

## **Autonomous Motivation in Palestine through Self-Determination Theory**

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Motivation which is broadly defined as a set of forces that cause people to behave in certain ways, and it is part of managerial directing function. One employee may be motivated to work hard to produce as much as possible, whereas another employee may be motivated to produce just enough to escape the sack. Managers must comprehend these differences in behavior and the reasons for them. This behavior becomes intrinsically complicated because Palestinians endured 648 Israeli army check points that restrict Palestinians interlinks and the movement of their goods for security reasons, and businesses were plummeting in economic crisis through the second Palestinian uprising (September 2000 – November 2004). A survey of 32 ISO certified manufacturing firms in Palestine were asked to complete a questionnaire that focused on the means of motivating their employees to keep the firms afloat during that period of socio-economic crisis. Palestinian firms embarked on autonomous motivation that stems from coherent goals, local cultural values, and self-worth performance to overcome business constraints and contingency hindrance. Self-determination theory that has steered up survival rate of firms in Palestine, explains organizational behaviour and performance throughout.

Keywords: self-determination theory, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, cognitive evaluation theory, causality orientation, competence

### **Introduction**

Managers in the early 1900s had very few external resources to draw upon to guide and develop their management practice. But early theorists like Henri Fayol (1841-1925), made administrative managers to get the tools they needed to lead and manage more effectively. Fayol (1916) proposed the primary functions of management as: forecasting, planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling ; this work has stood the test of time and has been shown to be relevant and appropriate to contemporary management (Daft, 2009). Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933) occupies a very significant place in the development of thinking and practice at organizations (communities). Follett (1918) argued that groups were mechanisms through which diverse individuals could combine their talents for greater people's needs, desires and aspiration; this was fundamental to the sorts of thinking that emerged at workplace too (Montana & Charnov, 2008).

According to the so-called classical theory of motivation, employees are motivated solely by money. Taylor (1911) proposed a way for both employer and employees to benefit from this widely accepted view of life in the workplace; if employees are motivated by money, then paying them more should prompt them to produce more.

The company that analyzed jobs and had found better ways to perform them would be able to produce goods more cheaply, and thus pay and motivate employees better than its competitors. The scientific management is attributed to Fredrick Taylor (1856-1915) whose ideas captured the imagination of many managers in the twentieth century. Argyris (1957) contrasted the management practices found in traditional and hierarchical organizations with the needs and capabilities of mature adults, because classical management approaches are inconsistent with the mature adult personality. Argyris (2004) also argued about individual and organizational learning and the extent to which human reasoning, not just behavior, can become the basis for diagnosis and action. McGregor (1960) advanced the thesis that managers should give more attention to the social and self-actualizing needs of employees at work; managers were called upon to shift their view of human nature away from a set of authoritarian management style, theory x, and toward ones of participative management style, theory y. Managers who hold either set of assumptions can create self-fulfilling prophecies where employees act in ways that confirm the original expectations. Hence, theory y thinking is very consistent with developments in the new workplace and its emphasis on valuing workforce diversity for the popular notions of employee participation, involvement, empowerment, self-management and motivation (Carson, 2005).

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Between 1927 and 1932, a group of Harvard researchers began a study at Cicero of Illinois that was home to a sprawling manufacturing complex called the Hawthorne Works, which produced some of the most technically advanced products in the world. In fact, two gurus of quality management, W. Edwards Deming (1900-1993) and Joseph M. Juran (1904-2008), started their career at the Hawthorne Works, which was the first factory to pioneer quality control practices and principles, using widespread visual inspection and testing to detect manufacturing problems (Weber, 2002, August 1). The study concluded that productivity rose in response to almost any management action that employees interpreted as special attention (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1949). Mayo (1993) argued that modern society had destroyed the belief of the individual in his social function and solidarity with the group. It would be up to administrative management to develop

methods for improving employee morale and ultimately securing national stability at a time of economic and social unrest.

Behaviorism is a very broad school of thought with several rich strands of research and theories (Thorndike, 1913; Skinner, 1953; Hull, 1943; Tolman, 1959), each of which has its own perspective on the causes of human motivation. But, the theories of Maslow (1954), McClelland (1961), Herzberg (1966), and Alderfer (1972) are considered classics from contents perspective in humanistic needs and motives in organizational behaviour. According to motivation theory, individual strives to seek higher need when lower needs are fulfilled; if a lower-level need is satisfied, it will no longer serve as a source of motivation. Maslow (1954) and Alderfer (1972) have proposed that there are five and three classes of needs, respectively, whereas Koltko-Rivera (2006) six hierarchy levels of need (Figure. 1A & B).

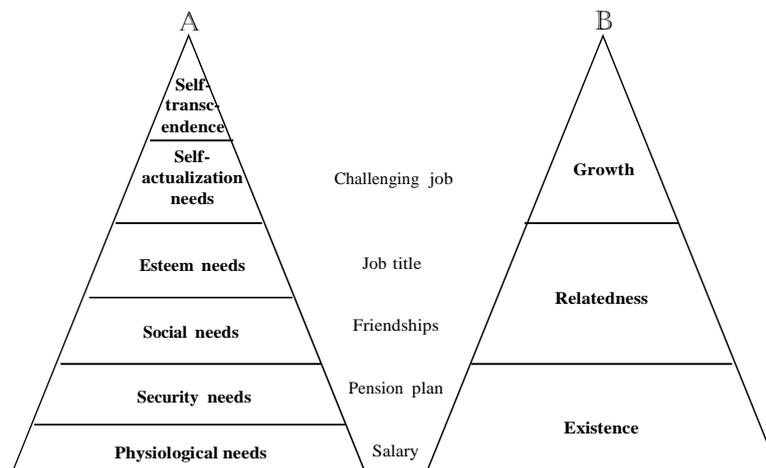


Figure 1. Hierarchy of needs. (A) Maslow's. (B) Alderfer's. Adopted from: Ebert and Griffin (2011).

The two lowest levels of the pyramid are important to the physical survival of the organism. Then, once we have our basic physical and safety needs sorted, we feel more ready to share ourselves with others and accomplish things in the world. Most people can readily identify with these common levels of motivation. Maslow (1954) held that as we come to feel satisfied with our accomplishments and sense of social worth, we take another step; he referred to this urge as self-actualization. It is very similar to the process Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1917) referred to as individuation (Stokes, 2004), which tends to kick in during mature adulthood (Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

Herzberg (1966) suggested that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction depend on two kinds of factors that affect motivation and they do it in different ways: (1) Extrinsic hygiene factors create

dissatisfaction if employees perceive them as inadequate or inequitable, yet they will not be significantly motivated if these factors are viewed as adequate or good. Such factors include salary, remuneration, job security and working conditions. (2) Intrinsic motivation factors considered of higher order that includes sense of achievement, recognition, responsibility, and personal growth.

McClelland (1961) identified three basic needs: (1) Needs for achievement where an employee who has a high need for achievement tries to attain challenging goals and to take personal responsibility as a need for a sense of accomplishment. (2) Needs for affiliation where an employee has a need for harmonious relationships, employee-oriented rather than task-oriented. (3) Needs for power where an employee wants to direct and command others. These categories of

needs are not exclusive; employees generally develop a dominant bias or emphasis towards one of the above three and entrepreneurs have a high degree of need for achievement (Carragher et al., 2010). Vroom (1964) developed a systematic

expectancy theory of workplace motivation that asserts employees are motivated to work toward rewards that they want and that they believe they have reasonable expectancy of obtaining (Figure 2).

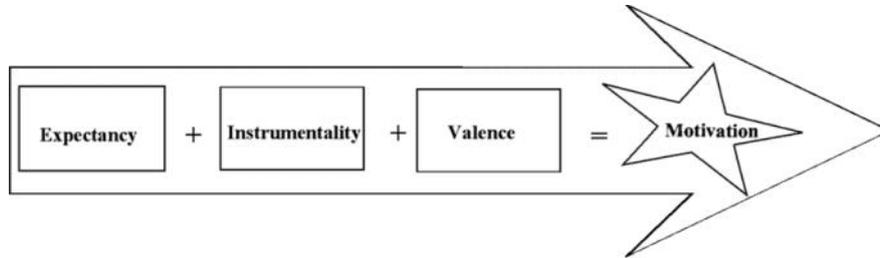


Figure 2. Expectancy theory model. Adopted from: Madlock (2008).

A reward that seems out of reach is likely to be undesirable even if it intrinsically positive (Johnson & Lewis, 2010). Adams (1963) put forward his equity theory that extends beyond previous simpler theories of Maslow (1954) and Herzberg (1966) of the employee, in that the theory acknowledged that subtle and variable factors affect each employee's assessment and perception of the relationship with work, and thereby their employer. It also incorporated influence and comparison of other employees' situations in forming a comparative view and awareness of equity, which is commonly manifested in a sense of equitable fairness. When employees feel fairly or advantageously treated, they are more likely to be motivated; when they feel unfairly treated they are highly prone to feelings of disaffection and demotivation. The sense of fairness commonly underpins motivation that is not determined by pay and conditions alone; it is rather dependant on our comparison between our input-to-output ratio and the ratio of others. The way that employees measure this sense of fairness is at the heart of equity theory and it predicts that employees would variably react to the speed and reaction of employees around them (Hopp, 2004).

Locke (1968) proposed goal-setting theory of motivation that is essentially linked to task performance. It states that specific and challenging goals could contribute to higher and better task performance, but goal-setting has certain eventualities such as: (1) Self-efficiency is the employee's self-confidence and faith that s/he has potential of performing the task. The level of self-efficiency is directly proportional with the efforts put in by the employee who is facing challenging tasks. (2) Goal-setting assumes that the employee is committed to the goal and will not leave the goal (Locke & Latham, 1990).

In light of the above theories, what did Palestinian manufacturing managers do to motivate

their employees throughout the second uprising against Israeli army occupation?

### **Methodology**

Chapman (1997) argued that the environmental uncertainty may become so great that accounting becomes unreliable and accounting tools become of little value too. Therefore, business environment that is viewed as a complex system of interrelated economic, market, technological, social and political variables (Cooper, 1996), needs the ability to learn and to adapt rapidly (Schermerhorn, 2002). Israeli occupation in Palestine has a considerable effect on the economic viability of business, especially during the Palestinian second uprising (September 2000 – November 2004) against Israeli army occupation (Liu, 2010). The large-scale uprising made the economic factors prominent and there would be no Palestinian economic development if no end to the occupation. The Israeli army erected 648 networks of physical barriers that were exceptionally disruptive to the local economy due to movement hindrance of commuting man and goods (Appendix 1). Widespread and ongoing closures of crossings from Palestinian territories to Israel, as well as economic sanctions against the Palestinians, curbed the economic growth experienced in Palestine during the years of early Oslo Accords peace process (Baroud, 2006). Since, the activities of Palestinian manufacturing firms across the entire chain of value-adding needed to genuinely improvise to find their own ways to ride off the economic crisis, a heuristic qualitative research method was used for data collection and analysis of industrial sector status.

Palestinian Trade Organization has a list of 339 registered firms, and a sample of 32 ISO certified by Palestinian Standards Institution, were selected from the industrial sector. The main

reasons for this random nationwide selection were as follows: (1) they were large-sized firms in local terms, (2) they have greater resources, (3) they display a great deal of etiology information, and (4) they are well reputed national firms. Questionnaires that encompassed a variety of instruments in which Palestinian executives responded by giving their opinion to written questions that elicit reactions, beliefs and attitudes; all questionnaires were completed by respondents at a rate of 100%. Thus, the aim of the questionnaire was primarily geared at comprehending the means that make Palestinian employees motivated against the odds in such environment of socio-economic crisis to attempt keeping businesses afloat.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-version 17) is a computer application, and it was used to provide statistical analysis of data.

## Results and Interpretation

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of organizational culture

Organizational culture	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
A. To worry about expressing disagreement with superiors.	32	1	7	4.84	2.02
B. To carry-out superior's Instructions	32	1	7	5.56	1.58
C. Ideas are controlled by Powerful others.	32	1	7	5.25	1.93
D. To fit work plans with desires of "bosses".	32	1	7	5.25	1.93
E. To worry that ideas and opinions are not accepted by powerful others.	32	1	7	5.15	1.85

Note: A seven-point scale (1= 'strongly disagree', and 7= 'strongly agree').  
Date had drawn from Question 6 (organizational culture).

It was apparent that individual respondent's function to carry out supervisor's instructions (mean score = 5.56), and in order to have their plans work; they have to fit their work plans with the desires of powerful people (mean scores = 5.25). These results are consistent with the Eastern cultures findings (Hofstede (1984), Brewer (1998) and Javidan and House (2001).

Individual respondents were asked to indicate the means they used for adjusting their firms to the conditions of Palestinian economic crisis and to the introduction of 100s of Israeli army check points. Table 2 Shows Chi-Square for 'performance

A number of academics have argued that the culture of a country has an important impact on work attitude (Hofstede, 1984; Javidan & House, 2001). Arabs and Asian people at large have the characteristic of high-power-distance and collective societies. They would prefer team-based work to individualized work (Brewer, 1998) and accept a superior's views, as well as what a "boss" needs. Table 1 shows the mean scores of organizational culture that is seemingly "tribal Arabism" in terms of individualism, masculinity, Confucian dynamism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. However, the studying of the relationship between culture and management control system is very broadly defined, i.e. the clusters of parallel intuition that all African, American, Asian, European, and Arab countries should share some similarities. So, relying upon these clusters to generalize that all "Arabs" or all "UK" cultures are entirely the same would be naïve.

improved' (26.759, 'training received' (24.500), 'solutions generated' (21.250), 'behavior altered' (15.438), 'problem analyzed' (14.313), 'external environment understood' (13.188), 'policies changed' (11.313), and 'enterprise restructured' (10.750). According to Hurst (1995), when the business is in economic crisis, the crisis forces the firm to learn fast how to restore itself through restructuring or reorganizing. Also, Kloot (1997) suggested that organizational learning stems from understanding the changes taking place in the external environment and adapting the organization to suit the changed environment.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney (NPar), Chi-Square and frequencies statistics for enterprise adjusting to the changed conditions since the Palestinian economic crisis.

Features	Observed N	Expected N	Residual N	Chi-Square <sup>a,b,c</sup>	Df	symp. Sig.
<i>Policies changed</i>				11.313	2	0.003
moderately important	2	10.7	-8.7			
very important	13	10.7	2.3			
critically important	17	10.7	6.3			
Total	32					
<i>External environment understood</i>				13.188	2	0.001
moderately important	1	10.7	-9.7			
very important	15	10.7	4.3			
critically important	16	10.7	5.3			
Total	32					
<i>Enterprise restructured</i>				10.750	2	0.001
moderately important	2	10.7	-8.7			
very important	14	10.7	3.3			
critically important	16	10.7	5.3			
Total	32					
<i>Problem analyzed</i>				14.313	2	0.001
moderately important	1	10.7	-9.7			
very important	13	10.7	2.3			
critically important	18	10.7	7.3			
Total	32					
<i>Solutions generated</i>				21.250	3	0.000
little important	1	8.0	-7.0			
moderately important	2	8.0	-6.0			
very important	14	8.0	6.0			
critically important	15	8.0	7.0			
Total	32					
<i>Training received</i>				24.500	3	0.000
little important	1	8.0	-7.0			
moderately important	1	8.0	-7.0			
very important	15	8.0	7.0			
critically important	15	8.0	7.0			
Total	32					
<i>Behaviours altered</i>				15.438	2	0.000
moderately important	1	10.7	-9.7			
very important	12	10.7	1.3			
critically important	19	10.7	8.3			
Total	32					
<i>Performance improved</i>				26.750	4	0.000
not important	1					
little important	1	6.4	-5.4			
moderately important	3	6.4	-5.4			
very important	14	6.4	-3.4			
critically important	13	6.4	7.6			
Total	32	6.4	6.6			

Note: Data had drawn from Question 66 (adjusting to Palestinian economic crisis). <sup>a</sup>0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected frequency is 10.7; <sup>b</sup>0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected frequency is 8.0; <sup>c</sup>0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected frequency is 6.4. At the 0.05 level of significance.

**Conclusions**

This research highlights that Palestinians employees comprehended the dichotomy of business success or demise. The ‘standard recipes’ may fail when employer expects employees in an organization to respond immediately to external emergency situations, in an innovative and autonomous way (Teven, 2007). Palestinian

employers empowered their employees, foster decision participation and support self initiation and autonomy. They were evidently resilient, persistent, determined to survive and prosper, as well as the hope that Israeli military occupation vanishes. Business environment in Palestine is long marked by arbitrary and deliberate barriers; they live a critical understanding of the economic and political impact of the Israeli occupation on

business in Palestine. Confronting harsh economic realities, the employees have developed business strategies and management styles which fit their unique culture and created motivated workforces that are not daunted by the inequitable odds against them. They were aspiring to build thriving businesses under difficult circumstances.

Palestinians who have built successful business, harnessed self-development, experience, business competency, responsibility, accountability and training, realized the risks of excessive social pressures from connections, cronyism, and nepotism of Eastern cultures characteristics. Employees were motivated by a blend of theories of motivations variables (Maslow, 1954; McClelland, 1961; Herzberg, 1966; Alderfer, 1972), as evidently shown in enduring the economic crisis throughout and landed successfully with promising business prospects. The faced a string of complex challenges, and yet a host of factors were contributing to their success. Walking the autonomous motivational walk often required questioning organizational assumptions and taking risks but there is no harder risk than seeing their business chalking through economic crisis.

The personality variables (Dunleavy et al., 2010) have been found to be a major determinant of success in Palestine which is economically disadvantaged, politically unstable and culturally traditional environment (unpublished data). Also, the public attitudes have a tremendous impact on how Palestinian employees view themselves and their role in the community and at work. More weight was assigned to subjective factors such as personality characteristics and social competence, more than to objective factors such as economic and political affiliation in the achievement of business success. The results have very significant implications for other societies who endure similar environment to the Palestinian socio-economic crisis. The design and implementation of training workshops for both prospective and working employees would be advantageous to expand on Palestinian experience.

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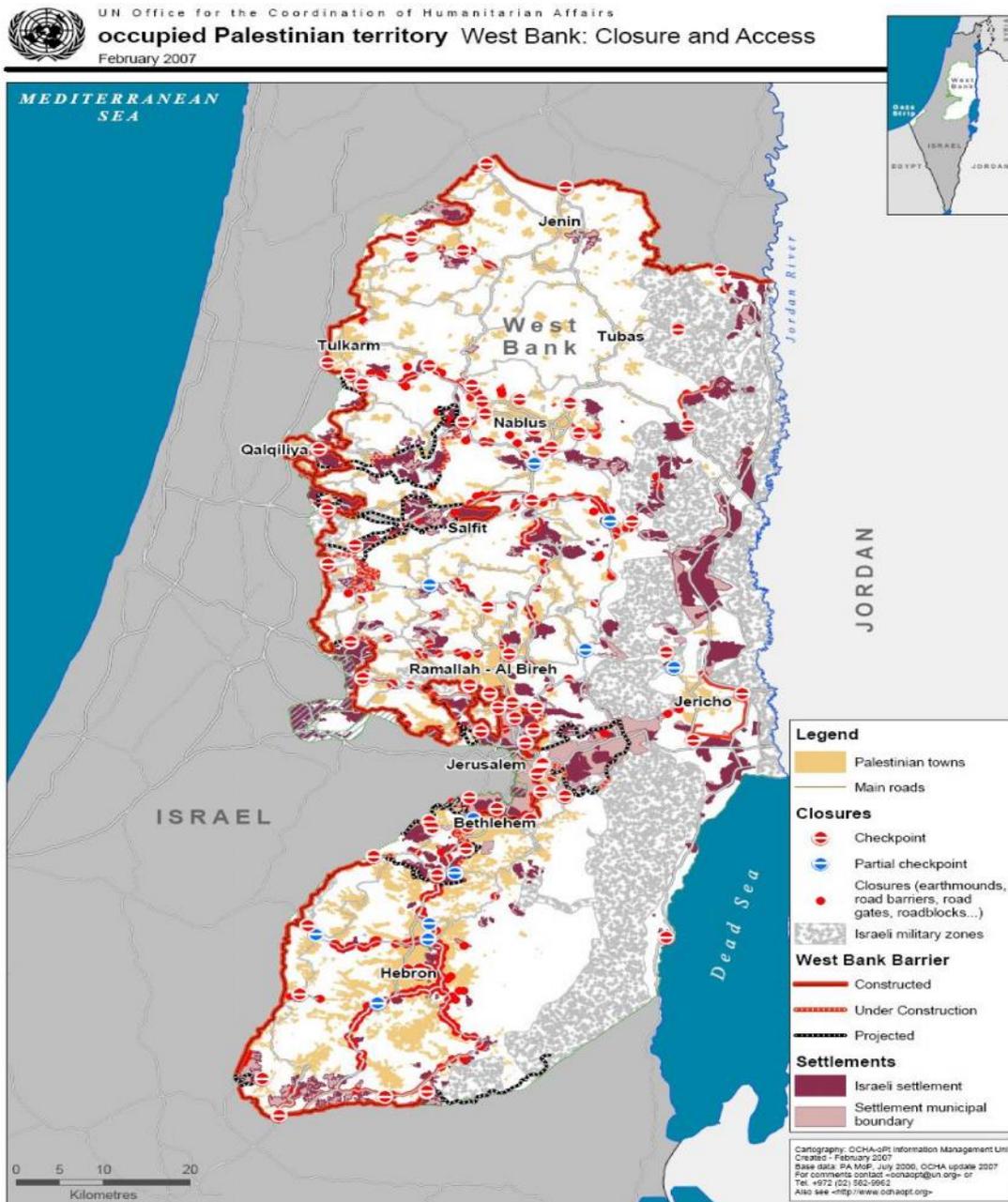
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Appendix 1. Israeli settlements, barriers and checkpoints in untransitory Palestine. Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2007).