

CHAPTER 2

MOTIVATION IN THE WORKPLACE: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Employees need to be motivated to function effectively in the workplace - and again, someone has to oversee this. According to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (1993:6) the workplace is any premises or place where a person performs work in the course of his/her employment. The activities required to motivate employees in the workplace, focus on "... one primary goal: to have those competent and adapted employees, with up-to-date skills, knowledge, and abilities, exerting high energy levels" (De Cenzo & Robbins, 1999:15). Managers are supposed to try to be more concerned about dealing with people. It is necessary for social work managers to have a general understanding of what motivates employees, and in particular the implications that motivation holds for management.

In this chapter definitions of motives and motivation are presented in order to understand the origin thereof. The motivation cycle/process, motivation theories (content theories, process theories and reinforcement theories), the strengths and weaknesses of motivation theories and a motivational model are identified so as to gain an understanding of what motivates an employee.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF MOTIVATION

Motivation can be "... formed and developed through interaction" between the social worker, the social work manager and the employer (Kruger & Schreuder, 1999:4).

In order to understand motivation as concept attention will be given to the following aspects:

2.2.1 The concept "motive" and characteristics of motives

Smit and Cronje (1997:306) define the concept "motive" as the drive that motivates an individual to take the action he believes will satisfy his needs. To Eksteen (1994:16) motives contribute towards goal setting. He describes motives as the drives, desires, needs, wishes, and equivalent forces that direct human behaviour.

According to Reece and Brandt (1993:154-155) motives are the “why” of human behaviour. They identify and describe the following five characteristics of motives:

Motives are individualistic. Human beings have different needs. What satisfies one person’s needs may not necessarily satisfy anyone else’s. Understanding the individual motives of colleagues will help prevent a breakdown in human relationships.

Motives change. Motives change throughout our lives. What motivates people early in their careers may not motivate them later on.

Motives may be unconscious. Proving to oneself and others that one has what it takes, may be triggered by unconscious feelings of inadequacy. Sometimes people are not fully aware of the inner needs and drives that influence their behaviour.

Motives are often inferred. Through observing other people’s behaviour, one can only infer (draw a conclusion) as to what motives caused that behaviour. Motives underlying one’s own behaviour and the behaviour of others are often difficult to understand.

Motives are hierarchical. Motives for behaviour vary in strength and importance. When contradictory motives exist, the more powerful motive usually guides behaviour.

2.2.2 The concept motivation

Beck (2000:3) regarded motivation as a “... theoretical concept that accounts for why people choose to engage in particular behaviours at a particular time”. Schermerhorn et al. (2000:102) believe that motivation refers to the employee’s forces that account for direction, level, and persistence of a person’s effort expended at work. The concepts direction, level and persistence are described as follows:

- Direction involves the employee’s choice when presented with a number of possible alternatives;
- Level involves the amount of effort an individual puts forth; and
- Persistence involves the length of time an individual pursues to a given action.

Werner (2001:326) describes motivation as intentional and directional. The word “intentional” refers to an individual’s personal choice and persistence to act. The word “directional” indicates the presence of a driving force aimed at attaining a specific goal. Swanepoel et al. (2003:324) refer to Robbins (1994:42) who states that motivation is the willingness to do something, and is conditioned by this action’s ability to satisfy needs of the individual. Related to motivation is employee

motivation. In today's workplace, employee motivation can be defined as "... an individual's willingness to achieve the organisational goals" (De Cenzo & Robbins, 1999:120).

De Cenzo and Robbins (1999:120) refer to effort, organisational goals and individual needs as the three major components of motivation. Motivated employees are aware of the fact that specific goals must be achieved and continuously direct their efforts at achieving these goals. They have a drive to succeed and approach their job with a positive attitude.

2.2.3 Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation

Armstrong (1990:63) differentiates between two basic forms of motivation, namely extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. *Extrinsic motivation* refers to what one does to or for people to motivate them. *Intrinsic motivation* refers to the self-generated factors, which influence people to behave in particular ways or to move in particular directions. Van Dyk (1998:270), like Rawlins (1992:148,149), differentiates between *extrinsic rewards* such as pay, benefits, promotions and size of office. *Intrinsic rewards* are more closely associated with the work being done. They arise from within the worker, for example, personal pride in a job well done. Research indicates that intrinsic rewards are more powerful motivators than extrinsic rewards. A great deal of the literature on motivation and reward stresses the importance of providing a reward shortly after the performance so that the performer can clearly see the link between performance and reward.

In a completed research study by Stander (1996), which focused on a comparative investigation into the work motivation of employees at three different levels in a service organisation, a comparison was made to determine the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that are considered to be important in the motivation process. A sense of personal well-being and social support assist social workers in coping with the stresses of work. Germain and Gitterman (1995:13) are of the opinion that "... both personal and environmental resources are required to cope". They refer to motivation as a personal resource.

2.2.4 Internal and external motivators.

Motivating someone means activating a person to behave in a particular way. Some employees are motivated by internal factors, such as a feeling of self-satisfaction; and others by external factors, such as money, power and so forth. In other words, factors that cause a person to act in a certain way

(Hollis-Turner, 1999:261). The manager should not only have some knowledge of the staff but must also be aware of internal as well as external motivators that can enhance or weaken the effect of motivation.

- **Internal motivators**

In the workplace motivation is the result of the internal rewards a person receives while performing the job. According to Robbins and Coulter (1999:507), Van der Westhuizen, Basson, Barnard, Bondesio, De Witt, Niemann and Van Rooyen (1991:203-204), and Werner (2001:331) there are certain factors that are inherent (internal motivators) in human beings, for example education factors, management factors and community factors, which will be discussed as follows:

Factors related to education. The needs of every person should be taken into account, such as the need for recognition, expectations, the need to achieve, the need to be an authority figure, the employees' value systems, self-respect and friendship relationships.

Factors related to the work itself. These factors may also serve as a means of motivating employees, for instance the meaningfulness and interesting nature and type of work, the opportunities for group identity, chances for promotion, the work environment, the opportunities and challenges that the work provides, i.e. the opportunities for creativity and renewal.

Management factors. The quality of management affects behaviour, attitudes and effort. Positive interpersonal relationships are regarded as strengthening motivation. To enhance motivation and stimulate participation, staff should assist with planning as well as the implementation of the planning.

Community factors. Certain community values also serve as motivators. Community values whether religious, economic, cultural, political or social may contribute to the motivation of employees.

In order to motivate staff, a manager should have knowledge of the needs of the people and the requirements of the community.

- **External motivators**

These motivators refer to factors such as individual differences, job characteristics and organisational practices.

Individual differences are the personal needs, values, attitudes, interests and abilities that workers bring to their jobs. One employee may be motivated by money and will therefore take a high paying

job, another may be motivated by security and so will accept a lower paying job that involves few risks of unemployment.

Job characteristics refer to those aspects of the position that determine its limitations and challenges. These characteristics include the variety of skills required to perform the job; the degree to which the employee can undertake the entire task from start to finish (task identity); the personal significance attributed to the job; autonomy and the type and extent of performance feedback that the worker receives.

Organisational practices are the rules, human resources policies, managerial practices and reward systems of an organisation. Policies defining fringe benefits such as paid vacation, insurance, etcetera and rewards such as bonuses can attract new workers and keep existing workers happy (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1996: 409-411).

2.3 MOTIVATION CYCLE / PROCESS

According to Luthans (1998:161-164), a comprehensive understanding of motivation includes the need-drive-incentive sequence, or cycle. The basic process involves needs, which set drives in motion to accomplish incentives (anything that alleviates a need and reduces a drive). The drives, or motives, may be classified into primary, general, and secondary categories.

The *primary motives* are unlearned and physiologically based. Common primary motives are hunger, thirst, sleep, avoidance of pain, sex, maternal concern, survival, well-being and self-actualisation.

The *general, or stimulus motives* are also unlearned but are not physiologically based. Curiosity, manipulation, activity and affection are examples of general motives.

Secondary motives are learned and are most relevant to the study of organisational behaviour. The need for power, achievement, affiliation, security and status are major motivating forces in the behaviour of organisational participants (Luthans, 1998:162-164; Smit & Cronje, 1997:306).

More and Wegener (1992:148-150) and Smit and Cronje (1997:306) refer to the motivation cycle or process as consisting of needs setting up drives (or motives) to accomplish goals (specific behaviour). More and Wegener (1992:148-150) argue that the intensity of the drive toward a goal is always proportional to severity. They also refer to Chrusden and Sherman's (1976) description of the motivation process, which consists of four sequential steps namely: need, goal-directed behaviour,

personal goal achievement and tension reduction. Motivation is an internal (dynamic and goal-oriented) process where the personal needs of individuals act as motives for their behaviour.

Although motivation is internal, managers activate and guide the motivation process as they seek to improve the performance of the individual. Motivated people continuously set new goals because their needs, desires, and wants are nearly insatiable. They want more, strive towards progress, improve the self and their personal circumstances, acquire new things and improve their vis-à-vis within the organisation. The researcher's version of the motivation cycle/process as referred to by Luthans (1998:187) and Smit and Cronje (1997:306-307) is illustrated in FIGURE 2.1.

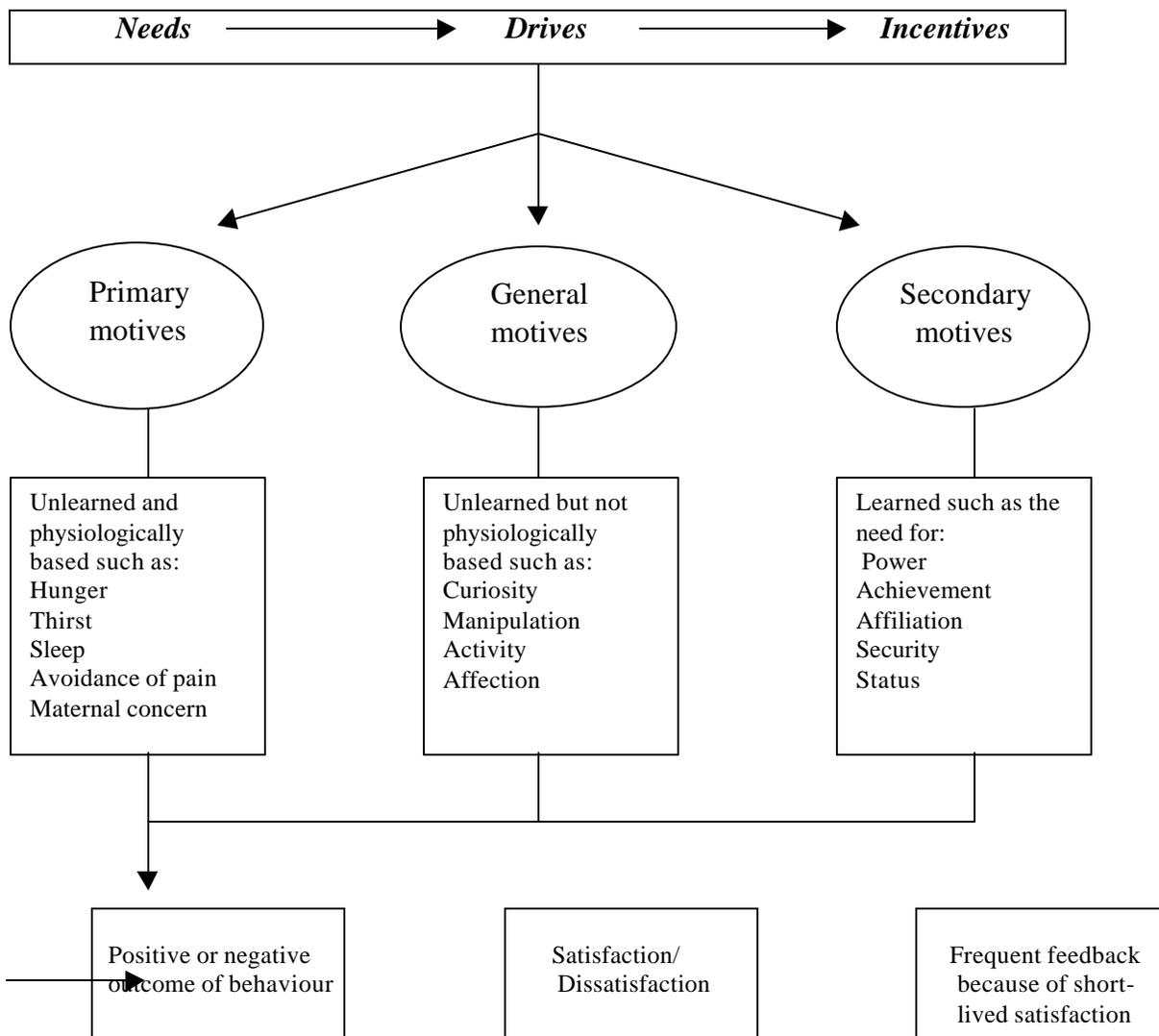


FIGURE 2.1 Need-driven-incentive sequence, or cycle of motivation

FIGURE 2.1 illustrates that *needs* lead to *drives* to accomplish *incentives*. Drives, or motives will lead to positive behaviour and in doing so provide satisfaction of needs. If the drives, or motives of an individual are not met it will result in negative behaviour and therefore dissatisfaction. Needs which are not satisfied will be repeated by frequent feedback until satisfied.

Van Dyk, Nel and Loedolff (1992:151) acknowledge the importance of motivation in terms of 1) the source or origin thereof; and 2) the way in which it must take place. Motivation can be seen as the release of energy and the application thereof in order to ensure that objectives are attained.

According to Clarke (1998:120), the importance of motivation is portrayed by:

- the willingness of employees to work hard and a determination to succeed;
- the high level of achievements and consistently good results by workers;
- the willingness of workers to go the extra mile and to do it cheerfully;
- a sense of bustle, energy and drive pervading the work team;
- a high, cohesive team spirit; and
- workers enjoying their work.

Human beings are complex creatures with a variety of needs. Banks (1997:16) emphasises that the more needs that jobs can help employees to meet, the more motivation to perform well is encouraged. According to Botha (2000:19) motivation is one of the most important aspects in individual and group dynamics.

2.4 MOTIVATION THEORIES

Managers should be aware of motivation theories, as more recent research on motivation provides new insights to understanding what motivates people in the workplace. Contemporary approaches, theories and models of motivation receive a considerable amount of attention from various authors in the behaviour science literature. Researchers like Clarke (1998:121-125); Fielding (1993:36-40); Hollis-Turner (1999:269-271); Du Toit (1995:329-346); Rawlins (1992:141-148); Robbins and Coulter (1999:50-57); Schermerhorn et al. (2000:110-118); Swanepoel et al. (2003:324-337) and Werner (2001:327-338) have all captured the approaches, theories and models in a unique way. The

manner in which Smit and Cronje (1997:308-321) present motivation theories would appear to be the most appropriate for the purpose of this study. They categorise the theories of motivation as follows:

- Content theories that focus on the ‘what’ of motivation.
- Process theories that indicate the ‘how’ of motivation.
- Reinforcement theories, which emphasise ways in which behaviour can be acquired.

The implications of the different theories for satisfying needs will be discussed in the following section.

2.4.1 Content theories

The content theories of Maslow, Herzberg and McClelland will be discussed in some detail.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory refers to:

- Physiological needs that refer to the basic needs of employees such as food, water and warmth.
- Security needs that include protection, insurance, job security, medical aid and pension schemes.
- Social needs that reflect affection of employees, a sense of belongingness, friendship, acceptance, interaction and understanding.
- Esteem needs that reflect on the inner-self of employees, need for success, self-respect and external esteem needs such as recognition from others and status.
- Self-actualisation needs that focus on ultimate fulfilment of the true unique self.

Kadushin (1992:198) mentions that an individual is motivated in terms of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs by a strong need for belonging, love, social interaction, need for esteem and status or by a need for self-actualisation. Banks (1997: 19) also acknowledges that when an individual’s needs for food, shelter, security and status are met, he/she feels more motivated than when those needs are not met.

Herzberg’s two-factor motivation theory in order to make jobs more interesting and challenging involves:

- Job context or hygiene factors that refer to satisfiers such as company policy and administration, equipment, supervision, working conditions, relationship with supervisor, salary, relationship with subordinates and co-workers, personal life, status, job security and fringe benefits.

- Job content factors that refer to motivators such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, feedback, challenge, need for self-actualisation, freedom, advancement and potential for growth (Smit & Cronje 1997:311-313; Weinbach 1998:143, 2003:132; Werner 2001:331).

According to Kadushin (1992:198) an individual is motivated in terms of Herzberg's theory through job security, salary and working conditions, or by needs that promote growth and development, increased responsibility and recognition of accomplishment. Banks (1997:24) refers to the findings of Herzberg's research, which found that more money did not necessarily lead to increased worker motivation. Respondents emphasised that factors such as integrity, values, personal expression or intellectual challenges were motivating.

McClelland's achievement motivation theory proposes that three major needs manifest themselves in workplace situations:

- The need for achievement when organisations mainly employ staff with a high need for achievement. People with a high need for achievement thrive on challenges, take responsibility and want feedback on performance.
- The need for affiliation when people are inclined to positive human relations. They need acceptance, support, camaraderie and enjoy being part of a group. They are motivated by teamwork, praise and recognition and have a low need for power.
- The need for power when people tend to dominate and control. They can direct other people's actions, set goals, make decisions and fit well into managerial positions (Smit & Cronje, 1997:314,315).

Banks (1997:23,27) is of the opinion that "... not everyone has the same level of need for each particular area", but that employees can be motivated when employers recognise their needs and provide ways to meet those needs. According to Kadushin (1992:198) an individual is motivated in terms of McClelland's theory if he displays a need for interpersonal affiliation, task achievement, or power to influence others.

2.4.2 Process theories

According to Smit and Cronje (1997:316-317), **the equity theory** of Adams involves comparing one individual's performance to that of someone else whom he/she regards as his/her equal or a worker in a different organisation doing a similar job. In any organisation the rewards should be fair and equitable. An open and honest approach from managers on inputs and outcomes will enhance the image of such managers as being fair people. Individuals who feel they are under-rewarded will try to restore equity in the following ways: by reducing their own inputs by means of lowering performance, increasing their rewards by asking for a raise, distorting the ratios by rationalising, trying to get the other individual to change inputs and/or rewards, leaving the situation and by comparing themselves with someone else. Individuals who feel they are over-rewarded will take the following steps to restore equity: increase their inputs by improving performance, reducing their reward by taking a pay cut, distorting the ratios by rationalising and trying to reduce the other person's inputs or increasing his or her reward.

Kotze (1996) completed a study entitled "The equity theory of work motivation: a case study in a small South African firm". He suggested that further research must be undertaken to determine whether the equity theory is applicable to big companies and if findings are the same as in the case of a small firm.

The expectancy theory of Vroom is based on the following:

- Employees' perceptions/efforts that their behaviour will lead to a certain outcome/ performance. They are committed and put in extra efforts to reach their goals.
- Performance will result in one or more outcomes for the employee. It refers to the likelihood that performance will be followed by a specific outcome.
- Each outcome is linked to valence. **Valence** is the value the outcome holds for the employee contemplating it.
- Managers should create a work environment conducive to hard work, set attainable goals and provide ongoing training. Employees will as a result become more confident, which will increase their expectancies.
- Managers should also identify outcomes. Performance should be made instrumental for positive outcomes (Smit & Cronje, 1997:318-320, 2002:356-357).

2.4.3 Reinforcement theories

These theories are based on behavioural principles, which imply that behaviour that has pleasant results will probably be repeated, while behaviour with unpleasant results will not. Behaviour modification is a systematic effort to shape the behaviour of employees and forms the basis for the reinforcement theories. To encourage specific behaviour, individuals can be rewarded (positive reinforcement) as they move closer to the desired behaviour. Reinforcement can also be negative. The following are examples of negative kinds of reinforcement:

- Punishment or disciplinary action that is used by managers to weaken undesirable behaviour. This however is not effective nor is it long-lasting in the workplace because it results in bitterness and animosity.
- Extinction can also be used to weaken behaviour, particularly with regard to behaviour that was previously rewarded.

The type of reinforcement and **when** and **how** frequently it occurs is important. Reinforcement should be scheduled to maintain desired behaviour and result in positive outcomes (Smit & Cronje, 1997:320-321).

In social work, according to Haynes and Holmes (1994:25), the “person-in-environment perspective” is used to understand the interaction between individuals and their life situations. This social work practice perspective requires understanding the reasons behind the behaviour of people as well as the environmental factors that influence that behaviour. To begin to understand the complexity of human behaviour, it is helpful to acknowledge that “... human situations, and thus human needs, are complex” (Johnson, 1998:4).

2.4.4 Strengths and weaknesses of motivation theories

For the purpose of this study the researcher compares and critically analyses different motivation theories, as referred to by Hellriegel and Slocum (1996:412,420,429); Smit and Cronje (1997:321,322); Swanepoel et al. (2003:324-337); Vinokur-Kaplan and Bogin (2000:176) and Werner (2001:328-331). This is done in terms of their relative strengths and weaknesses as illustrated in TABLE 2.1.

| <i>Theoretical base</i> | <i>Strengths</i> | <i>Weaknesses</i> | <i>Theorists</i> |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Content Focus on factors that motivate people, for example 'needs.'</p> <p>Identify unmet needs.</p> <p>What motivates people?</p> | <p>Individual self or social systems can satisfy physiological and social needs according to Maslow's hierarchy. Ego and self-actualisation provide employee motivation.</p> <p>Herzberg's theory values tasks for job satisfaction. Attainment of goals promotes enjoyment and pride. Lower needs are stronger and satisfied before ascending to a higher level. Easily identifiable motivators such as responsibility and hygiene factors such as status are present. Actions required to improve employee performance are straightforward.</p> | <p>Development of a strategy translating social needs according to Maslow's hierarchy into incentives for improved individual performance is difficult. Hygiene factors of Herzberg's theory do not motivate employees but make them feel neutral about their jobs. Flaws in research methodology and failure to consider differences in individual needs according to Herzberg's two-factor model are weaknesses.</p> | <p>Abraham Maslow</p> <p>Frederick Herzberg</p> <p>David McClelland</p> <p>Alderfer</p> <p>Edwin Locke</p> |
| <p>Process Analyse the process or manner in which people are motivated.</p> <p>How are people motivated?</p> <p>Motive: select behaviour to satisfy need.</p> <p>Behaviour: employee action to satisfy need.</p> | <p>Expectancy model suggests that motivation, performance and job satisfaction of employees will lead to desired results. Managers can concentrate on subordinates' behaviour to promote better performance. This theory recognises the importance of motivation for performance.</p> | <p>A weakness in the expectancy model is its limitation in terms of complexity.</p> | <p>J. Stacey Adams</p> <p>Victor Vroom</p> <p>Lyman Porter</p> <p>Edward Lawler III</p> <p>William Ouchi</p> |
| <p>Reinforcement How to condition consequence: shape behaviour in desired direction.</p> <p>Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction: the degree to which the need is satisfied.</p> | <p>The reinforcement theories focus on stimulus-response associations, that improve work performance. Reinforcement theories help managers to understand the history of the past in order to modify job performance.</p> | <p>Reinforcement can be negative such as punishment or disciplinary actions, which result in bitterness and animosity among employees.</p> | <p>Douglas McGregor</p> |

TABLE 2.1 Strengths and weaknesses of content, process and reinforcement theories of motivation

Theories of motivation have important implications for managers, who by nature of their management functions are involved with the motivational process (Smit & Cronje, 1997:308-321).

2.5 A MODEL OF MOTIVATION

Research has proved that people do change over time – so do their goals and needs. According to De Cenzo and Robbins (1999:104) "... factors that promote needs satisfaction also change - an unfulfilled need today may not be important tomorrow". They suggested that it is imperative that certain conditions or relationships be established and maintained for motivation to exist.

The model of motivation suggests that the social work manager must ensure the establishment of goals, performance feedback, high productivity, good work performance and achievement of personal goals. De Klerk (1999:1) refers to Mullins (1994:443) who states that the relationship between the organisation and its staff is governed by what motivates them to work and the fulfillment they derive from it. Relationships are of great significance in social work practice. The relationship between 1) effort and performance, 2) individual performance and organisational goals, and 3) organisational goals and individual goals as described by De Cenzo and Robbins (1999:104-109) will be discussed below.

2.5.1 The effort-performance relationship

The effort-performance relationship refers to an individual's ability to best meet the requirements of the job. Effort is defined as an inner reaction that is witnessed through outward behaviour. The manager must be able to specify what effort is needed. Managers must frequently evaluate and analyse jobs to ensure that the job is defined in terms of tasks, duties and responsibilities. Thereafter the appropriate person must be selected, helped to adapt and trained to do the job according to the rules and regulations of the organisation. The manager has to assist the organisation with appropriate staffing, training and development to ensure maximum output regarding performance. An effective manager is the product of his/her own potential, development and training. This implies that even the manager must be trained to establishing work standards in order to communicate expectations to the workforce. Managers who are able to coach their employees and assist them in achieving their performance levels contribute to the motivation of the workers.

2.5.2 The individual performance-organisational goal relationship

The individual performance-organisational goal relationship refers to guiding the effort towards achieving the ultimate goal of the organisation. The value of this relationship for the organisation involves attaining the performance levels necessary to achieve organisational goals. Clear directions must be set in order for the performance-organisational goal relationship to function effectively. Managers must ensure that individual employees know the important role they play in achieving organisational goals and objectives. Individual performance can be measured through performance evaluation instruments. Managers who ensure that performance evaluation operates properly will be in a better position to motivate employees.

2.5.3 The organisational goal-individual goal relationship

The organisational goal-individual goal relationship refers to what the organisation can do for the workforce. Motivation can only be enhanced if the goals or needs of individuals are met. Managers must ensure that processes are in place for individuals to get what they want. The manager who creates and supports the performance-reward link will motivate the employees and ensure that the productivity necessary to meet organisational goals is attained and sustained.

Sound knowledge and understanding of the various relationships will provide social work managers with the necessary expertise to promote better cooperative and productive relationships and thus contribute to the motivational process. Managing employees therefore involves managing "...all aspects related to and flowing from the employment relationships between the organisation as employing entity (the employer) and those persons employed to do the work (employees)" (Swanepoel et al. 2003:13).

2.6 SUMMARY

The concept motive is defined as a drive that leads to the motivation of employees in the workplace. Motivation is a key factor in social services and equally valuable to the social work manager. The comprehensive discussion on extrinsic rewards (such as pay, promotion, etc.) and intrinsic rewards (such as personal pride in a job well done) emphasises the importance of motivation with regard to the achievement of the goals of the organisation. Internal motivators (such as a feeling of self-satisfaction) and external motivators (such as money, power, etc.) imply that motivation is not a simple phenomenon.

Some important motivation theories, categorised as content theories, process theories and reinforcement theories, include Maslow's definition of the hierarchy of human needs, Herzberg's two-factor motivation framework to make jobs more interesting and challenging, McClelland's emphasis on achievement motivation, Adam's equity theory, Vroom's expectancy theory with the concept valence and reinforcement theories based on behavioural principles. Each theory can help social work managers to better understand workplace motivation.

Equally important in preparing social work managers for practice is knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the motivation theories. The relationship between effort and performance, between individual performance and organisational goals and between organisational goals and individual goals that enhance the motivation of social workers was discussed briefly.

The next chapter focuses on the motivation of human resources as a function of the social work manager.