Theoretical Article

Family Mentality for Control and Motivation in Organizations: A Theoretical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the concept of "Family Mentality" and its nature as a motivational tool. Family mentality is a method used in many social institutions and organizations with a view to sustainable growth in popularity towards aggrandizement. The characteristics of this mindset are analyzed with both pros and cons being listed and weighed. Several real life cases have gone through to obtain a realistic understanding of this technique for motivation and control, and its inherent morality is found in both industrial and social organizations especially in this sandwich generation by the sociologists and psychologists.

It has long been observed to be common practice among traditional or modern organizations along with a variety of other groups to utilize the concept of an adopted family when it comes to the procuring, induction and integration of new members. The concept of a family leads to a contagion effect on some people. Further it influences them to imbibe similar behaviors, attitudes and traits of their peers. This utilization of group mentality could be classified as a method for the motivation of subordinates in industrial environments along with other social organizations like trade union and NGOs (Non-Government Organizations). This nature of group mentality is highlighted by Herzberg's in his 'Two-Factor Theory'. Also, it has been stated that family mentality as a motivational tool can be used to provide the external driving force for motivation as observed in the Leavitt Model, and force field analysis, which was developed by the Gestalt Psychologists with an algebraic expression of $1+1=>2$, Kurt Lewin, also known as the father of Group Dynamics. The Levitt model comprises of four intersecting variables, such as people, tasks, technology and structure, and it analyses how these things affect the group as a whole. Whereas, force field analysis identifies the factors used for

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attaining synergy for the future development of the groups in question. As a proof of Gestalt Psychologists approach of whole must be greater than their part which is stated in an algebraic form previously described in this article. The management theory proposed by the Australian psychologist, Elton Mayo also implies that family mentality can be suitable for teamwork. According to behavioral scientists, attitude consists of three components, namely, the emotional component, behavioral component and the informational component. In the case of family mentality, all its three components are given equal importance play a significant role for developing family mentality among people.

FACTORS DETERMINING FAMILY MENTALITY

As far as developing family mentality in the society and also in the socio-technological environments has been pervasive, the factors of family mentality, namely, achievement of common goals, recognition, rewards, interesting duties, responsibility and opportunity for growth.

For achievement, the worker needs to feel that he has accomplished something. This gives the worker a sense of fulfillment. This improves the self – esteem of the workers which in turn leads to high achievements, something desirable for all parties involved. For recognition, the worker needs to feel that his/her achievement has been noticed. This often done in industrial environment by providing awards or titles like the 'best worker of the year',(It is noteworthy to mention that money is not a powerful motivator all the times as per the words of David McClelland, a Harvard Psychologist) or through bonus. This motivates them to work towards the goal of the organization and they will also be benefited in the process.

For interesting duties, the worker needs to feel interest in the work. Only if the worker believes in what he/she is working will they work efficiently. Also the working environment also plays a very important role in extracting the best performance out of their workers. For example the GOOGLE head office tries to make the work place casual and fun by adding slides in addition to stairs which is used to motivate innovative people by following 70%, 20%, 10% formula. For responsibility, the worker needs to feel that he is responsible for himself/herself and for his/her own work. Responsibility for new tasks and duties is also important. As mentioned in the book "Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health", some people take responsibility of their actions whereas others believe that external forces like luck, chance and fate determine their future. Thus one spectrum of people holds a creator mindset, while the other spectrum holds a victim mindset. The opportunity for growth, of a worker falls in employee need satisfaction principle of an organization. Opportunity for growth often acts as an incentive for people to put extra effort into their work. The potential for growth is a vital motivational factor in engagement. This may allow the top talent to climb up the ranks which can be ensured by an organization which involves in talents search.

Deserving individuals thus have to be motivated by outside forces, while others can be motivated from within. Family mentality provides a method to motivate impressible individuals either or both ways depending on the target of an individual's mindset. When one

can help protect and strengthen people where they feel weak, they may become dependent, this is one of the basic tactics generally used by the parental figure to control his/her "family" members.

In general human beings tend to exhibit very unique behaviors or habits once they live in a group and some psychologists and sociologists like Sigmund Freud and Wilfred Trotter call it "herd behavior" but it is more often described as "group mentality." Interestingly, it's not just human beings, as social animals, that behave that way. All living things have also been observed to exhibit similar behavior such as flocks of birds and herds of animals. It can also be noted, that in most cases, family mentality exhibits a sense of equality among member, regardless of gender, cast, creed or religion. It is also noted that most organizations that utilize such motivation methods, use the policy of no pain, no gain, in this case, the gain being the appreciation of the paternal figure in charge.

In a way, family mentality shares a striking quality with many attributions of clique mentality or swarm mentality, such as collective rationalization and the belief in their inherent morality, however, "family mentality" includes the knowledge of one another by all those involved in this group, this criteria has no place in the case of clique mentality. Attribution theory was originally developed by social psychologist Fritz Heider (1952) as a way of not only explaining why things happen, but also why people choose the particular explanations of behavior that they do. There are basically two kinds of explanations-those that involve an external cause and those that assume that causes are internal.

Group mentality could be defined as a mode of thinking that happens when the desire for harmony in a decision-making group overrides a realistic appraisal of alternatives. Generally, group members try to minimize conflict and reach a consensus decision without critical evaluation of alternate ideas or viewpoints. Clearly, group mentality is the manifestation of consensus building and adherence to the commands of group pressure irrespective of the facts or consequences. It has been noted by sociologists like Daniel Kahneman that there are several characteristic symptoms of group mentality, which are listed below:

The illusion of invulnerability and create excessive optimism that encourages taking extreme risks on the group's behalf. This allows the group leaders to extract the maximum performance from the members and make them do task which may be considered challenging or unconventional. Illusion of unanimity, the majority views, judgment and ideas are assumed to be unanimous by the group because of the unquestionable loyalty of the "family members" to the paternal figure.

Collective rationalization, members tend to take lightly to warnings and do not reconsider the assumptions that are linked to it. The members of the group form a small environment where the non-members are mostly considered outsiders and their advice is often neglected in favor of their group leader's orders. This prevents the members from being influenced by outside forces or other organizations and work with full conviction for the group but sometimes this

may be harmful for the group members as the main objective of the group leader could be motivated by the group's collective interest instead of individual interest. Self-censorship as doubts and deviations from the perceived group consensus are not expressed due to conjuring of their future success.

Belief in their inherent morality, members believe in the rightness of the group and its cause. This enables the group leader to make people to work according to the moral code of the organizations. This might also result in the members ignoring the ethical and moral consequences of their decision. This implies sometimes the group members may suppress their own moral dilemmas to uphold the overall good of the group. In some cases direct pressure on dissenters, members are kept under pressure not to express any arguments against any of the group's predefined views.

Stereotyped views of out-groups or negative views of so-called "enemies", making effective responses to conflict seem unnecessary by the group's leadership. This is one major disadvantage of family mentality as it prevents the members to develop as they are not open to knowledge and advice from 'outsiders'. Self-appointed "mind guards" to protect members against information which is problematic to the group's view.

The consensus nature of group mentality and the collective rigidity and irrational of in thinking of human resources, this results in negative attitude formation and this in turn leads to non-cooperation to arrive at a consensus for solving present and future problems. This attitude may result in extreme measures to preserve the consensus, even to the point of morally questionable acts, attacking any who disagree and in most cases, antagonizing these people who must be silenced for the betterment of the group's cause or ideals.

There is one specific trait present in family mentality which is not necessarily present in group mentality, members of a "family" feel obliged to keep reminding one another that they are a family to reinforce the believed consensus of the group, something that could be considered a subconscious or even in certain times a deliberate and calculated subtle attempt of educational brainwashing.

Personality change or disorder is a method of brainwashing in which there is no physical harm (in most cases) done to the subject undergoing this procedure, but the subject is continuously reminded of the idea that is supposed to be implemented into the subject's mind subconsciously, in this case, the concept of a family being their best choice of safety for the success and growth of the organization in question.

CASE STUDIES

The first case study highlights the benefits of using family mentality as a motivation technique, while the second case study analyzes an incident where it was misused.

For our first case, we'll be considering the training methods used in the Leaders for Global Operations program (MIT LGO) offered by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This higher education course was created so that students could earn both an MBA and a master's degree in engineering in two years. MIT LGO students develop management expertise and technical abilities as joint students in the MIT School of Engineering and the MIT Sloan School of Management. Most batches are tight knit, with lesser number of students, creating a "familial" bond among the participants, nurturing creativity and teamwork. This can be seen as a successful utilization of family mentality as a tool for motivation, as the involved individuals strive to contribute in the achievement of a common goal.

On the other hand, the Manson Family case illustrates a brutal picture of how family mentality can be misused. The Manson Family was a commune established in California in the late 1960s, led by Charles Manson. They gained national notoriety after the murder of actress Sharon Tate and four others on August 9, 1969 by Tex Watson and three other members of the Family, acting under the instructions of Charles Manson. Group members were also responsible for a number of other murders and assaults. The group believed that Charles Manson, a former convict, was Jesus Christ in human form, and they have to spill blood to start an inter-racial conflict, which they believed would be the apocalypse. The most chilling fact was that Manson didn't commit most of the murders, but somehow used his charismatic personality to convince his "family member" to commit these crimes, under the pretense of the greater good and the betterment of the family's objective, despite the moral consequences which such acts might result in. It should also be noted that his "family" was nothing more than an extension of Manson's belief systems.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the utilization of family mentality could be compared to a double edged sword, from one end, it nurtures teamwork and cooperation between members, and despite these advantages it can be utilized to commit horrendous acts for the betterment of the "family" or the personal interests of the group's leadership. In other words, it can be stated that the nature of family mentality and the results can only be defined than those who weld it to control and motivate others.

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