ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the outset my sincere thanks goes to my guide Dr. T. Dayakara Rao, Professor and Head, Department of Business Management, Indian Institute of Science and Management, Ranchi – 834004 for his constant guidance and valuable suggestions. I am extremely indebted to Dr. P. Vyasamoorthy, Advisor, ICICI Knowledge Park, Hyderabad who has been acting as a load star at every stage of this project from concept to completion. The ever so much support I received from Dr. R. Nargundkar, Professor, IIM, Kozhikode in carrying out the Statistical Analysis using SPSS Package is beyond description of words. My thanks are due to him and also to Mrs. Anuradha Nargundkar, for the hospitality at their residence. My heartfelt thanks are also due to Dr. B. Krishna Reddy, Associate Professor, Department of Business Management, Osmania University, Hyderabad for helping me with Statistical Analysis inspite of this very busy academic schedules. I thank Mr. Md. Sayeed Ahmed, Associate Consultant for his continual help with Data Processing and Analysis. I thank Air Cmde. NDN Bhaskara Rao, Hon. Director and Brig. G. Ramalingam, Hon. Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Vivekananda College of Science, Humanities and Commerce Sainikpuri Kendra, Secunderabad for all the encouragement received. Finally I thank my wife T. Saroja Devi for her constant inspiration. I will be failing in my daily if I donot acknowledge the great help received from the research enumerators even though they prefer to remain anonymous.

Hyderabad
25th November, 2003

T. Thomas
ABSTRACT OF

Ph.D. THESIS ON "INTERPERSONAL NEED STRUCTURE OF MANAGERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR VARIATIONS ACROSS MANAGERIAL LEVELS AND PROFESSIONS"

- T. THOMAS

Man is a superior social animal. We are gregarious by nature. We interact with fellow human beings in a wide spectrum of intimacy extending from just casual to very intimate. Understanding the interpersonal need profile of managers is of great value to the individual/organization, inter alia, in the following areas:

- Managing Employees
- Career Guidance
- Education
- Counselling
- Team Building & Devpt.
- Leadership Development
- Resolving Conflict
- Communications Workshops
- Personnel Development
- Ensuring Harmonious Personal Relationships

The FIRO-B instrument developed by William Schutz has been widely used as one of the effective tools for understanding the interpersonal need profile. Owing to certain limitations of this instrument the author himself revised it giving rise to what is called "FIRO Element -B". As per the FIRO Element -B instrument, interpersonal needs are classified into Inclusion, Control and Openness. Each dimension is subdivided into Perceived Expressed, Wanted Expressed, Perceived Received and Wanted Received. There has been a hesitation on part of Indian
researchers to use this instrument since it happens to the slightly more complex than
the original one. However, it is a fact that the additional information generated by this
instrument far exceeds its so-called Complexity. There has been only one Indian
study (ARUL, 1995) on “Interpersonal Needs of Managers and Management
students”, which, however, was in the Dairying Sector. There was an Unfilled
Knowledge Gap as far as managers belonging to other sectors was concerned. This
inspired the author to take up this investigation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objective of the study is to understand the Interpersonal need structure of
Managers with special reference to their variations across managerial levels and
professions. In this connection, there is a need for classification of the term
‘Profession’. Here “Profession” stands for the functional specialization of the
Marketing, Finance, HRM, IT and Production and NOT manager namely, “Functions of management” like planning, organizing, coordinating,
staffing and controlling.

The specific objectives have been

a) Study of interpersonal factors with reference to different managerial functions
   (Professions)

b) Study of interpersonal factors with reference to management levels.

c) Testing for independency of “Rating” and “Management Levels”.

d) Correlation Studies- Perceived vis-à-vis “Wanted” interpersonal factors.
**HYPOTHESES:**

H1: There is no difference in interpersonal needs of managers belonging to different professions (functional specializations).

H2: Different levels of managers do not differ in any of their interpersonal needs.

H3: Different Experience Levels do not result in any difference in the interpersonal needs of managers.

H4: The rating (Low, Medium, High) for various interpersonal factors are independent of managing level.

H5: Perceived and Wanted pairs of interpersonal needs do not vary across various levels of management.

H6: In each managerial function Perceived and Wanted Interpersonal needs are independent.

**RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION**

This research is prompted by the motivation to know and map the interpersonal need profile of Indian Managers, the information regarding which is painfully lacking. This exploratory study is meant to be a first step towards this direction. The mapping of the profile will be done with reference to Professions, Managerial Levels, Independency of ratings of interpersonal needs, Correlation between Perceived and Wanted Parameters, etc. The motto has been, "It is better to light one candle than curse the darkness". This light is sure to kindle many more.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since we are interested in exploring a large sample of subjects and comparing and classifying the profile of sub-groups within the samples, a cross-sectional exploratory – integrative design was adopted. Data collection was done by a Project Team comprising the investigator and six of his MBA students with specializations in HRM. Presentations, Discussions, Classifications, Administration of the questionnaire and Facilitation formed the main thrust of data collection. Analysis was done using SPSS-10 Statistical Package applying Descriptions, ANOVA, Turkey HSD etc.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Mean and Standard Deviation by Function:

All Managers: The decreasing order of magnitude for the Means for the various interpersonal needs for the composite sample of managers is PRC, WRC, WEI, WEC, PEI, WEO, PEO, PEC, WRO, WRI, PRO AND PRI. The most dominant interpersonal needs are PRC (People control me) and WRC (I want people to control me). This observation implies that whereas a manager is controlled by others (probably by his superiors), he has a dominant need to be influenced. The least dominant factors are PRO (People are open with me) and PRI (People include me). This is not a very healthy situation. We all know that Openness, Trust, Collaboration, and Proaction are the four pillars of organisational health.
Marketing Managers: The most dominant needs here are PRC and WRC just as in the case with composite sample. Least dominant needs are PRI and PRO, again similar to the composite sample.

Finance Managers: PRC and WRC lead whereas PRI and WRI trail. However, PRO comes immediately after WRI in the lower level. One of the reasons why Finance Managers have low WRI (I want people to include me) because the tasks of this profession is more of an independent nature in which the interaction is more with the elements of the job than with people unlike many other professions.

HR Managers: PRC and WRC have the highest values and PRO and PRI the lowest.

IT Managers: PRC and WRC are maximum with PRI and PRO at the minimum.

Production Managers: PRC and WRC are highest and PRI and PRO are the lowest.

The foregoing discussion indicate that Indian Managers are high on perception as well as desire as far as receiving Control is concerned. This seems to be a sort of accommodating mechanism to the behaviour of superiors who wish to exercise a higher degree of control.

Age Distribution of Managers: The interesting features are that only 8.6% of Production Managers are below the age of 26 whereas 49.3% of IT Managers belong to this category. This is due to the IT boom during the period of investigation, i.e., the 1990’s. 34% of Production Managers where above 45 years of age. Age distribution of managers in the finance function was very uniform suggesting a uniform growth pattern across the hierarchy.
Experience Distribution of Managers: The % of Managers with less than 10 years of experience in IT and Marketing where 86% and 70% respectively on account of the IT boom and the phenomenon of Globalization and Liberalization.

Rating Across Managerial Levels:

PEI & WEI: These were rated as ‘Medium’ in a high percentage ranging between 66.2% to 71.1% across the three levels of management.

PRI & WRI: Considerable proportion of Managers gave ratings as low.

PEC & WEC: The low and medium ratings were approximately the same across the three levels at around 42% each.

PRC & WRC: Approximately 90% of Managers across the three levels gave medium and high ratings.

PEO & WEO: Medium and high ratings were around 90% across managerial levels.

PRO & WRO: In case of PRO a high proportion of managers opted for a low rate. In case of WRO, low score was given by around 50% managers.

Dependency Analysis: Interpersonal Factors Vs. Managerial Levels:

To test whether there is any dependency between the levels of managerial activity (Junior, Middle & Senior Levels) and the ratings (Low, Medium and High) for various interpersonal factors like PEI, WEI... etc., Chi-Square analysis is undertaken for Marketing and Production functions and also a composite sample of “All Managers”. HR, IT and Finance were not considered for analysis since they were not giving rise to adequate data combinations against the levels. It was found that the various functional managers’ rating of the interpersonal variables is independent irrespective of the levels of managerial positions. This is in conformity with the
Universality of Management as proposed by Henri Fayol that managerial functions/activities are essentially the same irrespective of the levels.

**Correlation between Perceived and Wanted Parameters:**

Correlation analysis was carried out for Junior, Middle, Senior and for the entire combined sample. The six pairs considered are (PEI, WEI), (PRI, WRI), (PEC, WEC), (PRC, WRC), (PEO, WEO) and (PRO, WRO). All the samples exhibited highly significant correlation for each of the pair considered. This means an expectation of reciprocity. For example a significant correlation between PEI and WEI indicates a manager’s behaviour of ‘including people’ and his desire of ‘wanting to include people’ move in the same direction. Similar is the case with all other five pairs also.

**Paired Comparisons for Inclusion, Control and Openness:**

Perceived and wanted parameters were compared in terms of their average ratings. This was done for the Entire Sample, Junior Managers, Middle Managers and Senior Managers using ‘t’ tests. All pairs like (PEI, WEI), (PRI, WRI), (PEC, WEC), (PRC, WRC), (PRO, WRO) exhibited highly significant differences at 5% LOS indicating that the mean ratings of the two parameters of a pair are very different.

It is interesting to note that PEO and WEO are exhibiting altogether different behaviour with reference to their mean rating. The value of ‘t’ for this pair is not significant at 5% LOS. In other words the average rating of PEO and that of WEO can be taken as statistically similar. We may recall PEO implies “I am open with
people" and WEO implies "I want to be open with people". This means that there is no constraint forcing a manager to be either more open or less open with people than what he desires to be.

**Paired comparisons of Perceived and Wanted Interpersonal Factors by Function**:

**Correlation**: Correlation analysis indicated a significant positive association at 5% LOS for all pairs like (PEI, WEI), (PRI, WRI) etc., in case of all functions i.e., Marketing, Finance, HRM, IT and Production.

**Paired Comparison of Means**:

The mean differences of the following pairs are not significant as per the details below:

Marketing: (PEO, WEO).

Finance: (PEO, WEO), (PRI, WRI)

HRM: (PEI, WEI), (PRI, WRI)

IT: (PEO, WEO)

Production: (PEO, WEO)

In other words (PEO, WEO) are of the same order of magnitude for all pairs considered except in HRM, where PEO is significantly higher than WEO. This could be because of the nature of the profession with emphasis on "Openness" in communication where HR professionals force themselves to be expressing higher degree of openness than they actually want.
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**Paired Comparison of Means:**

The mean differences of the following pairs are not significant as per the details below:

Marketing : (PEO, WEO).
Finance : (PEO, WEO), (PRI, WRI)
HRM: (PEI, WEI), (PRI, WRI)
IT : (PEO, WEO)
Production : (PEO, WEO)

In other words (PEO, WEO) are of the same order of magnitude for all pairs except in HRM, where PEO is significantly higher than WEO. This could be because of the nature of the profession with emphasis on "Openness" in communication where HR professionals force themselves to be expressing higher degree of openness than they actually want.
Another interesting aspect which may be noted is that the mean differences in the pair (PRI, WRI) is not significant for Finance and HRM. This means that their desire for inclusion by others and actual inclusion is of the same order.

Comparison of Mean Rating by Function – ANOVA:

Interpersonal variables which are significantly different: PRC, WRC, PRO & WRO.
PRC of IT and Marketing were lowest as against that of HRM and Finance which were the highest. Regarding WRC, it was lowest for IT and Production as against higher for Finance and HRM.

PRO was lowest for Production and HRM and highest for IT and Finance.

WRO was highest for IT and HRM and lowest for Finance and Production.

HRM and Finance being corporate functions, probably management may be exercising higher controls. On the other hand, the low WRC for IT and Production may be because they are mostly technical people desiring a high degree of autonomy.

IMPLICATIONS

The results detailed above have wide implications some of which are as follows:

Most of the managers are controlled by others and they also have a dominant need to be influenced. This shows that he prefers to be led by others than be a leader himself.
The least dominant needs are PRO and PRI. In other words, he receives much less openness and inclusion. This is not a very healthy situation. We all know that Openness, Trust, Collaboration and Proaction are the four pillars of organizational health. This points towards the need for Organizational Development.
The IT sector is dominated by young managers whereas Production is dominated by older managers. There is likely to be a conflict because of the generation gap when IT specialists join the Production department.

Paired Comparisons for Inclusion Control, and Openness gave highly significant differences within each pair showing that the 'Perception' and 'Desire' are not balanced.

One cannot naturally expect to satisfy all his desires. However if there is imbalance in many of these interpersonal needs the person is likely to feel frustrated.

There seems to be no difference in the ratings of various functional managers with reference to their levels. Universality of management is confirmed in this case.

PRC, WRC, PRO and WRO are significantly different with reference to function. Knowledge of these variations will help a senior manager in dealing harmoniously with his subordinate managers.