

Motivation - process theories

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



Motivation theories can be classified broadly into two different perspectives: Content and Process theories. Content Theories deal with “ what” motivates people and it is concerned with individual needs and goals. Maslow, Alderfer, Herzberg and McClland studied motivation from a “ content” perspective. Process Theories deal with the “ process” of motivation and is concerned with “ how” motivation occurs. Vroom, Porter & Lawler, Adams and Locke studied motivation from a “ process” perspective. Process theories of motivation There are several process theories of motivation: * The Vroom Expectancy Theory, Valence, instrumentality and expectancy (VIE) theory had resulted from Vroom’s (1964) work into motivation. His argument was that crucial to motivation at work was the perception of a link between effort and reward. Perceiving this link could be thought of as a process in which individuals calculated first whether there was a connection between effort and reward and then the probability (valences) would follow from high performance (instrumentality.) The motivational force of a job can therefore be calculated if the expectancy, instrumentality and valence values are known. The individual’s abilities, traits, role perceptions and opportunities attenuate the motivational force. Expectancy theory [also called VIE Theory] is associated with Vroom, Porter and Lawler and it suggests that effort (a) is linked to the desire for a particular outcome, and (b)moderated by an evaluation of the likelihood of success. This is a pragmatic perspective that assumes that as we are constantly trying to predict potential future outcomes, we attempt to create what we perceive to be as realistic expectations about future events. Thus if things look reasonably likely and attractive, and if we know what to do in order to get there, and we believe

we can actually do it, then this will motivate us to act to make this future come true. According to Victor Vroom, individual motivation depends on three variables, namely: Force, Valence and Expectancy. * Valence: [W. I. F. M] What's in it for me? i. e. The value of the anticipated outcome * Instrumentality: Achievability i. e. The belief that if I complete certain actions then I will achieve the outcome. * Expectancy: Confidence in my capability i. e. The belief that I am able to complete the actions.

----- The conclusions that can be drawn from this theory are: (1) ----- Individuals will only act when they think that they have a good chance of getting what they want (2) ----- Effort alone is not enough. It has to be exercised with ability and skill (3) ----- Job satisfaction is derived from effective job performance and not the other way round (4) ----- Job design is therefore of crucial importance * The Adams' Equity Theory, Equity theory assumes that one important cognitive process involves people looking around and observing what effort other people are putting into their work and what rewards follow them. This social comparison process is driven by our concern for fairness and equity. Research by Adams (1965) and others confirms equity theory as one of the most useful frameworks for understanding work motivation. Equity theory states that in return for an input of skills, effort or production, the employee receives an outcome expressed in terms of any combination of salary, status and fringe benefits. This creates a ratio of input to outcome and equity is achieved when the ratios are the same for everyone in organization. Equity theory looks at an individual's perception of

the fairness of an employment situation and finds that perceived inequalities can lead to changes in behavior. When individuals believe that they have been treated unfairly in comparison with their coworkers, they will react in one of four ways: (1) Reduce their effort and productivity to better match the rewards they are receiving (2) Ask for more money or maybe take legal action (3) Change their own perception of the situation. (4) Resign and leave their job So, in a nutshell, unequal treatment of staff leads to de-motivation.

* The Needs-Goal-Setting Theory, Needs-Goal Theory — Motivation begins with an individual feeling a need. This need is then transformed into behavior directed at supporting, or allowing, the performance of goal behavior to reduce that felt need. Theoretically, goal supportive behavior and goal behavior itself continue until the felt need has been significantly reduced. The goal-setting theory posits that goals are the most important factors affecting the motivation and behavior of employees. This motivation theory was developed primarily by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham. Goal-setting theory emphasizes the importance of specific and challenging goals in achieving motivated behavior. Specific goals often involve quantitative targets for improvement in a behavior of interest. Research indicates that specific performance goals are much more effective than those in which a person is told to "do your best." Challenging goals are difficult but not impossible to attain. Empirical research supports the proposition that goals that are both specific and challenging are more motivational than vague goals or goals that are relatively easy to achieve. Several factors may moderate the relationship between specific and challenging goals and high levels of motivation. The first of these factors is goal commitment, which

simply means that the more dedicated the individual is to achieving the goal, the more they will be motivated to exert effort toward goal accomplishment. Some research suggests that having employees participate in goal setting will increase their level of goal commitment. A second factor relevant to goal-setting theory is self-efficacy, which is the individual's belief that he or she can successfully complete a particular task. If individuals have a high degree of self-efficacy, they are likely to respond more positively to specific and challenging goals than if they have a low degree of self-efficacy. * The Reinforcement Theory of Motivation. This theory can be traced to the work of the pioneering behaviorist B. F. Skinner. It is considered a motivation theory as well as a learning theory. Reinforcement theory posits that motivated behavior occurs as a result of reinforcers, which are outcomes resulting from the behavior that makes it more likely the behavior will occur again. This theory suggests that it is not necessary to study needs or cognitive processes to understand motivation, but that it is only necessary to examine the consequences of behavior. Behavior that is reinforced is likely to continue, but behavior that is not rewarded or behavior that is punished is not likely to be repeated. Reinforcement theory suggests to managers that they can improve employees' performance by a process of behavior modification in which they reinforce desired behaviors and punish undesired behaviors.