

6. Motivation

Understanding Key Concept

- Motivation refers to forces within an individual that account for the level, direction, and persistence of effort expended at work.
- Reinforcement theories emphasize the means through which operant conditioning takes place.
- Content theories profile different needs that may motivate individual behavior.
- Process theories seek to understand the thought processes that determine behavior.
- Reinforcement is the administration of a consequence as a result of behavior.
- Classical conditioning is a form of learning through association that involves the manipulation of stimuli to influence behavior.
- A stimulus is something that incites action.
- Operant conditioning is the process of controlling behavior by manipulating, or “operating” on, its consequences.
- The law of effect is the observation that behavior that results in a pleasing outcome is likely to be repeated; behavior that results in an unpleasant outcome is not likely to be repeated.
- Organization behavior modification (OB Mod) is the systematic reinforcement of desirable work behavior and the nonreinforcement or punishment of unwanted work behavior.
- Positive reinforcement is the administration of positive consequences that tend to increase the likelihood of repeating the behavior in similar settings.
- The law of contingent reinforcement is the view that, for a reward to have maximum reinforcing value, it must be delivered only if the desired behavior is exhibited.
- The law of immediate reinforcement states that the more immediate the delivery of a reward after the occurrence of a desirable behavior, the greater the reinforcing effect on behavior.
- Shaping is the creation of a new behavior by the positive reinforcement of successive approximations to the desired behavior.
- Continuous reinforcement is a reinforcement schedule that administers a reward each time a desired behavior occurs.
- Intermittent reinforcement is a reinforcement schedule that rewards behavior only periodically.
- Negative reinforcement is the withdrawal of negative consequences, which tends to increase the likelihood of repeating the behavior in a similar setting; it is also known as avoidance.
- Punishment is the administration of negative consequences that tend to reduce the likelihood of repeating the behavior in similar settings.
- Extinction is the withdrawal of the reinforcing consequences for a given behavior.
- Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory offers a pyramid of physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs.
- Higher order needs in Maslow’s hierarchy are esteem and self-actualization.
- Lower order needs in Maslow’s hierarchy are physiological, safety, and social.
- Alderfer’s ERG theory identifies existence, relatedness, and growth needs.
- Existence needs are desires for physiological and material well-being.
- Relatedness needs are desires for satisfying interpersonal relationships.
- Growth needs are desires for continued personal growth and development.
- Need for achievement (nAch) is the desire to do better, solve problems, or master complex tasks.
- Need for affiliation(nAff) is the desire for friendly and warm relations with others.

- Need for power (nPower) is the desire to control others and influence their behavior.
- Herzberg's two-factor theory identifies job context as the source of job dissatisfaction and job content as the source of job satisfaction.
- Hygiene factors in job context, the work setting, are sources of job dissatisfaction.
- Motivator factors in job content, the tasks people actually do, are sources of job satisfaction.
- Adams' equity theory posits that people will act to eliminate any felt inequity in the rewards received for their work in comparison with others.
- Vroom's expectancy theory argues that work motivation is determined by individual beliefs regarding effort/performance relationships and work outcomes.
- Expectancy is the probability that work effort will be followed by performance accomplishment.
- Instrumentality is the probability that performance will lead to various work outcomes.
- Valence is the value to the individual of various work outcomes.
- Extrinsic rewards are given to the individual by some other person in the work setting.
- Intrinsic rewards are received by the individual directly through task performance.
- Job satisfaction is the degree to which individuals feel positively or negatively about their jobs.

What is Motivation?

If asked to identify a major concern or problem at work, a manager is very likely to cite “motivational” need to do something that will encourage people to work harder to do “what I want.” Formally defined, motivation refers to the individual forces that account for the direction, level, and persistence of a person’s effort expended at work. Direction refers to an individual’s choice when presented with a number of possible alternatives (e.g., whether to exert effort toward product quality or toward product quantity). Level refers to the amount of effort a person puts forth (e.g., a lot or a little). Persistence refers to the length of time a person sticks with a given action (e.g., to try to achieve product quantity and give up when it is found difficult to attain).

REINFORCEMENT, CONTENT, AND PROCESS THEORIES

The theories of motivation can be divided into three broad categories.¹ Reinforcement theories emphasize the linkage between individual behavior and some specific outcomes to show how managers can alter the direction, level, or persistence of individual actions. They focus on the observable rather than what is inside an employee’s head. Thus, reinforcement views place a premium on observing individuals to see which work-related outcomes are highly valued. By altering when, where, how, and why some types of rewards are given, the manager can change the apparent motivation of employees by providing a systematic set of consequences to shape behavior. Content theories focus primarily on individual needs—the physiological or psychological deficiencies that we feel a compulsion to reduce or eliminate. These theories suggest that the manager’s job is to create a work environment that responds positively to individual needs. They help to explain how poor performance, undesirable behaviors, low satisfaction, and the like can be caused by “blocked” needs or needs that are not satisfied on the job. Process theories focus on the thought or cognitive processes that take place within the minds of people and that influence their behavior. Whereas a content approach may identify job security as an important need for an individual, a process approach probes further to identify why the person behaves in particular ways relative to available rewards and work opportunities. Ultimately, we use the insights of three sets of theories to offer an integrated view of motivational dynamics that should be useful in any work setting.

MOTIVATION ACROSS CULTURES

Before we examine the motivation theories in detail, an important caveat is in order. Motivation is a key concern in firms across the globe. However, North American theories (and these are the only ones discussed in this section) are subject to cultural limitations. The determinants of motivation and the best ways to deal with it are likely to vary considerably across Asia, South America, Eastern Europe, and Africa. Individual values and attitudes—both important aspects of motivation—have strong cultural foundations. What proves “motivational” as a reward in one culture, for example, might not work in another. We should be sensitive to these issues and avoid being parochial or ethnocentric by assuming that people in all cultures are motivated by

the same things in the same ways.

Reinforcement

In OB, reinforcement has a very specific meaning that has its origin in some classic studies in psychology.⁵ Reinforcement is the administration of a consequence as a result of a behavior. Managing reinforcement properly can change the direction, level, and persistence of an individual's behavior. To understand this idea, we need to review some of the concepts on conditioning and reinforcement you learned in your basic psychology course. We will then move on to applications.

CLASSICAL AND OPERANT CONDITIONING

Recall that Ivan Pavlov studied classical conditioning. Classical conditioning is a form of learning through association that involves the manipulation of stimuli to influence behavior. The Russian psychologist "taught" dogs to salivate at the sound of a bell by ringing the bell when feeding the dogs. The sight of the food naturally caused the dogs to salivate. Eventually, the dogs "learned" to associate the bell ringing with the presentation of meat and to salivate at the ringing of the bell alone. Such "learning" through association is so common in organizations that it is often ignored until it causes considerable confusion. Take a look at Figure 3.1. The key is to understand a stimulus and a conditioned stimulus. A stimulus is something that incites action and draws forth a response (the meat for the dogs). The trick is to associate one neutral potential stimulus (the bell ringing) with another initial stimulus that already affects behavior (the meat). The once-neutral stimulus is called a conditioned stimulus when it affects behavior in the same way as the initial stimulus. In Figure 3.1, the boss's smiling becomes a conditioned stimulus because of its linkage to his criticisms.

Operant conditioning, popularized by B. F. Skinner, is an extension of the classical case to much more practical affairs. It includes more than just a stimulus and a response behavior. Operant conditioning is the process of controlling behavior by manipulating its consequences. Classical and operant conditioning differ in two important ways. First, control in operant conditioning is via manipulation of consequences. Second, operant conditioning calls for examining antecedents, behavior, and consequences. The antecedent is the condition leading up to or "cueing" behavior. For example, in Figure 3.1, an agreement between the boss and the employee to work overtime as needed is an antecedent. If the employee works overtime, this would be the behavior while the consequence would be the boss's praise.

If a boss wants a behavior to be repeated, such as working overtime, she must manipulate the consequences. The basis for manipulating consequences is E. L. Thorndike's law of effect. The

law of effect is simple but powerful: behavior that results in a pleasant outcome is likely to be repeated while behavior that results in an unpleasant outcome is not likely to be repeated. The implications of this law are rather straightforward. If, as a supervisor, you want more of a behavior, you must make the consequences for the individual positive.

Note that the emphasis is on consequences that can be manipulated rather than on consequences inherent in the behavior itself. OB research often emphasizes specific types of rewards that are considered by the reinforcement perspective to influence individual behavior. Extrinsic rewards are positively valued work outcomes that are given to the individual by some other person. They are important external reinforcers or environmental consequences that can substantially influence a person's work behaviors through the law of effect. Figure 3.2 presents a sample of extrinsic rewards that managers can allocate to their subordinates. Some of these rewards are contrived, or planned, rewards that have direct costs and budgetary implications. Examples are pay increases and cash bonuses. A second category includes natural rewards that have no cost other than the manager's personal time and efforts. Examples are verbal praise and recognition in the workplace.

REINFORCEMENT STRATEGIES

We now bring the notions of classical conditioning, operant conditioning, reinforcement, and extrinsic rewards together to show how the direction, level, and persistence of individual behavior can be changed. This combination is called "OB Mod" after its longer title of organization behavior modification. OB Mod is the systematic reinforcement of desirable work behavior and the nonreinforcement or punishment of unwanted work behavior. OB Mod includes four basic reinforcement strategies: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement (or avoidance), punishment, and extinction.

Positive Reinforcement B. F. Skinner and his followers advocate positive reinforcement—the administration of positive consequences that tend to increase the likelihood of repeating the desirable behavior in similar settings. For example, a Texas Instruments manager nods to a subordinate to express approval after she makes a useful comment during a sales meeting. Obviously, the boss wants more useful comments. Later, the subordinate makes another useful comment, just as the boss hoped she would.

To begin using a strategy of positive reinforcement, we need to be aware that positive reinforcers and rewards are not necessarily the same. Recognition, for example, is both a reward and a potential positive reinforcer. Recognition becomes a positive reinforcer only if a person's performance later improves. Sometimes, rewards turn out not to be positive reinforcers. For

example, a supervisor at Boeing might praise a subordinate in front of other group members for finding errors in a report. If the group members then give the worker the silent treatment, however, the worker may stop looking for errors in the future. In this case, the supervisor's "reward" does not serve as a positive reinforcer.

To have maximum reinforcement value, a reward must be delivered only if the desired behavior is exhibited. That is, the reward must be contingent on the desired behavior. This principle is known as the law of contingent reinforcement. In the previous Texas Instruments example, the supervisor's praise was contingent on the subordinate's making constructive comments. Finally, the reward must be given as soon as possible after the desired behavior. This is known as the law of immediate reinforcement. If the TI boss waited for the annual performance review to praise the subordinate for providing constructive comments, the law of immediate reinforcement would be violated.

Now that we have presented the general concepts, it is time to address two important issues of implementation. First, what do you do if the behavior approximates what you want but is not exactly on target? Second, is it necessary to provide reinforcement each and every time? These are issues of shaping and scheduling, respectively.

Shaping If the desired behavior is specific in nature and is difficult to achieve, a pattern of positive reinforcement, called shaping, can be used. Shaping is the creation of a new behavior by the positive reinforcement of successive approximations leading to the desired behavior. For example, new machine operators in the Ford Motor casting operation in Ohio must learn a complex series of tasks in pouring molten metal into the casting in order to avoid gaps, overfills, or cracks. The molds are filled in a three-step process, with each step progressively more difficult than its predecessor. Astute master craftspersons first show neophytes how to pour the first step and give praise based on what they did right. As the apprentices gain experience, they are given praise only when all of the elements of the first step are completed successfully. Once the apprentices have mastered the first step, they progress to the second. Reinforcement is given only when the entire first step and an aspect of the second step are completed successfully. Over time, apprentices learn all three steps and are given contingent positive rewards immediately for a complete casting that has no cracks or gaps. In this way, behavior is shaped gradually rather than changed all at once.

Scheduling Positive Reinforcement Positive reinforcement can be given according to either continuous or intermittent schedules. Continuous reinforcement administers a reward each time a desired behavior occurs. Intermittent reinforcement rewards behavior only periodically. These

alternatives are important because the two schedules may have very different impacts on behavior. In general, continuous reinforcement elicits a desired behavior more quickly than does intermittent reinforcement. Thus, in the initial training of the apprentice casters, continuous reinforcement would be important. At the same time, continuous reinforcement is more costly in the consumption of rewards and is more easily extinguished when reinforcement is no longer present. In contrast, behavior acquired under intermittent reinforcement lasts longer upon the discontinuance of reinforcement than does behavior acquired under continuous reinforcement. In other words, it is more resistant to extinction. Thus, as the apprentices master an aspect of the pouring, the schedule is switched from continuous to intermittent reinforcement.

As shown in Figure 3.3, intermittent reinforcement can be given according to fixed or variable schedules. Variable schedules typically result in more consistent patterns of desired behavior than do fixed reinforcement schedules. Fixed interval schedules provide rewards at the first appearance of a behavior after a given time has elapsed. Fixed ratio schedules result in a reward each time a certain number of the behaviors have occurred. A variable interval schedule rewards behavior at random times, while a variable ratio schedule rewards behavior after a random number of occurrences. For example, as the apprentices perfect their technique for a stage of pouring castings, the astute masters switch to a variable ratio reinforcement.

Let's look at an example from Drankenfeld Colors, Washington, Pennsylvania, with 250 employees. The absentee rate of these employees was very low, and in a recent year 44 percent of the employees had perfect attendance records. The firm wanted to use positive reinforcement to showcase perfect attendance, even though attendance was already so positive. Consequently, it gave monetary awards of \$50 for perfect attendance at 6 and 12 months, with a \$25 bonus for a full year of perfect attendance. In addition, the firm entered employees with perfect attendance into a sweepstakes drawing at special award banquets. The winners received an all-expense-paid trip for two to a resort. Perfect attendance increased from 44 percent to 62 percent in the program's first year.

Let's consider what kind of reinforcement scheduling was used in this program. A strong argument can be made that a fixed ratio schedule was used, in conjunction with a variable ratio schedule. The first schedule rewarded attendance behaviors occurring within 6 months and 12 months, or the specific number of workday attendance occurring within these periods. Thus, for each period during which a perfect number of attendance days occurred, a person received an award—a fixed ratio schedule one.

The second schedule focuses on eligibility for the drawing. It is a variable ratio because a

random number of perfect attendance days must pass before a specific employee receives a trip. Maintaining perfect attendance to qualify for the drawing is similar to playing a slot machine. In this variable ratio system, players keep putting coins in the machines because they don't have any idea when they will hit the jackpot. Lotteries similar to Drunkenfeld's have been used by firms as different as new car dealerships and New York Life Insurance.

Negative Reinforcement (Avoidance) A second reinforcement strategy used in OB Mod is negative reinforcement or avoidance—the withdrawal of negative consequences, which tends to increase the likelihood of repeating the desirable behavior in similar settings. For example, a manager at McDonald's regularly nags a worker about his poor performance and then stops nagging when the worker does not fall behind one day. We need to focus on two aspects here: the negative consequences followed by the withdrawal of these consequences when desirable behavior occurs. The term negative reinforcement comes from this withdrawal of the negative consequences. This strategy is also sometimes called avoidance because its intent is for the person to avoid the negative consequence by performing the desired behavior. For instance, we stop at a red light to avoid a traffic ticket or a worker who prefers the day shift is allowed to return to that shift if she performs well on the night shift.

Punishment A third OB Mod strategy is punishment. Unlike positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement, punishment is not intended to encourage positive behavior but to discourage negative behavior. Formally defined, punishment is the administration of negative consequences or the withdrawal of positive consequences that tend to reduce the likelihood of repeating the behavior in similar settings. The first type of punishment is illustrated by a Burger King manager who assigns a tardy worker to an unpleasant job, such as cleaning the restrooms. An example of withdrawing positive consequences is a Burger King manager who docks the employee's pay when she is tardy.

Some scholarly work illustrates the importance of punishment by showing that punishment administered for poor performance leads to enhanced performance without a significant effect on satisfaction. However, punishment seen by the workers as arbitrary and capricious leads to very low satisfaction, as well as low performance. Thus, punishment can be handled poorly, or it can be handled well. Of course, the manager's challenge is to know when to use this strategy and how to use it correctly.

Finally, punishment may be offset by positive reinforcement received from another source. It is possible for a worker to be reinforced by peers at the same time that the worker is receiving punishment from the manager. Sometimes the positive value of such peer support is so great that

the individual chooses to put up with the punishment. Thus, the undesirable behavior continues. As many times as a experienced worker may be verbally reprimanded by a supervisor for playing jokes on new employees, for example, the “grins” offered by other workers may well justify continuation of the jokes in the future. Does all of this mean that punishment should never be administered? Of course not. The important things to remember are to administer punishment selectively and then to do it right.

Extinction The final OB Mod reinforcement strategy is extinction—the withdrawal of the reinforcing consequences for a given behavior. For example, Jack is often late for work, and his co-workers cover for him (positive reinforcement). The manager instructs Jack’s co-workers to stop covering for him, withdrawing the reinforcing consequences. The manager has deliberately used extinction to get rid of an undesirable behavior. This strategy decreases the frequency of or weakens the behavior. The behavior is not “unlearned”; it simply is not exhibited. Since the behavior is no longer reinforced, it will reappear if reinforced again. Whereas positive reinforcement seeks to establish and maintain desirable work behavior, extinction is intended to weaken and eliminate undesirable behavior.

Summary of Reinforcement Strategies Figure 3.4 summarizes and illustrates the use of each OB Mod strategy. They are all designed to direct work behavior toward practices desired by management. Both positive and negative reinforcement are used to strengthen the desirable behavior of improving work quality when it occurs. Punishment is used to weaken the undesirable behavior of high error rate and involves either administering negative consequences or withdrawing positive consequences. Similarly, extinction is used deliberately to weaken the undesirable high error rate behavior when it occurs. Note also, however, that extinction is used inadvertently to weaken the desirable low error rate behavior. Finally, these strategies may be used in combination as well as independently.

REINFORCEMENT PERSPECTIVES: USAGE AND ETHICAL ISSUES

The effective use of reinforcement strategies can help manage human behavior at work. Testimony to this effect is found in the application of these strategies in many large firms, such as General Electric and B. F. Goodrich, and even in small firms, such as Mid-America Building Maintenance. Mid-America, a janitorial services firm in Wichita, Kansas, provides an incentive program to employees who work 90 consecutive workdays without an absence. Reinforcement strategies are also supported by the growing number of consulting firms that specialize in reinforcement techniques.

Managerial use of these approaches is not without criticism, however. For example, some reports

on the “success” of specific programs involve isolated cases that have been analyzed without the benefit of scientific research designs. It is hard to conclude definitively whether the observed results were caused by reinforcement dynamics. In fact, one critic argues that the improved performance may well have occurred only because of the goal setting involved—that is, because specific performance goals were clarified, and workers were individually held accountable for their accomplishment.

Another major criticism rests with the potential value dilemmas associated with using reinforcement to influence human behavior at work. For example, some critics maintain that the systematic use of reinforcement strategies leads to a demeaning and dehumanizing view of people that stunts human growth and development. A related criticism is that managers abuse the power of their position and knowledge by exerting external control over individual behavior. Advocates of the reinforcement approach attack the problem head on: They agree that behavior modification involves the control of behavior, but they also argue that behavior control is an irrevocable part of every manager’s job. The real question is how to ensure that any manipulation is done in a positive and constructive fashion.

Content Theories of Motivation

Content theories, as noted earlier, suggest that motivation results from the individual’s attempts to satisfy needs. Four of the better known content theories have been proposed by Abraham Maslow, Clayton Alderfer, David McClelland, and Frederick Herzberg. Each of these scholars offers a slightly different view of the needs individuals may bring with them to work.

HIERARCHY OF NEEDS THEORY

Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, as shown in Figure 3.5, identifies five distinct levels of individual needs: from self-actualization and esteem, at the top, to social, safety, and physiological at the bottom. Maslow assumes that some needs are more important than others and must be satisfied before the other needs can serve as motivators. For example, physiological needs must be satisfied before safety needs are activated, safety needs must be satisfied before social needs are activated, and so on.

Maslow’s view is quite popular in U.S. firms because it appears easily implemented. Unfortunately, however, research evidence fails to support the existence of a precise five-step hierarchy of needs. The needs more likely operate in a flexible hierarchy. Some research suggests that higher order needs (esteem and self-actualization) tend to become more important than lower order needs (psychological, safety, and social) as individuals move up the corporate ladder.

Other studies report that needs vary according to a person's career stage, the size of the organization, and even geographical location. There is also no consistent evidence that the satisfaction of a need at one level decreases its importance and increases the importance of the next higher need. Finally, when the hierarchy of needs is examined across cultures, values such as those discussed in Section 2 become important. For instance, social needs tend to dominate in more collectivist societies, such as Mexico and Pakistan.

ERG THEORY

Clayton Alderfer's ERG theory is also based on needs but differs from Maslow's theory in three basic respects.²⁷ First, the theory collapses Maslow's five need categories into three: existence needs—desire for physiological and material well-being; relatedness needs—desire for satisfying interpersonal relationships; and growth needs—desire for continued personal growth and development. Second, whereas Maslow's theory argues that individuals progress up the "needs" hierarchy, ERG theory emphasizes a unique frustration-regression component. An already satisfied lower level need can become activated when a higher level need cannot be satisfied. Thus, if a person is continually frustrated in his or her attempts to satisfy growth needs, relatedness needs can again surface as key motivators. Third, unlike Maslow's theory, ERG theory contends that more than one need may be activated at the same time.

Even though more research is needed to shed more light on its validity, the supporting evidence on ERG theory is encouraging. In particular, the theory's allowance for regression back to lower level needs is a valuable contribution to our thinking. It may help to explain why in some settings, for example, workers' complaints focus on wages, benefits, and working conditions—things relating to existence needs. Although these needs are important, their importance may be exaggerated because the workers' jobs cannot otherwise satisfy relatedness and growth needs. ERG theory thus offers a more flexible approach to understanding human needs than does Maslow's strict hierarchy.

ACQUIRED NEEDS THEORY

In the late 1940s, psychologist David I. McClelland and his co-workers began experimenting with the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) as a way of measuring human needs.²⁹ The TAT is a projective technique that asks people to view pictures and write stories about what they see. In one case, McClelland showed three executives a photograph of a man sitting down and looking at family photos arranged on his work desk. One executive wrote of an engineer who was daydreaming about a family outing scheduled for the next day. Another described a designer who had picked up an idea for a new gadget from remarks made by his family. The third described an engineer who was intently working on a bridge stress problem that he seemed sure to solve

because of his confident look.³⁰ McClelland identified three themes in these TAT stories, with each corresponding to an underlying need that he believes is important for understanding individual behavior.

These needs are (1) need for achievement (nAch).the desire to do something better or more efficiently, to solve problems, or to master complex tasks; (2) need for affiliation (nAff).the desire to establish and maintain friendly and warm relations with others; and (3) need for power (nPower). the desire to control others, to influence their behavior, or to be responsible for others.

McClelland posits that these three needs are acquired over time, as a result of life experiences. He encourages managers to learn how to identify the presence of nAch, nAff, and nPower in themselves and in others and to be able to create work environments that are responsive to the respective need profiles.

The theory is particularly useful because each need can be linked with a set of work preferences. A high-need achiever will prefer individual responsibilities, challenging goals, and performance feedback. A high-need affliator is drawn to interpersonal relationships and opportunities for communication. The high need for-power type seeks influence over others and likes attention and recognition. If these needs are truly acquired, it may be possible to acquaint people with the need profiles required to succeed in various types of jobs. For instance, McClelland found that the combination of a moderate to high need for power and a lower need for affiliation is linked with senior executive success. High nPower creates the willingness to have influence or impact on others; lower nAff allows the manager to make difficult decisions without undue worry over being disliked.

Research lends considerable insight into nAch in particular and includes some especially interesting applications in developing nations. For example, McClelland trained businesspeople in Kakinda, India, to think, talk, and act like high achievers by having them write stories about achievement and participate in a business game that encouraged achievement. The businesspeople also met with successful entrepreneurs and learned how to set challenging goals for their own businesses. Over a two-year period following these activities, the participants from the Kakinda study engaged in activities that created twice as many new jobs as those who hadn't received the training.

TWO-FACTOR THEORY

Frederick Herzberg took a different approach to examining motivation. He simply asked workers to report the times they felt exceptionally good about their jobs and the times they felt exceptionally bad about them. As shown in Figure 3.6, Herzberg and his associates noted that

the respondents identified somewhat different things when they felt good or bad about their jobs. From this study they developed the two-factor theory, also known as the motivator-hygiene theory, which portrays different factors as primary causes of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction.

According to this theory, hygiene factors are sources of job dissatisfaction. These factors are associated with the job context or work setting; that is, they relate more to the environment in which people work than to the nature of the work itself. Among the hygiene factors shown on the left in Figure 3.6 perhaps the most surprising is salary. Herzberg found that low salary makes people dissatisfied, but that paying them more does not necessarily satisfy or motivate them. In the two-factor theory, job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are totally separate dimensions. Therefore, improving a hygiene factor, such as working conditions, will not make people satisfied with their work; it will only prevent them from being dissatisfied.

To improve job satisfaction, the theory directs attention to an entirely different set of factors—the motivator factors shown on the right in Figure 3.6. These factors are related to job content—what people actually do in their work. Adding these satisfiers or motivators to people’s jobs is Herzberg’s link to performance. These factors include sense of achievement, recognition, and responsibility.

According to Herzberg, when these opportunities are not available, low job satisfaction causes a lack of motivation and performance suffers. He suggests the technique of job enrichment as a way of building satisfiers into job content. For now, the notion is well summarized in this statement by Herzberg: “If you want people to do a good job, give them a good job to do.”

OB scholars continue to debate the merits of the two-factor theory and its applications. Many are unable to confirm the theory. Many criticize it as being method bound. This is a serious criticism, for the scientific approach requires that theories be verifiable under different research methods. Furthermore, this theory, just like the other content theories, fails to account for individual differences, to link motivation and needs to both satisfaction and performance, or to consider cultural and professional differences.

The content theories remain popular in management circles because of their simplicity and the direct apparent linkage from needs to behavior. At the same time, none of the theories links needs directly to motivated behavior desired by the manager. Rather, managers just misinterpret the theories and often inappropriately assume that they know the needs of their subordinates. Thus, we advise extreme care in simplistic application of content theories. We will return to

these theories when we incorporate satisfaction into the discussion of motivation.

Process Theories

The various content theories emphasize the “what” aspects of motivation. That is, they tend to look for ways to improve motivation by dealing with activated or deprived needs. They do not delve formally into the thought processes through which people choose one action over another in the workplace. Process theories focus on thought processes. Although there are many process theories, we will concentrate on equity and expectancy theory.

EQUITY THEORY

Equity theory is based on the phenomenon of social comparison and is best applied to the workplace through the writing of J. Stacy Adams. Adams argues that when people gauge the fairness of their work outcomes relative to others, any perceived inequity is a motivating state of mind. Perceived inequity occurs when someone believes that the rewards received for their work contributions compare unfavorably to the rewards other people appear to have received for their work. When such perceived inequity exists, the theory states that people will be motivated to act in ways that remove the discomfort and restore a sense of felt equity.

Felt negative inequity exists when an individual feels that he or she has received relatively less than others have in proportion to work inputs. Felt positive inequity exists when an individual feels that he or she has received relatively more than others have. When either feeling exists, the individual will likely engage in one or more of the following behaviors to restore a sense of equity.

- Change work inputs (e.g., reduce performance efforts).
- Change the outcomes (rewards) received (e.g., ask for a raise).
- Leave the situation (e.g., quit).
- Change the comparison points (e.g., compare self to a different co-worker).
- Psychologically distort the comparisons (e.g., rationalize that the inequity is only temporary and will be resolved in the future).
- Take actions to change the inputs or outputs of the comparison person (e.g., get a co-worker to accept more work).

The equity comparison intervenes between the allocation of rewards and the ultimate impact on the recipients. What may seem fair and equitable to a group leader, for example, might be perceived as unfair and inequitable by a team member after comparisons are made with other

teammates. Furthermore, such feelings of inequity are determined solely by the individual's interpretation of the situation. It is not the reward-giver's intentions that count, but it is how the recipient perceives the reward that will determine actual motivational outcomes.

Research indicates that people who feel they are overpaid (perceived positive inequity) increase the quantity or quality of their work, whereas those who feel they are underpaid (perceived negative inequity) decrease the quantity or quality of their work.³⁸ The research is most conclusive with respect to felt negative inequity. It appears that people are less comfortable when they are underrewarded than when they are overrewarded. Such results, however, are particularly tied to individualistic cultures in which self-interests tend to govern social comparisons. In more collectivist cultures, such as those of many Asian countries, the concern often runs more for equality than equity. This allows for solidarity with the group and helps to maintain harmony in social relationships.

EXPECTANCY THEORY

Victor Vroom's expectancy theory posits that motivation is a result of a rational calculation. A person is motivated to the degree that he or she believes that (1) effort will yield acceptable performance, (2) performance will be rewarded, and (3) the value of the rewards is highly positive. The interactive combination of all three influences motivation. (See Figure 3.7.) Thus, some key concepts are defined in terms of probabilities.

- The probability assigned by an individual that work effort will be followed by a given level of achieved task performance is called expectancy. Expectancy would equal 0 if the person felt it were impossible to achieve the given performance level; it would equal 1 if a person were 100 percent certain that the performance could be achieved.
- Instrumentality is the probability assigned by the individual that a given level of achieved task performance will lead to various work outcomes. Instrumentality also varies from 0 to 1. (Strictly speaking, Vroom's treatment of instrumentality would allow it to vary from -1 to +1. We use the probability definition here and the 0 to +1 range for pedagogical purposes; it is consistent with the instrumentality notion.)
- Valence is the value attached by the individual to various work outcomes.

Valences form a scale from -1 (very undesirable outcome) to +1 (very desirable outcome). Vroom posits that motivation (M), expectancy (E), instrumentality (I), and valence (V) are related to one another by the equation: $M = (E) \times (I) \times (V)$. This multiplier effect means that the motivational appeal of a given work path is sharply reduced whenever any one or more of these factors approaches the value of zero. Conversely, for a given reward to have a high and positive

motivational impact as a work outcome, the expectancy, instrumentality, and valence associated with the reward all must be high and positive.

Suppose that a manager is wondering whether or not the prospect of earning a merit raise will be motivational to an employee. Expectancy theory predicts that motivation to work hard to earn the merit pay will be low if expectancy is low—a person feels that he or she cannot achieve the necessary performance level. Motivation will also be low if instrumentality is low—the person is not confident a high level of task performance will result in a high merit pay raise. Motivation will also be low if valence is low—the person places little value on a merit pay increase. And motivation will be low if any combination of these exists. Thus, the multiplier effect requires managers to act to maximize expectancy, instrumentality, and valence when seeking to create high levels of work motivation. A zero at any location on the right side of the expectancy equation will result in zero motivation.

Expectancy logic argues that a manager must try to intervene actively in work situations to maximize work expectancies, instrumentalities, and valences that support organizational objectives. To influence expectancies, managers should select people with proper abilities, train them well, support them with needed resources, and identify clear performance goals. To influence instrumentality, managers should clarify performance–reward relationships and confirm these relationships when rewards are actually given for performance accomplishments. To influence valences, managers should identify the needs that are important to each individual and then try to adjust available rewards to match these needs.

A great deal of research on expectancy theory has been conducted, and review articles are available. Although the theory has received substantial support, specific details, such as the operation of the multiplier effect, remain subject to some question. One of the more popular modifications of Vroom's original version of the theory distinguishes between work outcomes for calculating valence. Researchers have separated extrinsic rewards—positively valued work outcomes given to the individual by some other person—from intrinsic rewards (see *The Effective Manager* 3.2). Intrinsic rewards are positively valued work outcomes that the individual receives directly as a result of task performance. A feeling of achievement after accomplishing a particularly challenging task is an example.

Expectancy theory does not specify exactly which rewards will motivate particular groups of workers. In this sense, the theory allows for the fact that the rewards and their link with performance are likely to be seen as quite different in different cultures. It helps to explain some

apparently counterintuitive findings. For example, a pay raise motivated one group of Mexican workers to work fewer hours. They wanted a certain amount of money in order to enjoy things other than work rather than just more money. A Japanese sales representative's promotion to manager of a U.S. company adversely affected his performance. His superiors did not realize that the promotion embarrassed him and distanced him from his colleagues.

Integrating The Motivation Theories

As you can see rewards, needs, cognitions, satisfaction, and performance are all integral to the discussion of motivation. Understanding the linkage between satisfaction and performance will help integrate all the views we have discussed.

JOB SATISFACTION

Formally defined, job satisfaction is the degree to which individuals feel positively or negatively about their jobs. It is an attitude or emotional response to one's tasks as well as to the physical and social conditions of the workplace. At first glance, and from the perspective of Herzberg's two-factor theory, some aspects of job satisfaction should be motivational and lead to positive employment relationships and high levels of individual job performance. But as we will discuss, the issues are more complicated than this conclusion suggests.

On a daily basis, managers must be able to infer the job satisfaction of others by careful observation and interpretation of what they say and do while going about their jobs. Sometimes, it is also useful to examine more formally the levels of job satisfaction among groups of workers, especially through formal interviews or questionnaires. Increasingly, other methods are being used as well such as focus groups and computer-based attitude surveys.

Among the many available job satisfaction questionnaires that have been used over the years, two popular ones are the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) and the Job Descriptive Index (JDI).⁴⁶ Both address aspects of satisfaction with which good managers should be concerned for the people reporting to them. For example, the MSQ measures satisfaction with working conditions, chances for advancement, freedom to use one's own judgment, praise for doing a good job, and feelings of accomplishment, among others. The five facets of job satisfaction measured by the JDI are:

- The work itself—responsibility, interest, and growth.
- Quality of supervision—technical help and social support.
- Relationships with co-workers—social harmony and respect.

- Promotion opportunities—chances for further advancement.
- Pay—adequacy of pay and perceived equity vis-à-vis others.

JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION AND PERFORMANCE

The importance of job satisfaction can be viewed in the context of two decisions people make about their work. The first is the decision to belong—that is, to join and remain a member of an organization. The second is the decision to perform—that is, to work hard in pursuit of high levels of task performance. Not everyone who belongs to an organization performs up to expectations.

The decision to belong concerns an individual's attendance and longevity at work. In this sense, job satisfaction influences absenteeism, or the failure of people to attend work. In general, workers who are satisfied with the job itself have more regular attendance and are less likely to be absent for unexplained reasons than are dissatisfied workers. Job satisfaction can also affect turnover, or decisions by people to terminate their employment. Simply put, dissatisfied workers are more likely than satisfied workers to quit their jobs.

What is the relationship between job satisfaction and performance? There is considerable debate on this issue, with three alternative points of view evident: (1) satisfaction causes performance, (2) performance causes satisfaction, and (3) rewards cause both performance and satisfaction.

Argument: Satisfaction Causes Performance If job satisfaction causes high levels of performance, the message to managers is quite simple: To increase employees' work performance, make them happy. Research, however, indicates that no simple and direct link exists between individual job satisfaction at one point in time and work performance at a later point. This conclusion is widely recognized among OB scholars, even though some evidence suggests that the relationship holds better for professional or higher level employees than for nonprofessionals or those at lower job levels. Job satisfaction alone is not a consistent predictor of individual work performance.

Argument: Performance Causes Satisfaction If high levels of performance cause job satisfaction, the message to managers is quite different. Rather than focusing first on peoples' job satisfaction, attention should be given to helping people achieve high performance; job satisfaction would be expected to follow. Research indicates an empirical relationship between individual performance measured at a certain time period and later job satisfaction. A basic model of this relationship, based on the work of Edward E. Lawler and Lyman Porter, maintains

that performance accomplishment leads to rewards that, in turn, lead to satisfaction. In this model rewards are intervening variables; that is, they “link” performance with later satisfaction. In addition, a moderator variable—perceived equity of rewards—further affects the relationship. The moderator indicates that performance will lead to satisfaction only if rewards are perceived as equitable.

If an individual feels that his or her performance is unfairly rewarded, the performance-causes-satisfaction relationship will not hold.

Argument: Rewards Cause Both Satisfaction and Performance This final argument in the job satisfaction-performance controversy is the most compelling. It suggests that a proper allocation of rewards can positively influence both performance and satisfaction. The key word in the previous sentence is proper. Research indicates that people who receive high rewards report higher job satisfaction. But research also indicates that performance-contingent rewards influence a person’s work performance. In this case, the size and value of the reward vary in proportion to the level of one’s performance accomplishment. Large rewards are given for high performance; small or no rewards are given for low performance. And whereas giving a low performer only small rewards initially may lead to dissatisfaction, the expectation is that the individual will make efforts to improve performance in order to obtain greater rewards in the future.

The point is that managers should consider satisfaction and performance as two separate but interrelated work results that are affected by the allocation of rewards. Whereas job satisfaction alone is not a good predictor of work performance, well-managed rewards can have a positive influence on both satisfaction and performance.

INTEGRATED MODEL OF MOTIVATION

Figure 3.8 outlines the integrated view. Note that the figure has much in common with Vroom’s expectancy theory and the Porter-Lawler framework just discussed.⁵⁰ In the figure, job performance and satisfaction are separate, but potentially interdependent, work results. Performance is influenced most directly by individual attributes such as ability and experience, organizational support such as resources and technology, and work effort—the point at which an individual’s level of motivation comes directly to bear. Individual motivation directly determines work effort, and the key to motivation is the ability to create a work setting that positively responds to individual needs and goals. Whether or not a work setting proves motivational for a given individual depends on the availability of rewards and their perceived value. Note also the importance of contingent rewards, reflecting the law of contingent reinforcement. Recall also the importance of immediacy in rewarding.

The content theories enter the model as the guide to understanding individual attributes and identifying the needs that give motivational value to the possible rewards. When the individual experiences intrinsic rewards for work performance, motivation will be directly and positively affected. Motivation can also occur when job satisfactions result from either extrinsic or intrinsic rewards that are felt to be equitably allocated. When felt negative inequity results, satisfaction will be low and motivation will be reduced.

With this discussion of reinforcement, content, and process theories, you should have a better understanding of motivation. Although it will always be difficult to motivate employees, the knowledge in this section should help you reach toward higher performance and satisfaction. Finally, the integrating model rests on cultural assumptions, so that the meaning of the concepts may be culturally specific. The importance of various intrinsic and extrinsic rewards may well differ across cultures, as may the aspects of performance that are highly valued.