate recognition, leadership and etc. It is comparable to the social acceptance need and praisal need of Maslow's hierarchical need theory. Lastly, the growth need (G) is the need to be self-evolving, progressive, innovative, and achievable. This is the highest need and this type of need is similar to the need of achievement of Maslow's hierarchical need theory. However, the ERG theory has three key assumptions. Firstly, every need must be fulfilled. For example, when employee is paid less, their needs towards the higher paid is more. Secondly, the need is expanded when existing need is fulfilled sufficiently. For instance, when the employee is paid much enough, they will desire the other things new such as respect from others. Thirdly, the new need happens when the highly expected need is not fulfilled. For example, when the employee desires to have growth in higher position, but she/he still cannot achieve that. They perhaps turn to need the love and good relationship from their friends and society.

### **The need to achieve theory**

The need to achieve theory proposed by McClelland and Atkinson (1953) is also important to explain the motivation. This theory consists of threefold encompassing need for achievement, need for power, and need for affiliation. With this theory, McClelland and Atkinson (1953) usually believes that the human has two main types of needs: the need for happiness and the need for pain avoidance. The rest of needs will occur when they have the learning experiences. The different learning experience can generate the different need to response. However, when considering closely, it is found that all human being will have the similar needs (achievement, power and affiliation). Firstly, the need for achievement means the need to do things better or more effectively for success. Individuals who desire the success will approach competition, challenge, work evaluation and feedback, and planning in order that they can improve themselves at all time. Secondly, the need for power is the need to influence others such as being a leader having the position to make a decision. Thirdly, need for affiliation means the needs to be accepted into a group or society and to have a relationship and bond with other members in the group.

### **Concept of teamwork**

Teamwork means working together with more than one member in order to reach the same goals and direction. For teamwork, it is accounted as a very important tool in every organization, it plays an important role in the success of the work, which requires the cooperation of the members (Parker, 2011). Teamwork profoundly focuses on everyone's participation contributed to the group or team such as be involved in solving problems and expressing useful opinions to the organization. As a result, teamwork is considered as a crucial technique used widely for organization development (Onputtha, 2016). Hereinafter, the teamwork can be characterized into four main characteristics. The first characteristic is the social interaction among the team member. It means that two or more members are associated with the

affairs of the team, recognizing each other's importance, value and honor. For large groups, they often interact more as networks than one to one. The second characteristic is the mutual goal and direction among the group member. The goal and the direction of the team can encourage and stimulate the team members to participate in group activities. Often, it brings the success of the work easily. The third characteristic is the structure of a team. This means that team members certainly have a behavioral system that can reflect the team characteristics. The team members must follow the rules of the group. The team structure can be either formal or informal, led by directional regulation or driving socialization. The last characteristic is the mutual role and responsibility or the uniqueness (Liu & Wohlsdorf, 2016). All team members definitely have a mutual role and should feel in the team together. The workload will be allocated appropriately according to members' ability, knowledge, competency and characteristics.

Teamwork is an important tool of motivating and creating a good leader and follower. One is a good leader leading the team to achieve the goal and the others perform the task to drive the goal (Onputtha, 2016). Nevertheless, being a successful team, accordingly, it is important to recognize the different characteristics of the team members who are under the same goal and direction (Dobre, 2013). Herewith, there are various strategies to create a successful team encompassing team uniqueness building, self-management, self-reliance, and team size appropriateness. Firstly, the team must build up the uniqueness of the team which it can infer the understanding of the goal, direction, vision, plan, strategy, commitment, role and responsibility. Everyone in the team can generally have different opinion, responsibility, characteristic, method and others, but they have to perform under the mutual understandings and in the same direction. More importantly, all members must feel in the team. Thereafter, the team can gain effectiveness. Secondly, the team needs to build self-management. The self-management refers to way the members in the team can work on their own ability, knowledge, competence and preference upon the ethical work assignments. In this way, the team needs to create a good structure and systems in order to respond the fairness of team management. When the members in the team work smoothly, efficiently and effectively according to the team structure and system, the team can finally obtain effectiveness. Thirdly, the team needs to create the self-reliance. It means that successful team members must make a goal inevitably or work together with another (Svastdi-Xuto, Smith & Joungtrakul, 2014). If there is a problem, the members must ask for each other's opinion and advice and solve the problem together. Lastly, the team size should be appropriate (Hoegl, 2005). The size should not be too large or small. The larger size the team has, the appropriate team management is needed to take into account because every member must be treated with fairness in all aspects including workload assignment, opinion contribution, competence utilization and so forth. For the larger size, the team is perhaps uncontrollable. For the smaller size, the team perhaps lack the sufficient talent. Herein, the size is important. Some study mentions that the odd number of member is more appropriate because it will be advantageous to judge some decision (Suff & Reilly, 2006).

Furthermore, knowing team members about their diversity is also taken into account (Dobre, 2013). The team must perceive that members have different personality, idea, attitude and background. Herewith, the team member's characteristics can be described into six aspects; namely, thinker, organizer, operator, team member, investigator and evaluator. Firstly, the thinker refers to a member of the team that is creative and has a thinking characteristic expressing the idea, opinion and advice. In this type of member, she/he must be treated with respect, pride and encouragement in order to retain in the team. In terms of organizer, secondly, this type of member has behavior to manage the team. She/he is principled, disciplined,

inflexible and directional. Working with this type of member, the clearly manipulated plan and process design is necessarily. Thirdly, the operator refers to the member who perform the task, intentionally to achieve the assignment goal. However, this type of person is impatient, disclosed and delayed in decision-making as well as disappointed when the work is incomplete. With this point, the team need to closely control and approach the direction. Fourthly, team member refers to the member who contributes and supports the team, she/he is active, team-oriented, problem avoidance and inoffensive. Often, this type of team member perhaps perceives themselves as unimportant and less valued and fades themselves from the team. Therefore, the team needs to encourage them to display idea and opinion as well as also assign equal assignment. Fifthly, investigator refers to the person who always monitors, investigate and seek the progress and mistake. She/he often thinks of themselves as fair, delicate, and meticulous, but others may view them as authoritative and tyrant. For investigator, the role is related to advisory or consultancy, giving comments and suggestions to better the performance. This type of team member must be treated by using coordination or compromise. Lastly, evaluator refers to a person who establishes the great balance between the thinker and operator. The evaluator will cautiously and carefully assess or analyze data or situations. Although the evaluator is not desired in the team member, their views were respected by the members. In conclusion, understanding the different personality is very crucial (Saengchot et al., 2016).

#### **Strategies in building teamwork**

Team building refers to the process of the team member participating into the activities, starting from collecting and analyzing the data, attempting to make the team to learn, and improving the work relationship both in terms of quantity and quality (Dyer Jr, 2015). In order to achieve the team effectiveness, teamwork requires good leadership and followership as well as a good strategy. There are strategies shortly introduced in this article. The first is about building a good team by combining the appropriate numbers of team members. Some study recommends the number of members should be approximately 6-15 persons, this can help create multiple skills and personalities in the group (Suff & Reilly, 2006). Additionally, the smaller teams can give the better teamwork (Hoegl, 2005). However, a group should comprise with thinker, organizer, operator, investigator and evaluator. The second is about ensuring that the team know their task, role, vision, goal and requirements (Puree, Wisessuwan & Tubsree, 2018). The team members need to participate and contribute to the team activities in order to gain mutual understanding and direction. Participation to the team can provide the clarification on their own and member's work and create the linkage, coordination and harmonization of the work among the members (Svastdi-Xuto, Smith & Joungrakul, 2014). Finally, the team will derive the effectiveness. The third is about understanding and knowing the member individually. It is clear that the team needs to know each member as much as possible in order to potentially identify each member's significant characteristic, strengths and weaknesses (Svalestuen et. al., 2015). The different members' characteristics requires different approaches to coach, motivate and build. The last is about maintaining the good communication. Communication among the team is necessary. Everyone in the team must speak and share information and knowledge to each other either in formal or informal styles (Svastdi-Xuto, Smith & Joungrakul, 2014). To step forward to the goal attainment, the team needs to accept suggestions, listen and exchange ideas. Therefore, successful team building requires leadership skills, team building strategies and difference understanding (Dobre, 2013). Once the team is effective, the consequence will turn out in good way driving the organization to reach the performance.

### **Guidelines for applying motivation theory to team dynamics**

Based on theories and concepts, motivation and teamwork are associated. Therefore, the organization must pay close attention on how each person's motivation works effectively. The application of motivation theory to the dynamics of the team management is very important. The right and proper motivation for the organization's circumstances will enable the personnel in the organization to willingly devote their energies, knowledge, skills and ability to fully benefit the organization (Dobre, 2013). In addition, they will retain in the organization (Trisakorn & Onputtha, 2015). Therefore, motivation is one of the main tasks that the organization must perform and apply with morality in order to create team dynamics. In the line with the aforementioned theories and concepts, this article selected three needs to achieve theory by McClelland and Atkinson (1953) consisting of need for achievement, need for power, and need for affiliation because this theory can explain the need of all human believed by McClelland and Atkinson that everyone has two main needs: need for happiness and avoidance of pain

For the team member with high need for achievement, she/he is active and requires highly motivated. They are excel (Chan et. al., 2010) and perform the work with the focus on success rather than on reward. The book by Saridvanich (2009) states that the organization with the team members who have a high demand-for-success characteristic must focus more on offering the appropriate job, the chance to succeed, and the higher payment in order to retain the talented members. The right job characteristic can be including the challenging works that significantly affect the organization outcomes (Chan et al., 2010). The example of the suitable jobs for this type of person can be the marketing executives, project manager or project consultants. With this kind of job characteristic, she/he will perceive and perform the work with happiness and contribute greatly potentials to the organization.

For the team member with high need for power, it is important to recognize that this type of member will need the power for themselves. They are deranged in power that they are assigned by the organization. Perhaps, they will use his or her own power for self-interest. However, if they avail the power for the team, it can hugely benefit the organizations (Donkauser, Rösch & Schultheiss, 2015). The personality of this type of team member is competitive, challenging, directional and authoritarian (Saengchot et al., 2016). Therefore, the organization should place them at the point where they can express their opinions, control and potentials, especially in the activities or projects with time constraints or for urgent task that requires immediate action. Concrete examples can include the works in intensely competing organizations, works with huge need of problem solving, work with needs of urgent decision, work with time constraints or works with need of well planning and control.

For the team member with high need for affiliation, the organization should understand that this type of member and should place an importance on people's value. This type of member will prefer to work collaboratively with other team members. The study by Schüler et al. (2008) revealed that the team member with higher explicit and implicit affiliation showed a large amount of affiliation behavior and higher life satisfaction. However, the organization should not place them in the team with highly intense competition because they will feel pressure and unconformable to work with. If this is the case, they perhaps become a person who does not desire to work at all or may leave the organization. The suitable work for this type of person can be working as administrative, supportive or service staff in such as human resources development, customer relation service department, or the work that needs the highly coordination with either internal or external parties.

Applying motivation theory to the management of dynamic team is very imperative. The right and proper motivation for the organization's circumstances will make the personnel in the organization happy and willing to devote themselves to benefit the organization.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the organization which aims at creating a team, that is dynamic, needs to understand not only the context of the organization, but also the needs of different team members with different characteristics and background so that they can be appropriately motivated and assigned duties or position. Herewith, the need-to-achieve theory by McClelland and Atkinson is useful to this article because it can allow the manager to truly understand and lead their team members to fully express their abilities according to their assigned tasks. Nevertheless, the role of current management should be changed from the controller to the consultant or advisor. They should not function as a controller, but should advise or direct their members so that everyone in the team and organization can contribute their potential. The good management to build the team can lead to achieve the goals of the organization efficiently and all team members will then satisfy with their work which finally it can create competitive advantage to the organizations.

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