Work Motivation[1][2]

One of the most important contexts that motivation takes place in is the jobs people have. Organizations want to get the best work they can out of workers and a motivated worker is a worker willing to put in the time and effort to succeed. Motivation is a crucial part of self-regulation, with workers focusing on the right behaviors to do and putting in appropriate effort. Work motivation is defined as "a psychological process that influences how personal effort and resources are allocated to actions pertaining to work, including the direction, intensity, and persistence of those actions" (Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2008). The direction is where a person decides to put effort or resources toward (Greenberg, 2011). Intensity is how much effort and attention the person puts toward a work task. Persistence is how long the person keeps putting in effort, attention and resources toward the work task. Thus, a motivated worker generally is doing the correct job behavior, trying hard to accomplish them, and keeps working hard over time.

Researchers in I/O Psychology and affiliated fields have looked to better understand motivational processes for individuals as well as teams (Latham & Pinder, 2005; Park, Spitzmuller & DeShon, 2013). Motivation has even been looked at from the unconscious level (Bargh et al., 2001) with recent research finding that a goal can have impact even when it is primed unconsciously (Chen & Latham, 2014). Work motivation has been found to relate to greater work performance (Locke & Latham, 2012) as well as individual wellbeing in the workplace (Gagne, 2014).

Motivation arises as an interaction between an individual and his/her environment (Latham & Pinder, 2005; Pinder, 1998). Thus, the motivation of two people can be very different even if they share similar personalities, experiences, or environment. Research has looked to understand both the impact of the individual and the environment on a person's motivation.

One of the main theories in motivational research includes elements of both the environment and the individual. Goal Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990; Locke & Latham, 2012) shows that the best type of goals a person can be assigned to have are specific and difficult in nature. Specific goals help a person to know clearly what they are striving for and where they should focus their effort. Difficult goals help to push a person to put more effort into a task. Additionally there are different kinds of goals, such as performance goals, focused on doing well at a task, or learning goals, focused on gaining new knowledge and skills (Winters & Latham, 1996). The goals that best helps a worker to perform will vary based on what task is being done. Goal setting has been applied in real organizations through interventions such as Management by Objectives (Drucker, 1976) and ProMES (Pritchard 1990). The impact of goals has been examined in a number of ways, including how they can change over time (Donovan & Williams, 2003; Scherbaum & Vancouver, 2010) and the impact of having multiple goals (Unsworth, Yeo, & Beck, 2014).

A person's personality and individual characteristics also impact motivation. Self-efficacy is a personality characteristic that relates to a person's beliefs he/she can successfully do a task. Generally the higher the

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self-efficacy, the more a person persists at a task and sets higher goals (Bandura, 1997). Goal orientation is the perspective a person brings to a task (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). A performance goal orientation means a person is focused on performing well and doing better than others whereas a learning goal orientation means a person is focused on developing new skills and competences. These impact how well people learn and perform (Utman, 1997).

Research has also examined how environmental characteristics impact motivation. Hackman & Oldham (1980) looked at how job characteristics (e.g., getting feedback on how a person is doing, task variety) impact a person's motivation. How a job is designed impacts how motivated a worker is in that job. Leaders have a significant impact on worker motivation as well because they have significant control over what work individuals do (Zaccaro, Ely, & Nelson, 2008).

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