

**THE ROLE OF THE TRI-MOTIVATION APPROACH IN ACHIEVING
EXCELLENCE IN E-UNIVERSITY STRATEGY EXECUTION
(A CASE STUDY BASED ON PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF E-UNIVERSITY
PERSPECTIVE IN KAU STRATEGY)**

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ABSTRACT: *This paper deals with King Abdul-Aziz University's exercise to upgrade the level of strategy implementation by applying three incentive approaches, namely positive, moral and negative approaches. This paper briefly explains the electronic university perspective at King Abdul-Aziz University. The paper emphasizes the importance of close examination of the incentive approaches at the beginning of the strategy preparation stage and the necessity to prepare an incentive plan during the implementation of the strategy to ensure continuity of implementation in accordance with set time lines while maintaining required efficiency and quality to benefit the organization by implementing the strategic plan thoroughly and comprehensively.*

KEYWORDS: Positive approach, Moral approach, Negative approaches, Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Strategy is considered the main factor which enables an organization to achieve its objectives. This is due to its components which contribute to the development of the organization. Moreover, strategy functions as a driving force which encourages individuals to work interactively, and enhances their feeling of loyalty by encouraging them to participate in decision-making. As a result, they feel that they are an integral part of the organization which positively reflects on their creativity and cooperation when they realize that they contribute towards achieving the mission, goals and strategies of the organization. Organizations utilize the available resources to achieve their targeted objectives. Hence, the mobilization of efficient human resources that are capable of implementing the strategies of the organization by utilizing best practice is vital.

Motivation is considered a major factor in the development of human resources. Thus, it has been the main theme in numerous pieces of research (Richard, 2013; Paul, 2013; Midhat, 2009). The rationale behind this is that all motivation approaches, whether positive, moral or negative, are considered the main driving force behind performing duties. It can be characterized by the ability to lead and motivate others to perform duties since they are the source of development and without whom objectives cannot be realized (Harvard College, 2011).

The success of any strategy is determined by the feasibility of its implementation and practical application. Strategies are objectives, programs and performance indicators (Misfer, 2013;

Esam, 2013; Ala', 2013) . The failure of higher management of organizations to implement strategies is due not only to the inadequacy of the strategies themselves, but also to other hindering forces related to the implementation process. These could be financial, procedural and/or related to the work environment. Other hindrances, which have not received proper attention, are due to the lack of enthusiasm of workers to achieve strategies.

Numerous studies and research deal with the methodology and approaches of strategy application; the most well-known is the "Balanced Scorecard" approach (Werner, & Fyuan, 2011), which has been rated highly by most public and private sector institutions. Other research deals with the phase of strategy implementation which requires a detailed knowledge of information and procedures which exist in the organization during the time span of implementation to ensure the success of application (Okfalisa, Alias, & Salim, 2009). Despite the voluminous studies and close examination of the subject, the application of strategies remains a field which is open to more research and development to ensure proper application within organizations without any hindrances, whatever they may be.

MOTIVATIONAL APPROACHES

The importance of motivation lies in the fact that the employee needs to be enthusiastic and willing to perform duties. This can only be achieved by utilizing approaches to motivation. Motivation instigates enthusiasm, willingness and a desire to perform which positively reflects on performance in general and, accordingly, increases productivity. Utilization of these approaches enhances mutual interaction between the individual and the organization and acts as a driving force that compels the employee to exert all efforts to achieve the organization's objectives. Motivational approaches also aim at preventing the feeling of frustration since the provision of a positive work environment, whether material or psychological, enhances an employee's perseverance and ability to deliver a constant high-quality performance. Motivation is considered the main driving force behind the success of strategy application. Numerous studies emphasize the role of motivation in the management process (Shen, Chendu, & Li, 2010; Aijun, Weirong, & Jun, 2010; Wang Chen, 2006). Motivation is achieved by utilizing three approaches: positive, moral and negative; as illustrated in figure (1) below (Paul, & Randi, 2005).

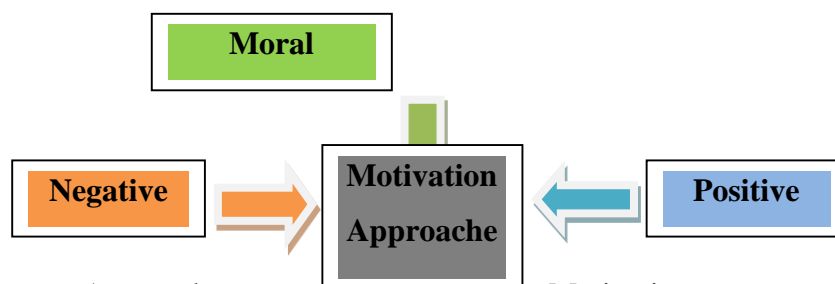


Figure 1: Three Approaches to Motivation

Positive Approach

Incentives afforded to employees of an organization differ based on their personalities and interests. Some can only be motivated by financial rewards. The more that financial incentives and rewards are provided to them, the better are their performance and productivity. Material incentives satisfy the basic human needs and accordingly encourage employees to exert

maximum efforts at work, employ all their capabilities and enhance the quality of their performance.

Material incentives are immediate which result in the individual's feeling of positive immediate reward for his/her efforts. However, a constraint of this incentive is that it is short-lived and this same individual will soon consider this incentive as an accomplished lawful right. It could also result in the employee's request for further material rewards, and thus the intended effect vanishes after the elapse of a short period of time, as shown in figure (2) below. Examples of a positive approach to motivation are financial rewards, grants, vacations, periodic merit increases, promotions, etc. Other employees are motivated by positive psychological and social incentives. Employees have needs and desires which have to do with psychological and social factors. The sense of achievement and social recognition reinforces the feeling of integrity and loyalty to the organization and enhances cooperation among peers.

Psychological and social incentives are as important as material ones. In fact, material incentives cannot be realized without the presence of psychological and social ones. Examples of these incentives are feelings of achievement, having an appropriate position, social status and social acceptance and recognition.

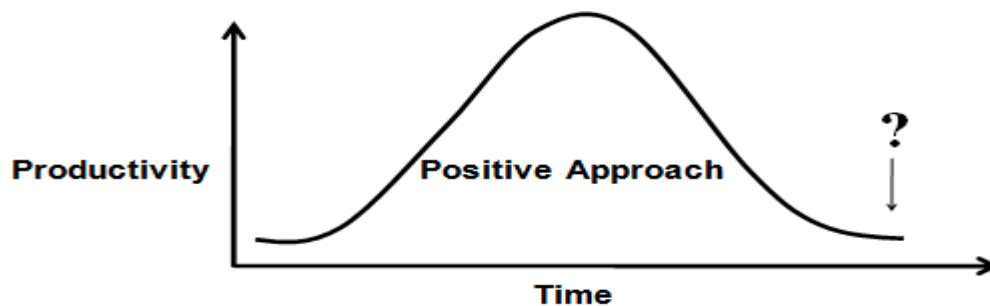


Figure 2: Positive Approach

Moral Approach

Moral incentive is considered the main approach to motivation and the most powerful and constant force for personality development. Dealing with long-standing behaviours that have been formed over the years takes time and can be demoralizing from time to time, but once it is accomplished, it remains in effect for a long time, as shown in figure (3). Moral incentives entail behavioural norms which the employee needs to practice and adhere to which will reinforce the employee's commitment. Examples of moral incentives are:

- Reaffirming work integrity and that a person is accountable for whatever action he takes.
- Reminding employees that material income can flourish and thrive if gained by performing an outstanding task.
- Reaffirming that a person's genuine satisfaction is achieved by enjoying his work.
- Reminding employees that commitment to work is legal and legitimate.
- The human being is entrusted to devote time and effort to perform his duties and not to waste time.
- The human being is required to deal honestly with others and to use best practice in performing duties.

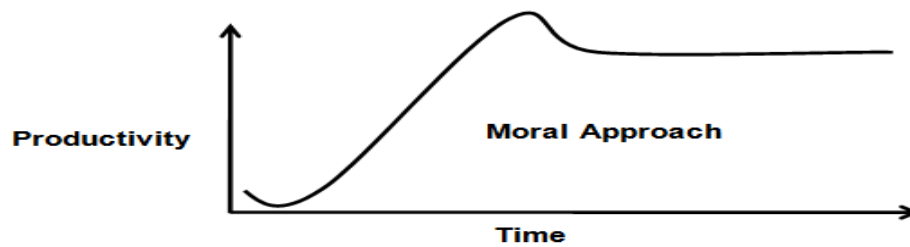


Figure 3: Moral Approach

Negative Approach

This is one of the oldest approaches. It was used in primitive societies which depended on physical force to control and manage workers by the threat of using physical punishment. This approach is used by management by the use of threats, such as salary deduction, transfer, demotion or termination. The effect of this approach is temporary and it produces short-term normal results, as shown in figure (4). In modern times, this approach uses economic and social pressures to enforce loyalty. Nowadays, many managers need to use pressure and threats or deprivation of rewards, benefits, merit increases or salary reductions to motivate employees to contribute to the organization success in realizing its mission.

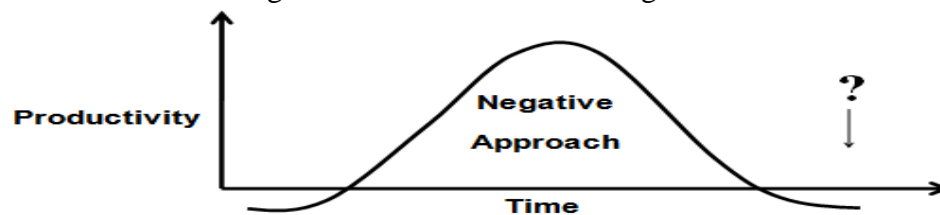


Figure 3: Negative Approach

STRATEGY OF KING ABDUL-AZIZ UNIVERSITY

The strategy of King Abdul-Aziz University includes all strategy components, most important of which is the strategic vision which is, "Beacon of knowledge, integration in occupational professionalism and innovation in development." The strategic mission is "The advancement of society through pioneering research, cultural and scientific excellence." Values also represent a major component of the university's dominant culture. The university's adoption of these values represents the central pillars of its activities. The more that individuals adhere to these values and are committed to their constituents, the better that individual, group and institutional performance is. The most important of the university values are: quality and continuous improvement, compliance to the standards of institutional accreditation, quality of the educational process, individual innovation, team work, constructive interaction, intimate communication and social interaction.

The strategic objectives of the university are as follows:

- Comprehensive application of the electronic management systems in all university sectors and the achievement of all established quality standards by the university electronic gate.
- Electronic learning use of 80% of the university course syllabi.
- Advancement of the higher studies programs to meet the required standards of the educational process, scientific research and community service.
- Establishment of societal trust and confidence so that the university becomes the first choice in accordance with the university communication plan.
- Increase in volume of the university's annual self resources to become double what they are at present.

- Acquiring more consultancy contracts than any other university in the Kingdom.
- Become one of the leading universities in scientific research in the Arab world according to international classifications.
- Become one of the leading universities in the Arab world in the development of programs which deal with technology transfer, nationalization and development.
- Availability of academic accreditation requirements for all programs and academic units.
- Practical applications of the content of syllabi and assigned courses listed in the approved study plans and developing these applications to enhance the educational process in accordance with international standards and to meet social needs.
- Provision of necessary requirements for success and effective performance of infrastructure in all university sectors.
- Registering all innovative and talented individuals in business incubators programs at the university.

The second strategic plan of the university includes major performance indicators to measure performance at all levels, such as the university performance as a whole and faculties' and other sectors' performance. Success indicators which measure each objective of the plan have been identified so that the university is able to determine the level of achievement of these objectives. Table (1) shows the basic components of King Abdul-Aziz University strategies(E-University Perspective). These include the university programs and projects.

Table 1: Major components of the King Abdul-Aziz University Strategy (E-University Perspective).

Perspective	Program	Project
Electronic University	Development of Electronic Transactions	1. Development of technologies and technical support.
		2. Development of electronic financial and administrative services.
		3. Development of educational services.
		4. Development of electronic medical services.
		5. Total quality management of electronic transactions.
	Development of the university electronic gate	1. Development of the electronic gate infrastructure.
		2. Development of technical specifications.
		3. Achievement of internet web metrics.
	E-Learning and distance education	1. Support of human resources.
		2. Development of financial and administrative systems for distance education programs.
		3. Academic accreditation for distance education programs
		4. Development of technical and technological systems.
		5. Increase the number of students in distance education systems.

APPLICATION OF THE TRI-MOTIVATIONAL APPROACH

Organizations realize that motivation has a major impact on the loyalty of their employees and the duties which they perform. Thus, the application and implementation of an organizational strategy depends on providing greater incentives for its employees. Incentives such as bonuses, over-time payments, promotions, shields, certificates of appreciation, participation in training courses, scholarships for graduate studies and assignments to assume leadership positions enhance the level of motivation, and, accordingly help boost employees' morale and their performance. Figure (5) gives actual examples of incentives used at the university, which represent the three motivational approaches.

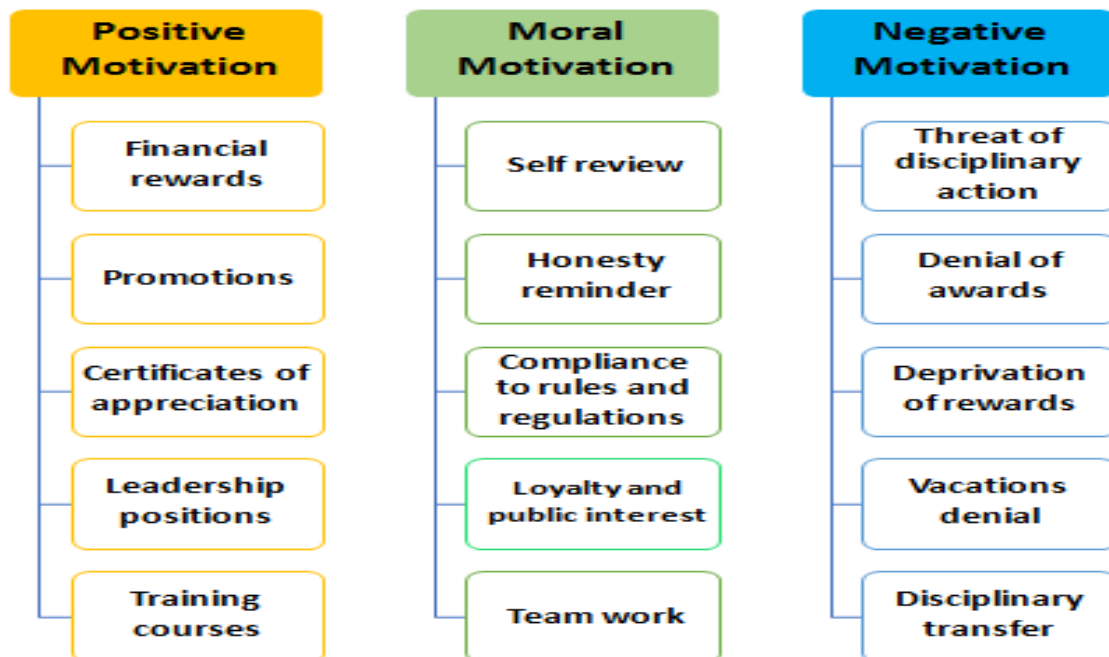


Figure 5: Motivational sub-approaches

The three approaches to motivation (positive, moral and negative), which have been applied at King Abdul-Aziz University, have played an important role in motivating the employees who have exerted every effort to excel in implementing the objectives, strategies and programs of the university. Applying the approaches has positively impacted on both individual and group performance. In addition, it has enhanced the consistency of fundamental values and employees' professional integrity which facilitate accomplishing a motivated working environment.

The university has arrived at the firm conclusion that the application of strategy cannot be achieved without enhancing the level of motivation of its employees. So, it has carried out some procedures to upgrade the level of duty accomplishment by motivating the employees. Examples of positive motivation include:

- Financial allocation for each project. The money is disbursed to team members when the project is delivered.
- Pay for the over-time hours spent to accomplish tasks on time.
- Showing appreciation to team members for the efforts which they have exerted to implement projects.

- Assigning distinguished team members to assume leadership positions as a result of their valuable contributions and excellence.
- Recommending that competent administrative staff join raining courses.

With regards to incentives towards a moral approach, staff members were reminded all the time of their moral obligations. Values and principles were highlighted during group meetings or during individual counseling sessions with members who failed to implement the strategy. They were reminded that self-criticism is essential for success. With regards to the negative approach, higher management at the university made sure that there would be no need to use this approach when dealing with employees to motivate them. However, the approach is present and known to all employees. The university has noticed a significant improvement in the level of its employees' performance and their efforts to implement its strategy, as shown in figure (6). This has taken place after the three-approach motivational method has been applied. Application of the approach here is represented in terms of the provision of material and moral incentives, emphasizing professional integrity and employees' morality and the threat of disciplinary action for those who have shortcomings in their performance.

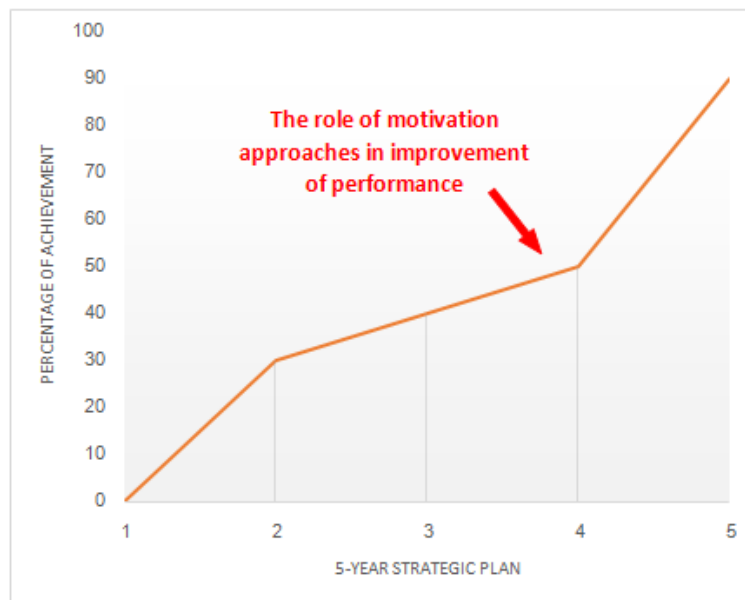


Figure 6: Achievement percentages during the application of the King Abdul-Aziz University strategy(E-University Perspective).

Figure 6 above shows that performance level and percentages of achievement of the employees with regards to strategy application at the university during the first three years of the strategic plan were constant except for a brief increase due to encouragement, follow-up and monitoring. On the other hand, when the three-approach incentive motivation method was applied at the start of the fourth year of the plan, the level of performance increased dramatically which resulted in a marked increase in the level of strategy application.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper highlights the King Abdul-Aziz University exercise in applying the three-approach motivational model to enhancing the application and implementation of its strategy. The paper concludes that these motivational approaches need to be prepared and utilized both before and during strategy application and implementation. Thus, the team recommends the following:

1. It is essential to exploit the motivation methodology at the beginning of strategy implementation.
2. It is essential to apply the principles of equality and fairness when motivational approaches are applied, especially when financial incentives are used.
3. Moral motivation requires responsible and trustworthy leaders and managers who can set a good example for others.
4. Negative motivation has a promising impact, but should only be used cautiously and with selected individuals.

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