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MANAGERIAL MOTIVATION OF BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS ASPIRING TO
CAREERS IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: AN APPLICATION OF MINER'S
ROLE MOTIVATION THEORY

Pace University

D.P.S. 1986

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MANAGERIAL MOTIVATION OF BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS
ASPIRING TO CAREERS IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT:
AN APPLICATION OF MINER'S ROLE MOTIVATION THEORY

by

Eugene H. Nellen

A Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Lubin Graduate School
of Business, Pace University, in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Professional Studies

Sponsoring Committee:

Professor Peter Allan, Chairman
Professor Thomas Robinson, Member
Professor Lawrence G. Bridwell, Member

October 1985

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Identifying and developing managerial talent has been of great importance to both scholars and practitioners for most of the twentieth century. In a highly complex, bureaucratic society, as our own, the need for identifying those who qualify for top management positions is important for survival of business organizations. (Bass, 1981)

Arch Patton of McKinsey and Company predicted in his article, "The Coming Scramble for Executive Talent" (May, 1967) that United States business organizations faced a shortage of qualified management talent. Patton based his conclusions on factors he saw at that time: "complexity of the managerial process", low birth rate of the nineteen-thirties, growth of complex business organizations and the competing need for managerial talent in non-business enterprises. After reviewing his own research and that of others, John B. Miner, Research Professor of Management at Georgia State University, concurred with Patton's conclusions. However, Miner found that the greatest threat was the decline in traditional managerial values and attitudes among the traditional source of manage-

ment, the college student. He identified as traditional managerial values a favorable attitude toward work, a desire to compete, a motivation to be assertive, a desire to exercise power, a desire for a distinctive position, and a sense of responsibility. (Miner, 1974, 1981) Miner's findings that "the change in student attitudes and motivation changed from past generations" have been concurred in by Ward and Athos (1972); Rotter (1971); Tarnowieki (1973); Howard and Bray (1981) and Miner and Smith (1981). After reviewing findings of two generations of management-bound personnel at A.T.&T.'s Assessment Center, Howard and Bray (1981) concluded that the overall message was that "The new managers simply pay less homage to higher-level positions. They neither aspire to those jobs nor defer to those who have them. They don't want to lead; they don't want to follow." (p. 26) This then led to their question: "...who is going to run our corporations in the future?". Alone, this question needs continued refinement and documentation of theoretical arguments on the reasons for this dilemma and more importantly...how to meet this challenge.

Motivation to Manage

In his book My Years with General Motors, Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., commented:

It is not easy to say why one management is successful and another is not. The causes of success or failure are deep and complex, and chance plays a part. Experience has convinced me, however, that for those who are responsible for a business, two important factors are motivation and opportunity. (Sloan, 1965, p. 505)

The literature discussing research and thinking in the realm of understanding specific characteristic management traits is extensive. Many studies were designed to determine a manager's intellectual, social, emotional, physical or personality traits in order to determine if, in fact, any universal characteristics in effective leaders would distinguish them from less effective leaders. In discussing the characteristics necessary in effective management, Ghiselli (1971) considers motivation an important characteristic. This involves the ability to act independently and initiate actions without stimulation and support from others. Supporting Ghiselli, Yukl, (1981) and Miner (1965) suggest that the "motivation to manage" or "will to manage" characteristic is essential for effective management. Miner's contention is that to be a successful manager the individual must possess a strong motivation to manage attribute; "to manage well a person has to want to manage, he has to really 'love it'." (Miner, 1974, p. 13)

Acceptance of Miner's theory has been slow. However, it is now being included in textbooks on man-

agement and organizational behavior and, in Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership (1981), Bass devotes half of Chapter 22 to the Miner Role-Motivation Theory and cites it in four other sections of the handbook.

In reviewing the Miner Sentence Completion Scale for Buro's, Editor, The Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook, Adcock (1972) concluded:

The success achieved by this test in research situations encourages the hope that it may provide a very promising, relatively objective type of projective test in an area where there is dearth of useful measures. (p. 173.)

Miner's Role-Motivation Theory

In order better to understand the motivation to manage deemed essential for managerial success by Miner and others, Miner himself (1965b) developed a theory of managerial role motivation. This theory is built on role theory and psychoanalytic theory and on research results of Kahn (1956) and Fleishman, Harris and Burt (1955). Miner's theory is directed "specifically toward role-taking propensities with the ideal large organization formalized and rationalized to function bureaucratically." (Bass, 1981).

A theory of managerial performance was constructed using a combination of sociological and psychological variables. This theory assumes that there are certain "role requirements" which occur frequently across a great variety of business management positions. These role requirements can be expected to appear at all managerial levels in a great variety of companies...For success to occur in managerial work it is assumed that an individual must possess the motivation appropriate to these generalized role requirements. (Miner, 1965a, p. 12)

In finalizing his theory, Miner described the following role requirements which are important to success in hierarchical positions in bureaucratic business organizations:

ROLE: Maintaining positive relations with higher-level management.

Motivational Base: A favorable attitude toward people in positions in authority.

Importance: In a hierarchical system, there must be communication and interaction with superiors; a manager must be able to represent his group upward in the organization and obtain support for these activities at higher levels, etc.

ROLE: Competing with one's peers in the organization.

Motivational Base: A desire to compete.

Importance: In a hierarchy, rewards such as promotion to the highest levels and the largest salaries are unequally distributed; it therefore becomes necessary to distinguish oneself from one's peers.

ROLE: Imposing one's will over subordinates.

Motivational Base: A desire to exercise power over others.

Importance: In a hierarchy, manipulation of sanctions and downward supervision are required: Managers must direct the behavior of subordinates so as to further their own objectives and the organization's; to the extent such activities yield satisfactions, they are more likely to be performed.

ROLE: Playing a quasi-parental part in relations with subordinates.

Motivational Base: A desire to assert oneself and guide others.

Importance: In a hierarchy, the managerial role is, in many respects, modeled on a traditional parental role in the family, and accordingly, a degree of assertiveness (a "take charge" attitude) congruent with a parental role is required.

ROLE: Standing out from the group.

Motivational Base: A desire to be distinctive.

Importance: In a hierarchy, managers must assume a highly visible position, one clearly differentiated from the relative homogeneity of their subordinates.

ROLE: Handling routine administrative tasks.

Motivational Base: A desire to perform routine duties in a responsible manner.

Importance: In a hierarchy, it is essential that various routine decision-making and communication tasks be carried out; therefore, appropriate motivation and a sense of responsibility for such matters are required. (Miner and Smith, 1981, pp. 29-30)

The specific hypotheses that Miner developed with reference to overall managerial motivation scores are that a successful manager need not exhibit all of those prescribed characteristics at all times; certain positions will have different emphases and, thereby, some of the behaviors might be more important than others in any given situation; and that other personal characteristics are important to success in management. (Miner, 1965a, pp 41-46).

Miner Sentence Completion Scale(MSCS)

In order to test his theory Miner (1965a) developed the Miner Sentence Completion Scale (MSCS) which is an instrument designed to ascertain the degree to which an individual may possess the six attributes as hypothesized by Miner as necessary for successful management. The scale measures motivation for the six role prescriptions and yields the total score, and

seven subscale scores entitled: authority figures, competitive games, competitive situations, assertive role, imposing wishes, standing out from group and routine administration functions.

The MSCS is commercially available in two forms, the free form, in which respondents complete 40 sentence stems such as "Being President..." or "Leading an orchestra..." or "Answering correspondence..." (These are not actual questions). The actual sentence stems were chosen to make the theory usable while hiding the true nature of the variable. Five stems each are used to identify the seven subscales and five stems are distractors. The respondents complete the sentence stem in their own words. (Miner, 1965) Since this form requires an experienced scorer, the form used in this study is the multiple choice version. This version of the MSCS was developed to facilitate administration and scoring. The MSCS-MC version consists of 40 items similar to the free response version and in the same order. However the instrument provides, for each stem, six predefined responses which were actual responses in tests using the free response version. The respondent checks the one response which best expresses his or her feeling. (Miner, 1977d) Thirty-five of the forty items yield scores for the seven

subscales: (1) Authority Figure, (2) Competitive Games, (3) Competitive Situations, (4) Assertive Role, (5) Imposing Wishes, (6) Standing Out from the Group, and (7) Routine Administrative Functions.

Those managers considered as effective by their superiors have mean scores of 7.5. (Flippo and Munsinger, 1982) Studies by Miner (1977a) have indicated that high scores on the MSCS correlate with managerial success. In one study among 61 managers in an oil company, those whom the company would rehire had average scores of 8.9, while those whom they would not rehire averaged 3.3. Miner (1973) has found that business managers in general have an average score of 6 points and nonbusiness managers score 1 point.

Over the past twenty-five years tests of the theory using the MSCS have been conducted and have consistently demonstrated the construct, as well as concurrent and predictive validity of the motivation to manage concept.

Tests by Miner (1965b); Gantz, Erikson & Stephenson, (1971); Miner and Miner, (1976); Singleton, (1976) and others established concurrent validity using various indices of managerial success. These tests have yielded significant correlations. Predictive validity has been provided in studies using marketing