

Contemporary theories of motivation essay sample

[Psychology](#), [Motivation](#)



Motivation is a desire to attain a goal, combined with the energy to work towards that goal. It involves the biological, emotional, social and cognitive forces that stimulate a person's behavior. In everyday usage, the term "motivation" is frequently used to describe why a person does something. "There are three major elements of motivation- intensity, direction and persistence" (Robbins & Judge, 2011-2012, p209). Intensity refers to how hard a person tries, direction refers connected and consistence effort towards goals and persistence denotes how long a person can continue such effort. "The 1950s were a glorious time because at that period various motivational theories were introduced" (Robbins & Judge, 2011-2012, p209). But as time went by many more new motivational theories were introduced because those classical theories were not supported by empirical evidence. Some of the much known contemporary theories of motivation are discussed below-

Cognitive Evaluation Theory:

Cognitive Evaluation Theory simply states that if an extrinsic reward added to a behavior that was done by a person who already feels intrinsically rewarded will often decrease that person's motivation to continue that behavior in the long run. This theory suggests that there are actually two motivation systems: intrinsic (self-granted rewards, such as feeling proud of oneself) and extrinsic (rewards that comes from the outside, such as money, presents or praise). Most of the motivation theorist assumed that intrinsic rewards (exciting tasks) were independent of extrinsic rewards. But cognitive evaluation theory suggest otherwise. As an example- a person who teaches poor children in a public school for free only does this job because he/she

feels good about it. Now if that public school hired that person and pays him/her a fixed salary that person will not willing to teach there anymore. In most of the case this sort of result occurs because when a person has a stronger internal locus of control they will feel they are in control of how they behave but when they have a stronger external locus of control, they will believe that environment or others have a greater influence over what they do. Expectancy Theory:

Expectancy is a person's belief that working hard will result in high task performance Expectancy Theory was established by proposed by Victor Vroom of Yale School of Management in 1964. According to expectancy theory, employees choose to devote effort in courses of action in which they have probabilities of achieving desired outcomes. " Vroom suggests that a person's motivation to work depends on the relationships between the three expectancy factors depicted" (John R, 2010, p356). Expectancy (effort will lead to performance), instrumentality (performance will lead to outcomes), and valence (these outcomes are important or valued). These 3 factors interact together to create a motivational force for an employee to work towards pleasure and avoid pain. The formula for this force is: $\text{motivation} = \text{expectancy} * \text{instrumentality} * \text{valence}$, or

As an example a student always thinks that ' if I study hard, I will become a good student if I become good student then I can obtain good grades and good grades will increase my CGPA.

Goal Setting Theory:

In the late 1960s, Edwin Locke proposed intentions to work toward a goal are

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a major source of work motivation (Robbins & Judge, 2011-2012, p219).

Basically, Locke's theory states that if an individual sets goals, he will be motivated to achieve those goals by virtue of having set them. Several elements must exist in order for the goal-setting effect to take place. Goals must be clear, challenging and attainable, and there must be some method of receiving feedback. Goal setting theory focused on:

- * Specific goals are more motivating than vague goals.

- * Challenging goals are more motivating than easy goals. According to Locke, " high goals lead to greater effort than low goals" (Robbins & Judge, 2011-2012, p219).
- * When people are given positive feedback, both during and after taking action on their goals this spurs them to achieve even more.
- * Having a specific goal in itself provides a major source of motivation to actually reach the goal.
- * Having goals leads to an overall improvement in individual performance. A systematic way to utilize goal setting is Management by Objective (MBO) because it brings supervisors and subordinates together in participative process of goal setting and performance feedback and review.

Self-Efficacy Theory:

Self-efficacy is a person's belief that he or she is capable of performing a task. Self-efficacy theory which is also known as social learning theory or social cognitive theory is closely related to both the expectancy and goal setting theory of motivation. Albert Bandura the famous psychologist introduced this theory which has an important implication with motivation. Bandura's basic principle is that people are likely to engage in activities to

the extent that they perceive themselves to be competent at those activities. People with high efficacy are more confident, are more persistent in difficult situation and express better response to negative feedback.

Mahatma Gandhi once said “ if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it, even if I may not have it at beginning”.

According to Bandura’s work there are four major ways in which self-efficacy can be enhanced. * Enactive mastery: gaining confidence through positive experience. * Vicarious modeling: learning and increasing confidence by observing other’s performance. * Verbal persuasion: praising, telling or encouraging someone that he/she can do it. * Arousal: highly stimulated, energized or “ psyched up”-emotionally aroused to perform well in situation.

Job Design:

The basic meaning of job design is arranging work tasks for individual or group. In today’s world job design is one of the very well recognized contemporary theories. The main purpose of job design is to increase both employee motivation and productivity. The sense of achieving organizational goals significantly influences a person’s motivation. But how job structure motivates a person the theory of job design explains that. Classic research on job design has focused on the principle of job enrichment, which refers the practice of increasing job content to create opportunity and motivate employees (John R, 2010, p364). Modern management theory adopts a contingency standpoint that takes job enrichment one step beyond and that is known as Job Characteristics Model (JCM) which is developed by J. Richard Hackman and Greg r. Oldham in 1980 (John R, 2010, p364). It explains that motivation, satisfaction, performance quality, and withdrawal behaviors such

as absenteeism and turnover are a function of three critical psychological states: experienced meaningfulness, responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of results.

Experienced meaningfulness is assumed to be addressed by three core job characteristics: skill variety (being challenged to use a variety of skills in variety of tasks), task identity (completing a whole piece of work from start to finish), and task significance (having an influence on other people inside or outside the organization). Experienced responsibility is assumed to be shaped by the job characteristic of autonomy (freedom and preference about when and how to complete the work), and experienced knowledge of results by the job characteristic of feedback (information about how effectively the job holder completed the task). “ In true contingency fashion these core job characteristics will not affect all people in the same way” (John R, 2010, p365). These effects are moderated by individual differences in growth need strength, such that employees who value learning and development should be more responsive to both the enriched job characteristics and the critical psychological states, as well as by knowledge, skill, and satisfaction with the work context.

As we all know “ Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm” (Ralph Waldo Emerson). So, in order to get success being motivated is very important. Not every person gets motivated by same process and that’s why all these respected scholars, researchers are always coming up with modern or contemporary theory of motivation. For achieving organizational goal motivation is one of the key factors that drive employees towards achieving

target. Without motivation, the performances of employees often go down. Motivation theories suggest many ways of keeping the employees motivated on what they do. Although managers are not required to learn all the theories of motivation but having an idea of certain theories will bring advantage for day-to-day activities.

Bibliography:

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