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ABSTRACT

A study assessed the perceived effectiveness of cognitive theories of motivation on correctional educators in Tennessee in facilitating teacher attitude and performance as compared to noncognitive models. The Performance Motivation Questionnaire obtained demographic information and responses to items on motivational concepts and practices. Responses were arranged on a Likert scale. The subjects were all certified teachers and administrators employed by the Tennessee Department of Correction and the Tennessee Department of Youth Development; 192 of 240 completed questionnaires. Four hypotheses were tested, comparing the perceptions of correctional educators of cognitive and noncognitive approaches to staff motivation in terms of effects on their attitudes, morale, and performance. The other three variables were types of students, educator's sex, and educator's position. Data were analyzed using means, standard deviations, and t-test of significance. Research findings showed a significant difference in the perceptions of correctional educators toward noncognitive versus cognitive theories and approaches to staff motivation, especially in terms of what best facilitates positive effects on teacher attitudes, morale, and performance. Overall, the cognitive approach was preferred to the noncognitive. No significant differences were found in perceptions of educators working with adult and juvenile students, male and female educators, and supervisors and teachers. (Seven data tables are provided.) (YLB)

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Noncognitive Theories of Motivation
on Morale and Performance of
Correctional Educators

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THE EFFECTS OF COGNITIVE AND
NONCOGNITIVE THEORIES OF MOTIVATION
ON MORALE AND PERFORMANCE OF
CORRECTIONAL EDUCATORS

A need exists to determine what motivates teachers working in the twin fields of adult and juvenile corrections. The critical relationship in education is between the teacher and the students. Consequently, it is important to ascertain the effect of cognitive theories of motivation as compared to noncognitive theories on the morale and performance of correctional educators. In the present study, the assessment was made by studying the perceptions of correctional educators in Tennessee as reported by them.

It seemed reasonable to organize this study around the categories of cognitive and noncognitive theories of staff motivation. Through the history of western culture, these two basic views, in various forms, have dominated theory and methodology in a variety of disciplines at different times in different settings. The debate between these two sets of theories continues today.

Greek philosophical thought gave Western philosophy two great traditions: (1) Rationalism, which holds that human ideas are innate and experience simply serves to stir them into consciousness, and (2) Empiricism, which holds that the mind has no ideas of its own but instead looks out upon the world through the windows of the senses. The progress of philosophy is more or less a battle between various forms of these two major positions regarding ideas. The psychological progeny of these two positions still battle under the banners of the behaviorists and of the cognitive theorists. The mind or body debate goes on today, influencing many areas of thought including staff motivation.

Staff motivation has ranked very high among the perceived needs of certificated educators working for the Tennessee Department of Correction and the Tennessee Department of Youth Development. This has been determined by needs assessments from the educators for the purpose of ascertaining staff training needs. Determining which general motivational model, cognitive or noncognitive, has the greatest perceived impact on teachers and principals should aid those responsible for developing relevant inservice training as well as enabling administrators to be more effective in motivating teachers. Therefore, the paper has dealt with the effects of cognitive and noncognitive theories of motivation on morale and performance of correctional educators.

For purposes of this study, cognitive was defined as pertaining to the mind or thought processes, to subjective perceptions such as needs and interests, and to that which is intrinsic. Noncognitive was defined as pertaining to that which comes from outside the mind or thoughts of a person, to determinative behavioral and environmental factors, and to that which is extrinsic.

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceived effectiveness of cognitive theories of motivation on correctional educators in Tennessee in facilitating teacher attitude and performance as compared to noncognitive models. This was accomplished by comparing teacher and administrator responses to items on the Performance Motivation questionnaire. The research design required the testing of certain hypotheses. There were four hypotheses tested, as stated in the null, comparing the perceptions of correctional educators of cognitive and noncognitive approaches to staff motivation in terms of effects on their attitudes, morale, and performance. The other three variables were the types of students being taught (i.e., adults or juveniles), sex of the educators, and the position held by the educators (i.e., teaching or supervisory positions). The .05 level

of significance was used to either reject or fail to reject the hypotheses.

Method

Subjects

The subjects of the study were all certificated educators employed by the Tennessee Department of Correction and the Tennessee Department of Youth Development. As of January 3, 1992, there were 240 educators in both departments. There were 157 working with adults and 83 working with juveniles. Thus the population constituted the sample. Those educators employed by the Tennessee Department of Correction are responsible for adult students. Those educators employed by the Tennessee Department of Youth Development are responsible for juvenile students. The response consisted of 192 completed questionnaires. There were 119 from the adult side and 73 from educators working with juveniles.

Procedure

The study involved the use of a questionnaire survey to collect data. Demographic information and perceptions were obtained for correctional educators relative to the impact of the value of cognitive types of motivation strategies, and noncognitive types.

Each correctional educator was given a copy of the Performance Motivation Questionnaire, an instrument designed to obtain demographic information and responses to items on motivational concepts and practices. The responses were arranged on a Likert scale. a cover letter was attached to each questionnaire explaining the purpose of the study, assuring the anonymity of the respondents, and requesting that each person participate in the study by completing the questionnaire. They were asked to complete the form and return it.

Data Analysis and Results

The data were collected, recorded, analyzed, and compared. A computer data entry form was designed and provided the method for data entry into the computer. The data were analyzed using means, standard deviations, and the t test of significance. An assessment was made concerning the correctional educators' perceptions of the effectiveness and value of cognitive types of motivational approaches as compared with noncognitive approaches. Comparisons utilizing the demographic data were made.

Hypothesis 1

"There will be no significant difference in correctional educators' perceptions of cognitive and noncognitive approaches to staff motivation in terms of effects on their attitudes, morale, and performance."

Hypothesis 1 showed a significant difference at the .05 level and the null hypothesis was rejected. The responses of correctional educators to the cognitive items on the Performance Motivation Questionnaire tended more toward strong agreement, with a mean of 2.0, than did the responses to the noncognitive items, with a mean of 2.3.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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Hypothesis 2

"There will be no significant difference between the perceptions of educators working with juvenile students and educators working with adult students."

Hypothesis 2 showed no significant difference at the .05 level on the perceptions of correctional educators who work with adult students and those who work with juvenile students on the noncognitive approach to staff motivation and

also on the cognitive approach. So the null hypothesis was accepted.

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Insert Table 2 A about here

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Insert Table 2 B about here
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Hypothesis 3

"There will be no significant difference between the perceptions of female educators and male educators."

Hypothesis 3 showed no significant difference at the .05 level on the perceptions of male and female correctional educators on the noncognitive approach to staff motivation and also on the cognitive approach. Thus the null hypothesis was accepted.

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Insert Table 3 A about here

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Insert Table 3 B about here
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Hypothesis 4

"There will be no significant difference between the perceptions of educators in teaching positions and educators in supervisory\administrative positions."

Hypothesis 4 showed no significant difference at the .05 level on the perceptions of supervisors\administrators and teachers on the noncognitive

approach to staff motivation and also on the cognitive approach. So the null hypothesis was accepted.

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Insert Table 4 A about here

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Insert Table 4 B about here

Findings

This study identified some distinctions between Tennessee correctional educators' perceptions of noncognitive and cognitive concepts and methods of staff motivation. These distinctions related to the attitudes, morale, and performance of correctional educators in Tennessee. According to the research findings of this study, there exists a significant difference in the perceptions of correctional educators toward noncognitive versus cognitive theories and approaches to staff motivation, especially in terms of what best facilitates positive effects on teacher attitudes, morale, and performance. The analysis of data indicated that overall the cognitive approach was preferred to the noncognitive, but there was still a great deal of credence given to certain noncognitive concepts and methods.

No significant differences were found in the perceptions of educators working with adult students and those working with juvenile students as Hypothesis 2 had predicted. No significant differences were uncovered in the perceptions of male and female educators and in the perceptions of supervisors and teachers, just as Hypotheses 3 and 4 had anticipated. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected for Hypothesis 1 but was accepted for Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4.

As a result of this study, it would be advisable for correctional principals and supervisors to stress cognitive theories, concepts, and methods in attempting to motivate teachers but, at the same time, refuse to discard noncognitive approaches that have been perceived to work. Perhaps an appropriate combination of cognitive and noncognitive methods of motivation with an emphasis on the cognitive approach would be most consistent with the research findings and most effective to use. It would also be advisable for staff development training curricula to include an appropriate combination of cognitive and noncognitive concepts in teacher and management classes with an emphasis on cognitive concepts.

Discussion of Findings

From studying the results of this study, it is evident that correctional principals and staff trainers need to be aware that correctional teachers are most responsive to cognitive approaches to staff motivation. That is to say, administrators should be concerned about providing teachers with experiences that will enable them to meet personal needs such as recognition, responsibility, and career advancement. Apparently, employees are motivated toward being more productive when they believe they are achieving and contributing something they think is important. This may be more significant to them than financial rewards.

Certain noncognitive factors, however, should not be ignored. Administrators need to understand that providing a safe, secure, nonthreatening environment produces higher motivation for employees. According to the teachers themselves, working in a setting in which duties, equipment and materials are provided in an orderly, efficient manner, increases productivity and facilitates positive attitudes.

Table 1

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference in correctional educators' perceptions of cognitive and noncognitive approaches to staff motivation in terms of effects on their attitudes, morale, and performance.

| Variable | Number of Respondents | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|-----------------------|------|--------------------|
| Noncognitive | 192 | 2.3 | .461 |
| Cognitive | 192 | 2.0 | .423 |
| Significance Level (2-Tail Probability) = .000 | | | |

Table 2A

Hypothesis 2 relating to perceptions of correctional educators working with adults and with juveniles to the noncognitive approach to staff motivation.

| Type of Students | Number of Respondents | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|-----------------------|------|--------------------|
| Adult | 119 | 2.3 | .467 |
| Juveniles | 73 | 2.3 | .451 |
| Significance Level (2-Tail Probability) = .293 | | | |

Table 2B

Hypothesis 2 relating to perceptions of correctional educators working with adults and with juveniles to the cognitive approach to staff motivation.

| Type of Students | Number of Respondents | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|------------------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|
| Adult | 119 | 2.0 | .396 |
| Juveniles | 73 | 2.0 | .466 |

Significance Level (2-Tail Probability) = .871

Table 3A

Hypothesis 3 relating to perceptions of male and female correctional educators to the noncognitive approach to staff motivation.

| Sex of Educator | Number of Respondents | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|
| Male | 128 | 2.3 | .459 |
| Female | 62 | 2.3 | .475 |

Significance Level (2-Tail Probability) = .555

Table 3B

Hypothesis 3 relating to perceptions of male and female correctional educators to the cognitive approach to staff motivation.

| Sex of Educator | Number of Respondents | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|
| Male | 128 | 2.0 | .450 |
| Female | 62 | 1.9 | .394 |

Significance Level (2-Tail Probability) = .633

Table 4A

Hypothesis 4 relating to perceptions of correctional educators in supervisory/administrative positions and in teaching positions to the noncognitive approach to staff motivation.

| Position of Educator | Number of Respondents | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|
| Supervisor | 45 | 2.3 | .456 |
| Teacher | 145 | 2.3 | .465 |

Significance Level (2-Tail Probability) = .749

Table 4B

Hypothesis 4 relating to perceptions of correctional educators in supervisory/administrative positions and in teaching positions to the cognitive approach to staff motivation.

| Position of Educator | Number of Respondents | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|
| Supervisor | 45 | 1.9 | .459 |
| Teacher | 145 | 2.0 | .412 |

Significance Level (2-Tail Probability) = .416

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