

Questions and answers on employee motivation



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Question. 01. How can expectancy theory be used to explain the differences in motivation between Alex and Katrien? What specifics from the case apply to expectancy theory?

Answer: Expectancy theory[1] states that the strength of a tendency to act in a certain way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual. They are both college students so the expected result would be that they would have similar opportunities and pay. Katrien is given many elements in the job characteristics model such as task identity and autonomy since she is able to create a product at the culinary center and see it to completion while Alex is placed in one area without any other tasks that could be considered motivational. Alex doesn't believe that performing at a certain level will attain a desired outcome like additional pay. The rewards are not consistent with his needs. For example, stocking more produce may only result in a sticker which has no value or little value for Alex while Katrien has the opportunity to make an additional \$75. 00 for attempting to sell 10 expensive bottles of truffle oil that is not only challenging but also adds value by helping her pay the bills.(high expectancy).

Question. 02. Alex states that he is underpaid for the work he does. What motivational theory does this apply to, and how would it explain Alex's behavior?

Answer: Alex is underpaid and thus equity theory[3] could help explain his behavior. Also, the job characteristics theory could be applied since he is stuck in the produce department devoid of the other components of the model like skill variety or task significance. Denise has a shorter term in the market and gets paid more which adds to the inequitable situation. The

environment, the repetitive work and the unfair treatment are all disincentives for Alex so his behavior is consistently negative.

Question. 03. Using concepts from organizational justice, explain why Alex knocks his boss's lunch to the floor. What should Alex's boss do to improve the fairness of his treatment?

Answer: Both distributive and procedural justice[5] are components because of his pay and the fact that Jacque is treating Denise more favorably.

Distributive justice is the perceived fairness of the outcome and this case he does not believe that he is being rewarded fairly. Alex has an issue with procedural justice in that Jacque has a bias for Denise and therefore Alex believes that the process is unfair. He knocks his lunch to the floor when he perceives a problem with interactional justice when Jacque interrupts his lunch with Katrien and he feels that he is not respected. Although he has 45 minutes for lunch, Jacque always wants him to return within 30 minutes, which is once again unfair treatment as compared to other employees.

Question. 04. Using concepts from the emotions and moods chapter, explain why Alex retaliates toward his supervisor. Was his behavior driven purely by emotion, or did cognition also play a role? How so?

Answer: Alex's emotions are negative. He is exhibiting a negative effect, which is a mood state that is displaying his stress level, anxiety and irritability toward his boss and the climate in which he is employed. His retaliation is an emotional reaction to the poor treatment that he has endured from his boss and the favorable treatment toward Denise. Cognition plays a role since Alex is aware of his environment and has been trying to make sense of the injustices. His ultimate emotional response with Jacque's sandwich was a result of an accumulation of perceived inequities.

Question. 05. Compare and contrast Alex and Katrien in terms of each person's level of work stress. How might stress affect their attitudes and behaviors within their work environment?

Answer: Katrien consistently has a smile on her face and her level of job satisfaction is high. She has been given a variety of tasks and her job is fulfilling, therefore her level of work stress is low. In contrast, Alex's stress level is high with many perceived injustices and boring work. His attitude and behavior are poor and negative respectively since their managers have different styles of Theory X for Alex and Theory Y for Katrien. Alex will quit as soon as he finds another job while Katrien is content with her position and present challenges.

Question. 06. Discuss Alex and Katrien in terms of each person's job attitudes (for example, job satisfaction and organizational commitment). What factors might be responsible for any differences?

Answer: Again, the attitudes including job satisfaction and organizational commitment are positive for Katrien and negative for Alex. As mentioned, Alex is looking to leave the organization while Katrien is given more responsibilities and challenges. Her job satisfaction is high while his is low. Many factors mentioned earlier have contributed to this situation from the differences in managers and their respective styles to the biases and injustices including unfair treatment and inequitable pay that all contribute to a poor working environment and a lack of motivation on Alex's part.

1. Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Pages 231&237
2. Robbins/Judge, " Organizational Behavior", 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Pages 233-234

3. Robbins/Judge, “ Organizational Behavior”, 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Pages 234&236
4. Robbins/Judge, “ Organizational Behavior”, 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Pages 229&236
5. Robbins/Judge, “ Organizational Behavior”, 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Page 229
6. Robbins/Judge, “ Organizational Behavior”, 13th Edition, Pearson Education, 2009, Pages 285-293