

Theories of and pros and cons of risk-taking and human motivation

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Behavior of individuals in various settings is at times very difficult due to ethical constraints. This includes the investigation of why people take risks or gamble with their decision making processes. However, it is quite interesting to note that on situations which are not so threatening for individuals, it is apparent that people typically take risks in picking their options or when making their final choice. The following shows available data on human motivation and the theories surrounding the topic.

Risk taking is defined as "engaging in any activity with an uncertain outcome," as one scholar puts it. Theories of Motivation on Risk Taking Different theories describe and explain risk taking and why human beings are motivated to pursue or engage in activities or behavior that put their lives in much danger or create an element of risk of whatever form. The following are taken from current literature in the field of human behavior analysis. 1. Psychoanalytic or Psychodynamic Theory

Following the tradition of Freud, human motivation to take risks is taken from the basic understanding that when people feel fear in a certain situation or occasion, it is not good to overcome that fear. Freudian theory condemns outrightly risk taking as plain insanity. It reasons that to risk man's very life has no warrant at all. It is nonsense. In other important spheres of life, however, to risk is inevitable and deemed necessary. There are many successful people in the business world who are known as risk takers (Llewellyn, 2003).

They succeed, in fact, because of this unique attitude in them which is considered foolhardy in other realms. While it is true that life is the most precious commodity a man could ever possess, and to risk it is foolishness, it <https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-and-pros-and-cons-of-risk-taking-and-human-motivation/>

is equally true that not to risk at all in other areas means cowardice and immobility. Psychoanalysts even treat risk-taking behavior as a symptom of “ a diseased mind. ” Because for them, life is not to be gambled, therefore, it is insanity when someone chooses bungee-jumping as his/her sport (Llewellyn, 2003). 2. The Evolutionary Theory

Evolutionary theory explained man’s adventurous nature as simply an expression of his primal instincts (Llewellyn, 2003). Assuming that Darwin’s theory is correct, that man evolved from apes like common animal, a human early in the evolutionary process had to fight for his life to survive. This survival nature, according to this theory, is retained in modern man’s genetic make up (Llewellyn, 2003). This is the reason why even those people in the elite echelon of society choose to use their favorite sport like riding a dirigible as their campaign tool to promote their business.

The problem with this theory is that it has remained to be unproven and lacking in evidences as yet. Humans are not proven to have descended from apes.

3. Contemporary Theories a. Extroversion and Introversion Personality theories contend that this two broad scope of personality traits capture the individual’s propensity towards behaving in certain ways. Extroversion helps explain why some people tend to be outgoing and hence, the greater the probability to engage in risky decisions (Llewellyn, 2003). b. Emotional Stability and Neuroticism

This is another of the Contemporary theories that shed light on traits that remain stable over a period of time, clearly indicating which may best describe an individual and what differs him/her from another. Emotionally stable people, as those who posit on this model, may take risks but have <https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-and-pros-and-cons-of-risk-taking-and-human-motivation/>

taken many things to great lengths in order to get the best possible option or alternative (Llewellyn, 2003). Conversely, people who are more on the neuroticism side manifest the greater tendency to take risks without much weighing on the consequences.

The tendency to be impulsive is to a higher degree present in individuals under this category. 4. Eysenck and Costa and McCrae's model These two theorists added their own version to the array of personality theories. The former has the Psychoticism versus Humaneness dimension while the latter two theorists added three dimensions: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, and Agreeableness. The main argument against these classifications is its narrowness in explaining and categorizing the complexities that make human behavior (Llewellyn, 2003).

While they help explore different behaviors or attitudes, there are more that remained unexplained. Until now, certain serial killers or murderers, defy the above mentioned explanations of human behavior. 5. The Zuckerman 'Sensation Seeking Trait' Although an expansion on one of the features of Psychoticism and Humaneness model, Sensation Seeking helps also explain the differences between individuals. There are people who do have a higher degree of this trait; like more men seek sensation-enhancing-experiences or "venturesome" traits, while others have very minimal of this trait.

This is what Zuckerman refers to in his Sensation seeking trait theory. What other experts consider as this theory's limitation is embedded in the matter of other personality traits' influence on risk taking behavior other than this trait by itself. Studies reveal that the psychological profiles of risk takers are diverse and the universality of this trait is still further being investigated <https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-and-pros-and-cons-of-risk-taking-and-human-motivation/>

(Llewellyn, 2003). Risk taking is a fascinating area of interest for many students of human behavior.

When explored through the eyes of a Psychoanalyst, the subject becomes even more intriguing because Freudian understanding possesses an attractive alternative to the more cognitive way of assessing risk taking behavior. When the subject of evolutionary psychology of explaining risk taking behavior is concerned, it contains a ring of truth in it that many today are convinced of its manner of explaining behavior. Instinct is still a potent facet in behavior that cannot be eradicated from the study of behavior of humans (Llewellyn, 2003).

When people are confronted with the distinctiveness of the human personality, the dimensions are almost unlimited; some experts opt for the multi-dimensional method while others choose the narrow and concise way. All of these approaches have their strengths and weaknesses; degree of breadth and limitations. However, they are good and profitable for jumpstarting further explorations into the human psyche and its accompanying expressions. E. Creativity: An explanation and three scenarios ~Delineate a real-life problem associated with your work or something you have experienced. You must define this problem completely.

Make yourself a disinterested observer and omit no detail. The real-life problem that is to be explored here has something to do with two colleagues who play "serious" parts or roles in the dynamics of office work. Their mutual animosity has exceeded civility that it has engulfed us their co-workers, and even each of our respective families. Whenever they are around, all of us have to make sure that no favoritism is shown to any.

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Nevertheless, it is precisely this stance that further places the rest of us in trouble. One of the antagonists, let's call her Doreen, is the senior of the rest of us who are in this department.

Her archenemy, whom she name-calls as the "trying-hard" woman, we call Madeline. Madeline is not your typical officemate also. She is not the very outspoken and gregarious, happy-go-lucky person nor the touchy type. But she knows malice if she meets one. Their problem is already more than ten years old. They have had their first series of encounters that ended up in lawsuit. Their relationship didn't improve, expectedly, after that period. This time around, the matter between them was revived and had escalated with another series of lawsuits.

I was caught in the middle of this conflict as much as the others in the department. Doreen wanted us to take her side to pin Madeline down that latter is a malicious woman bent on destroying a reputable colleague whose work and influence (Doreen's) are exceptional and meritorious both to the department and the bigger institution, and as to the clientele that she handles outside our workplace. Madeline, on the other hand, was knowledgeable about the manipulations and gossip that Doreen had been doing all these years to put Madeline outside the "group," or the inner circle in the institution where she had been "first."

"In my judgment, though Madeline had lapses of her own, I have not encountered nor observed her as a person who had as much malevolence as Doreen. Both had wanted anyone of us in the department to sympathize and rally to either of their "causes," and overtly, not one of us showed to the rest of the institution that we had taken sides. However, privately, we had <https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-and-pros-and-cons-of-risk-taking-and-human-motivation/>

our sympathies for Madeline because her clout is not that extensive as Doreen; Madeline's fight was just almost always to defend herself in the wake of the accusations that Doreen had tried to hurl against her.

~Synthesize the data.

DeBono (as cited in Franken, 2007) terms this process "finding redundancies" and calls it lateral thinking. You are going to identify patterns in your scenario. This is the heart of the creative process. The whole scenario with Doreen, Madeline and the rest of us in the department embroiled in the dispute reached its peak just a few months ago. Recently, Doreen because of her belief that we are not deeply supportive of her, accused the whole department of conspiracy against her. Although she had the appearance of respectability, Doreen however, is a very good "actor," who plays her part well.

Because her accusation of conspiracy was not effective, she tried other ways. Through text messages and sarcasm she began to intimidate each of us personally and privately. She somehow managed to know some important details or weaknesses in each of us to weaken us down. Members of our department were at our lowest point in the working relationship and morale within the workplace. It was a very difficult time. The problem with these two colleagues did not just start with any one of them as individuals although their idiosyncrasies and even their personal, family or private lives are surely crucial factors in the dynamics of office work.

Looking at the whole dilemma from start to the more recent clashes, Doreen and Madeline's conflict which now involved us, was firstly a leadership responsibility. If then, during the early times that those who <https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-and-pros-and-cons-of-risk-taking-and-human-motivation/>

oversee the department had keen understanding of people's behavioral inclinations or types, who cared enough to address the early signs of trouble that arises in a specific workplace, and had the decisive facility to impose certain boundaries and discipline either or both of them and those involved then, this was surely a thing of the past.

What the person (Doreen or Madeline) was, certainly has bearing in whatever will continue to develop in future relationships, responsibilities, and possible frictions that normally are present in any work setting. ~Then, you will suspend judgment; leave your opinions of the situation out of the process. Think of this as a game and devise at least three (3) options for your scenario. 1) Discipline both Doreen and Madeline. Impose sanctions for the way the conflict between them had been allowed to escalate. Probably suggest suspension, leave of absence for a definite period of time so the whole office can breathe.

2) Because I am not the department head, a meeting is to occur (or a series of meetings) just for the sole purpose of brainstorming on the viable alternatives to restore the two to a more civil relationship. If they will not acquiesce to what will be decided by the group, then everyone in the department will make a resolution to recommend the two for further investigation by the institution's disciplinary council and even propose their dismissal should they not accede to the department/institution's guidelines or decisions.

3) Leave them to fight their battles between them because they are adults and can fend for each of themselves. ~ Last, explain how motivation is

linked in each of the options. 1) The implications for option one is that when <https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-and-pros-and-cons-of-risk-taking-and-human-motivation/>

there is outright or decisive action to make the two answerable for the fiasco will provide a sharp curb to their ongoing hostility. In understanding human nature, when a person's ego is touched with matters that the case between Doreen and Madeline will be exposed as behaving like children and needed to be out rightly disciplined, it will unmask their vulnerability to society's approval and disapproval.

This is based on Affiliation motive, and what they will lose is Esprit de corps- the feeling of being part of a sympathetic group, only this time, not just one of them will stand lose it, but the both of them (Morris & Maisto, 1999, p. 318) 2) This has something to do with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. What will happen here is to make the threat of losing years of hard work and establishment of a career in one institution to end up in disgrace because then, the two should have been dismissed for the trouble they brought to the whole department.

In Maslow's theory, if everything that mattered to any of them is pulled under them, then they will think deep with how they will have to make compromises in order that their source of livelihood (Maslow's first level Physiological needs) will be at stake. Secondly, when their sense of esteem is also threatened, then they will be pushed to think through with pulling down not only each other, but also the others in the workplace (Morris & Maisto, 1999, p. 317)

3) A sense of acceptance for many pervades whenever clashes between people who seemed to be influential, quite strong and resistive to advices, and who have made up their minds as to the recourse they were taking. It is to understand that people have what psychology calls as Aggression motive. <https://assignbuster.com/theories-of-and-pros-and-cons-of-risk-taking-and-human-motivation/>

Some experts on human behavior look at this particular trait or behavior as an inherent force within people that is intended to be redirected to more positive or beneficial outcomes (Morris & Maisto, 1999, p.

319) Conclusion Essentially, the role of motivation in a person's life is crucial to the understanding of human activities. Motivation is never static because in life, there always presents a dynamic and changing pattern of needs. Internal and external motivation provides in brief, an astute way of explaining the " why's" of people's behaviors. No wonder then, that in general, educators handle pupils or learners in the light of this ideation.