HUMAN DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

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Summary

A number of theories and perspectives regarding human development were advanced in the twentieth century. Some focused on direct means of increasing the product of human effort, whereas others stressed the importance of behavioral factors, such as motivation and job satisfaction as a basis for increasing productivity. Assessment of the human development process: first focused on quantities of trained personnel; then on job content and requisite knowledge and skills; and most recently on the quality of job performance, and the consequent need for further training.

These factors remain relevant but must be considered in the context of rapid change that is taking place along two lines. First, evaluation of the product of human labor is

broadening from cost-effectiveness concerns to issues of equity, quality, and satisfaction, as well as program sustainability and resources renewal. Second, the growth of multi-national enterprises, and advances in information technology are creating the global village as the base of human development in the twenty-first century. Cognizance must be taken of the new climate, as well as the traditional employee, employer and societal perspectives, as human development objectives are formulated for the new era.

Four directions are discerned in the formulation. First, in anticipation of continuing technological change, persons cannot prepare to follow a single career path but must be prepared to adapt to new career demands throughout their lifetime. Second, because globalization and advances in telecommunications will foster development of organizational arrangements that minimize the importance of face-to-face social interactions, organizational loyalties will be challenged, and efforts at social cohesion and institutional loyalty must be emphasized. Third, the technology appropriate for individual settings must be defined in order to ensure that human development actions are appropriate and a proper technological balance is achieved. Finally, the presence of great affluence at one end of the social spectrum and the continuing fight for survival at the other raises quality of life and equity questions that must be addressed in setting development objectives. Issues regarding child labor and the trade-off between work and leisure, and matters of resources renewal are among the specific concerns.

1. Introduction

In the first instance human energy is expended in order to produce food, shelter, or other life-sustaining commodities. When the essentials for subsistence have been acquired the question arises whether the objective remains limited to the product of the labor or whether the satisfaction and sense of accomplishment inherent in the labor itself are also of value. Historically economists have focused attention on measures of productivity, but some economists and other behavioral scientists have considered the fundamental utility of pleasurable activity as well.

The industrial revolution has complicated the picture as the efforts of individuals have been combined within large organizations which themselves have purpose and lifelike characteristics. Young enterprises, for example, tend to be vibrant, innovative, and increasingly productive, whereas "mature" organizations may, like older individuals, devote their principal energies to the preservation of what has already been gained. The challenge is thus to establish organizational objectives that are mutually compatible with the aims and desires of individual members of the organization team. Or attention may be directed to the resolution of conflicts between the two sets of goals. Although unduly simplistic, the argument has been made that in order for organizations to be optimally productive, they must mobilize the efforts of persons who find the work distasteful. An automobile assembly line made up of highly specialized individuals might be maximally productive, whereas worker satisfaction could be maximized if each individual were made responsible for a recognizable final product for which s/he could take satisfaction. The compromise solution has been found in the organization of teams with output objectives broader (e.g., assembly of the engine) than those for a worker who was formerly expected only to drill three holes in the engine block.

Methods developed especially during the first half of the twentieth century for increasing the quantity of output are reviewed in the next section. Because in recent years attention has shifted to measures of the quality and effectiveness of effort, the following section summarizes this development. With the current state of thinking in hand we highlight in Section 4 certain features of the current twenty-first century environment that suggest the need for a further elaboration of human development objectives. In this environment the perspectives of employees, employers and society at large must all be recognized. Section 5 therefore reviews these perspectives. In the final section projection of likely directions of change is discussed under four headings: career adaptation, organization loyalty, technology balance, and work and leisure trade-off.

2. Physical and Behavioral Objectives

2.1 Scientific Management

The early work of Taylor, Gilbreth, and others attempted to provide the best possible physical environment for productive labor. It was presumed, for example, that the amount of gravel that could be moved manually per hour from one location to another depended upon the size and shape of shovel used. A small shovel would obviously limit the amount of material transported per shovel full, whereas an excessively large shovel would increase the weight to the point where the worker would quickly tire and productivity would consequently decline. The aim was to determine the optimum size.

In the case of assembly operations, positioning of the separate items to be assembled was recognized to be important. Unnecessary reaching for parts would be both time-consuming and tiring. Thus studies were undertaken to position parts in an array that minimized body movement.

2.2 Theories X and Y

Productivity improvements arising from such investigations served to advance the new field of scientific management. In some cases, however, rising productivity was noted regardless of whether the physical environment was enhanced or worsened. It seemed that the mere expression of concern for worker welfare was appreciated apart from any physical changes introduced. The acknowledged importance of social, as well as physical, considerations in worker performance led to various behavioral theories of personnel management, of which two are highlighted here.

McGregor distinguished what he referred to as management Theories X and Y. According to theory X work is distasteful and will be shunned whenever possible. Therefore supervisors must exercise tight control over subordinates to ensure fulfillment of organization objectives that are thought to be at odds with those of the persons working in it. In contrast Theory Y proposes that individuals gain satisfaction from worthwhile accomplishments and therefore are self-motivated to engage in productive effort. The supervisor's role, therefore, is to guide the energies of subordinates in directions that meet organization needs while providing a sense of accomplishment to its members. Current thinking emphasizes the importance of making Theory Y viable in practice.

2.3 Dissatisfaction and Motivation

Herzberg added further insight regarding behavioral influences by distinguishing between contextual factors and content factors of the job. He argued that worker dissatisfaction arises from contextual factors such as low pay, poor working conditions, incompetent supervision and poor administration. Removal of these negative influences will overcome the dissatisfaction but will not produce the desired positive effects on productivity and performance. These come from motivational factors inherent in the job content. Under favorable circumstances workers respond positively to the work itself and associated sense of responsibility, opportunities for self-improvement, and recognition, advancement and general sense of achievement gained on the job.

Too often attention is limited to removal of the negative features of the job because they relate to readily identifiable tangible factors, such as pay increases and supervisory arrangements. It is more difficult to provide the necessary positive forces that make the job interesting and challenging. When positive reinforcement is sought, however, notions of direction and control are de-emphasized in favor of considerations of teamwork and self-improvement. High priority is given to maintenance and enhancement of employee morale because this stimulates the motivation, self-actualization, and teamwork that are in the organization's interests as well as those of its members.

3. Labor Quantity, Job Content, and Performance Quality

The above thinking is mainly a product of the first half of the twentieth century. Post-World War II independence for many countries; and consequent concern for their economic and social development brought another level of human development concerns to the forefront during the second half of the century. A WHO health manpower study identified three phases in this interest that led to three distinct sets of manpower objectives. Because the health sector experience is thought to be more generally applicable, it is reviewed below.

3.1 Quantitative Increases

As countries gained independence they assumed direct responsibility for expansion of their agricultural and industrial bases, and for the health, education, and other social services of their people. In undertaking these tasks the severe shortage of qualified personnel soon became apparent. This led to massive training efforts; the capacity of existing programs was increased, and new schools were opened. The number of medical schools in India, for example, went from fewer than a dozen at time of independence in 1947 to well over one hundred today.

Quantitative increases in personnel are made in response to three influences. First, existing personnel must be replaced as they retire or leave service. While retirement may not be an important consideration in a young society, moves from public to private employment or from one sector to another can be significant. If the economy is not prepared to absorb a massive increase in the number of trained doctors, for example, many may leave the country or the health field, thereby causing wastage of the

resources employed in their training.

Population growth, the second contributor to the need for more trained personnel, can place major demands on limited resources just to maintain existing inadequate standards of care. Where population is growing at the rate of two percent annually the number of additional personnel needed in 20 years must increase by 49 percent simply to maintain the status quo.

Standards improvement is the third factor affecting the level of personnel need. Unfortunately, the three factors interact to exacerbate their separate effects. To illustrate, suppose that a country whose population is increasing by two percent annually wishes to halve its population per doctor ratio from 4000 to 2000 in twenty years. To accomplish this the number of doctors must be increased by 197 percent, nearly a three-fold growth.

3.2 Job Descriptions

Analyses of manpower shortages produce evidence of the magnitude of training required, but they shed little light on the content of that training. One country was found to have twice as many doctors as nurses, and nearly 70 percent of the doctors were located in three large cities. In contrast, another country had more than five nurse-midwives for every doctor, and many of the former were based in rural areas where there was one doctor per 60 000 population. The need for nurses is evident in the first case, while the doctor shortage is apparent in the second situation. What should be the training of these additional personnel, however? Urban doctors in the first setting were undoubtedly performing many functions usually reserved for nurses, whereas nurse-midwives in the second country were probably functioning as independent medical practitioners. Since these circumstances were likely to prevail for some time, how should they be reflected in the training curricula?

The raising of such questions suggests the need for locally relevant operational studies to assess health needs, the extent to which they are being met adequately, and the skills mix required to fill existing gaps, both in terms of type of service and geographical distribution. Functional analysis methods have been developed and widely applied to this second phase of manpower development concern.

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Biographical Sketch

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