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## OUTCOME-BASED THEORY OF WORK MOTIVATION

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## OUTCOME-BASED THEORY OF WORK MOTIVATION

### Abstract

This paper introduces an outcome-based theory of work motivation. This theory focuses on the individual's expected consequences of his or her action. We identify four different types of expected consequences, or motives. These motives lead to four types of motivation: extrinsic, intrinsic, contributive, and relational. We categorize these outcomes using two criteria: the perceived *locus of causality*, which defines the origin of the motivation, and the perceived *locus of consequence*, which defines who receives the consequences of the action. Individuals generally act based on a combination of extrinsic, intrinsic, contributive, and relational motivations, each one having a particular weight. We use the term *motivational profile* to refer to the particular combination of an individual's motivations in a certain context. Individuals may experience conflict when different alternatives convey different expected consequences (or motives). Resolution of conflicts among motives results in motivational learning. Specifically, the resolution of conflicts among motives of the same type results in *calculative learning*. On the other hand, the resolution of conflicts among motives of different types results in *evaluative learning*. Evaluative learning implies a change in the individual's motivational profile.

**Keywords:** Work motivation, Locus of causality, Motivational profile, Extrinsic motivation, Intrinsic motivation, Contributive motivation, Relational motivation

## OUTCOME-BASED THEORY OF WORK MOTIVATION

A fundamental question in organizational research is: What motivates people to work? Different theories, namely content theories, have addressed this question focusing on the characteristics either of the individual or of the job. Among these theories are: personality theories (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986); need theories (Maslow, 1954; Alderfer, 1972; McClelland, 1965); job characteristics theories (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; Hackman & Oldham, 1975); and self-concept based theories (Shamir, 1991; Leonard, Beauvais, & Scholl, 1999). Other theories have focused on the process that leads to motivation, incorporating cognitive elements. Examples include: self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985); expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964); equity theory (Adams, 1965); goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1984); and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). However, few theories address work motivation focusing on the outcomes of the individual's actions. Although several fields of research look at the effect of different incentives on motivation, such as OBMod theory (Luthans & Kreitner, 1985), these studies are mainly reinforcement theories, that is, theories focused on contingent extrinsic rewards (or punishments) that may influence people's behavior from outside. And yet, there is increasing evidence to suggest that outputs other than contingent rewards may also motivate people to work, such as learning, the desire to belong, or the willingness to contribute (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Thus, there is a need to develop a more general outcome theory of work motivation. In order to resolve this problem we develop an Outcome-Based Theory of work motivation (which we call OBT).

OBT looks at the different types of outcomes that may result from an individual's action. We categorize these outcomes using two criteria: the perceived *locus of causality* (deCharms, 1968; Deci & Ryan, 1985); which defines the origin of the motivation, and the perceived *locus of consequence*, which defines who receives the consequences of the individual's action. Both criteria have two categories: internal and external. Thus, this conceptualization results in a four-category typology of outcome-based work motivation (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Typology of Outcome-Based Work Motivation**

Locus of causality	External	Intrinsic motivation	Contributive motivation
	Internal	Extrinsic motivation	Relational motivation
		Internal	External
		Locus of consequence	

*Extrinsic* motivation is the motivation characterized by an external locus of causality and an internal locus of consequence. This motivation is based on the contingent rewards the individual expects to receive from the environment, which we call the reactor (for example, a company, a group, or another individual) in exchange for that action. An example of this type of motivation is when an employee works overtime because he or she wants to get the overtime payment. *Intrinsic* motivation is the motivation characterized by an internal locus of causality and an internal locus of consequence. This motivation is based on the consequences that the action itself is expected to have for the individual. An example of this type of motivation is when an employee works overtime because he or she likes working on that project. *Contributive* motivation is the motivation characterized by an internal locus of causality and an external locus of consequence. This motivation is based on the consequences that the action is expected to have for the reactor. An example of this type of motivation is when an employee works overtime because he or she wants to contribute to the goals of the organization. And *Relational* motivation is the motivation characterized by an external locus of causality and an external locus of consequence. This motivation is based on the impact that an action is expected to have on the relationship between the individual and the reactor. An example of this type of motivation is when an employee works overtime because otherwise he or she could be fired.

OBT characterizes individuals according to their *motivational profile*, that is, the particular combination of motivation types typical of an individual in a certain context. These motivational profiles may have important implications for leaders and human resource practices such as selection processes, incentive systems, and retention of talent. Since motivational profiles can change over time, this theory also has implications for coaching and development. In fact, OBT is primarily a choice rather than an effort or personality theory. It emphasizes the consequences of different alternatives and looks at the resolution of decision-making conflicts as a mechanism driving an individual's learning process. Specifically, we distinguish between calculative and evaluative learning. *Calculative* learning results from resolving intra-motivational conflicts, that is, conflicts among outcomes of the same type. *Evaluative* learning results from resolving inter-motivational conflicts, that is, conflicts among outcomes of different types.

## **Outcome-based theory of work motivation**

Pinder (1998) defines work motivation as the set of internal and external forces that initiate work-related behavior, and determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration. This definition suggests that work motivation is a multi-focal phenomenon that cannot be directly measured by a single variable. Rather, work motivation is the end result of a combination of individual and work-setting characteristics that interact in various ways to elicit individual action. Many theories have been proposed to structure and explain different aspects of this phenomenon (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). There have been few attempts to integrate different theories in a comprehensive framework of work motivation (for example, Locke & Latham, 1990). Integrative frameworks necessarily look at three aspects of work motivation: the individual's disposition, the cognitive process of motivation, and the outcomes derived from the individual's action.

Theories focused on individual and job characteristics (also called content theories) try to explain why people are motivated in different ways and by different work settings. Some of these theories look at the individual's personality or traits. For example, Brief and Motowidlo (1986) suggest that differences in prosocial personal characteristics explain differences in prosocial behavior. Other theories look at personal needs (Maslow, 1954; Alderfer, 1972; McClelland, 1965). For these theories, a person is only motivated to do something if he or she experiences a specific need that may be fulfilled directly or indirectly by performing that action. Since people experience different needs (and even the same person experiences different needs at different moments), this can explain the variation in individuals' motivation. Other theories look at job content as the determinant of motivation variation (Herzberg, 1966; Hackman and Oldham, 1975). For these theories, only aspects directly related to job content satisfy and motivate people to work. Finally, other theories suggest that individual differences may be explained by the different concepts people develop about who they are, and what they can and should do. According to these theories, individuals are motivated to behave in ways that are consistent with their self-perceptions (Leonard, Beauvais, & Scholl, 1999).

Theories focused on the cognitive development of motivation (also called process theories) try to explain how people initiate, sustain, and terminate work motivation. These theories propose general mechanisms that are valid for all individuals under certain conditions. For example, equity theory (Adams, 1963, 1965) suggests that individuals will be motivated to reduce inequity. It assumes that individuals evaluate their outcome/input ratio and compare it against the ratio of a comparison other. Inequity exists when these ratios differ. Another important process theory, expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), assumes that individuals act according to conscious and rational choices among expected outcomes. It focuses on the cognitive processes by which individuals assign probabilities on three factors: expectancy, instrumentalities and valences. Expectancy is how confident they are that their effort will lead to a certain level of performance. Instrumentalities are their beliefs that the level of performance will result in the attainment of certain outcomes. Valences are the expected values that they assign to those outcomes. One of the most important process theories, goal setting theory (Locke, 1968), assumes that human behavior is guided by conscious goals. A goal is the object or aim of an action; it is what the worker tries to accomplish in the job. This theory suggests that other concepts, such as needs, values, and motives, affect action through goals. Social cognitive theory assumes that the influence of motivation on performance is mediated by the individual's perceived self-efficacy. According to Wood and Bandura (1989), people prefer to adopt strategies when those strategies produce valued outcomes. This theory focuses on the learning processes (from direct experience or from observation of others' experience) that lead to changes in perceived self-efficacy.

Finally, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) focuses on extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. This theory gives special emphasis to the internalization process that leads individuals to accept external rules and norms as their own, creating a diffused boundary between the two types of motivation.

Theories focused on outcomes try to explain what expected consequences motivate people to work. Traditionally, these studies draw on reinforcement theory (Skinner, 1953) and look at the effects on motivation of different contingent incentives (or interventions), such as economic rewards (for example, employee benefits and gainsharing plans) or social rewards (for example, attention and praise). There are also studies of the effects of punishment on motivation (Butterfield, Trevino, & Ball, 1996). Although few reinforcement theories exist, such as OBMod (Luthans & Kreitner, 1985), most of the empirical research on incentive systems is atheoretical (Welbourne and Gomez Mejia, 1995). Besides, these theories tend to focus on extrinsic contingent rewards.

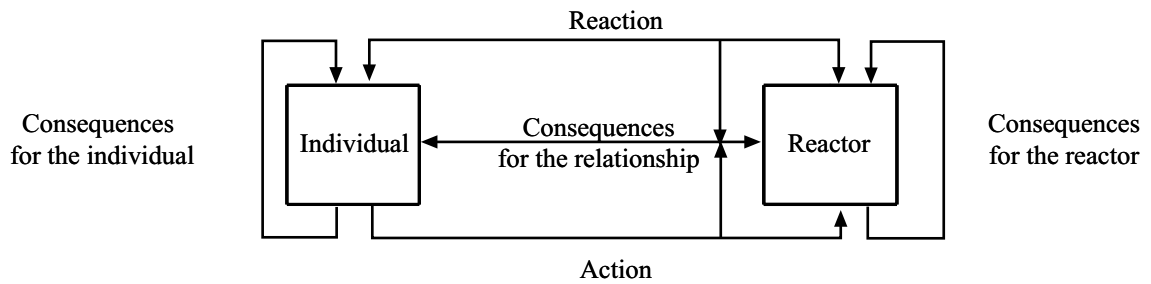
However, increasing evidence suggests that outputs other than contingent rewards may also motivate people to work, such as learning, the desire to belong, or the willingness to contribute. For example, an empirical literature review by Baumeister and Leary (1995) suggests that a strong desire to form and maintain enduring personal attachments is a powerful motivator of human behavior. They conclude that people “seek frequent, affectively positive interactions within the context of long-term, caring relationships” (p. 522). In fact, traditional research on social psychology (Katz & Kahn, 1966) has identified four motivational patterns in organizations: legal compliance (acceptance of role requirements based on their legitimacy), instrumental satisfaction (use of rewards to induce behaviors), self-expression (satisfactions deriving directly from role performance), and internalized values (internalization of organizational goals as reflecting values and self-concept). Katz and Kahn described a wide variety of behaviors driven by these four motivational patterns. Previous outcome-based theories do not cover all these phenomena. Thus, there is a need to develop a more comprehensive outcome-based theory of work motivation that conceptualizes different types of outcomes and motivations. This theory should also explore how people make decisions that involve these different types of outcomes.

### ***Different consequences of an action***

In OBT the decision-maker is not an isolated individual, but a social person interacting with the environment (Bandura, 1986). In a work setting, the environment can be, for example, another person (inside or outside the organization), a team, or the individual’s company. Generally, the interaction between the individual and the environment (which we call the reactor) produces a dynamic reciprocal influence: the reactor receives a certain action from the individual and responds with a reaction, which moves the individual to respond with a new action. However, this new action may be very different from the previous one, because the elements of the relationship are no longer the same as they were in the first decision: both the individual and the reactor have changed, and even the relationship itself may have changed. For example, if a salesperson makes an extraordinary effort in order to solve a client’s problem, the reaction of the client may be no more than a “thank you” note. But the client now may be more willing to accept a new product from the salesperson than before. Thus, the first action may affect the possible future actions of the salesperson in the relationship. Even the nature of the relationship may change. For example, the client may see this salesperson as a special consultant now, instead of as a simple product provider.

In general, we can conceptualize an individual's action in a work setting as an interaction between the individual and the reactor. We draw on work by Pérez-Lopez (1991) to represent the different consequences of an action on a relationship. According to Pérez-Lopez, when an individual is involved in a relationship with a reactor (another individual, a group, or an organization), the individual's action has multiple consequences. We identify four types of consequences (see Figure 2): the reaction of the reactor to the individual; the consequences for the individual deriving directly from performing the action; the consequences for the reactor deriving directly from receiving the action; and the consequences for the relationship between the two. We call recipient the person or entity that receives the consequences of the action. The recipient of the first two types of consequences is the individual. The recipient of the third type of consequence is the reactor. The recipient of the fourth type of consequence is the relationship.

**Figure 2. Different consequences of action**



The reaction is what the individual receives from the reactor in exchange for his or her action. For example, if an employee is working full-time for a company (reactor), the action is the employee's full day's work, and the reaction is the salary that the company pays to the employee. Following this example, the consequences for the individual directly derived from performing the action (working full-time for this company) may be as diverse as fatigue, pleasure, learning, or fun. The consequences for the reactor derived from receiving the action will be the effects of the individual's job on the company (the individual's performance in its broadest sense, not just economic performance). And finally, there is an indirect consequence related to the other three: depending on how interesting the task is for the employee, how well he or she is paid, and how the company values his or her performance, the relationship between the individual and the company will be strengthened or weakened.

### ***Outcome-based definitions of work motivation***

OBT is concerned about what motivates people to work. In our perspective, different types of expected consequences become different individuals' *motives* for action. In other words, an individual's motive is an expected consequence of the individual's action. We distinguish different types of motivation depending on the different possible motives for action. Since we have found four different motives for action, we can define four types of outcome-based motivations that we call: extrinsic, intrinsic, contributive, and relational.

*Extrinsic motivation* is the individual's willingness to act because of the rewards he or she expects to receive from others in exchange for that behavior. People with extrinsic

motivation engage in activities that lead to formal rewards, such as salary, status, and perks. For example, an individual may be willing to work hard because he or she expects to receive an appropriate monetary compensation.

There are positive and negative extrinsic motives for action. Extrinsic motivation may be fostered by the desire to gain different types of extrinsic rewards but also by the desire to avoid punishments. Positive extrinsic motives include money, goods, vacations, status, and social recognition, among others, whereas negative extrinsic motives include punishments such as economic sanctions, and physical or emotional damage.

*Intrinsic motivation* is the individual's willingness to act because of the satisfaction he or she expects to experience from the action. In other words, what motivates the individual to work is the experience of learning or pleasure that results from performing that specific task. People with intrinsic motivation engage in activities that are personally rewarding such as projects with high learning potential, or tasks that satisfy their curiosity or are enjoyable. For example, an engineer may keep up-to-date on the latest developments in the field because of his or her personal interest in learning and in professional achievement.

There are positive and negative intrinsic motives for action. On the positive side, an individual may like to perform an action, for example, because it is fun, provides a learning experience, or produces a feeling of achievement. But also, an individual may experience negative intrinsic motivation, for example, if a task is boring or does not allow for any interesting experience. This may result in a less intense effort to do the task.

*Contributive motivation* is the individual's willingness to act because of the benefits he or she expects others to experience as a consequence of the behavior. People with contributive motivation engage in activities that have potential impact on other people, organizations, or society. For example, an individual may help employees who are experiencing personal difficulties because of his or her values and feelings of responsibility.

There are positive and negative contributive motives for action. On the positive side, people may be willing to contribute to a project, a cause, or a group of people out of altruism, moral norms, or consistency with their self-concept. But people can also act in such a way as to produce negative consequences for others out of envy or revenge, for example. This negative side of contributive motivation has not been as widely studied as the positive side. However, it may explain many behaviors in work settings as well as in other contexts.

*Relational motivation* is the individual's willingness to act because of the expected impact of that behavior on the relationship between him or her and the reactor. Especially important for this type of motivation is the acceptance of external norms due to their legitimacy (Katz and Kahn, 1966). People with relational motivation engage in activities that strengthen the relationship with the reactor, such as impression management behaviors. For example, a salesperson may do a favor to a client in order to strengthen their relationship.

There are positive and negative relational motives for action. On the positive side, an individual may want to maintain or reinforce the relationship with a reactor in order to satisfy future extrinsic, intrinsic, or contributive motives. An example of this motivation is when an employee makes some extra effort because he or she fears that otherwise he or she may lose the job. On the negative side, the individual may want to weaken the relationship (or signal that the relationship has weakened) by carrying out certain actions or refraining from performing others that were expected by the reactor. For example, an employee may stop engaging in citizenship behaviors after feeling betrayed by his or her company (or boss).



Thus, we can introduce the following two propositions:

Proposition 1: There are four types of outcome-based work motivation, which are based on the four possible consequences of an individual's action in a relationship: extrinsic motivation, based on what the individual expects he or she will receive from others in exchange for the action; intrinsic motivation, based on what the individual expects to experience from performing the action itself; contributive motivation, based on what the individual expects to be the impact of the action on the reactor; and relational motivation, based on what the individual expects to be the impact of the action on the relationship between him or her and the reactor.

Proposition 2: For each type of motivation there are positive and negative motives for action (or omission).

### ***Perceived Causality and Perceived Consequence***

Based on the different types of consequences of an individual's action, we have defined different types of motivation. Our next question is: how can we categorize these motivations from an individual's perspective? To address this issue, we examine Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory (SDT). In this theory, they introduce the concept of perceived locus of causality.

“Activity that is perceived as having an internal locus of causality is congruent with or emanates from one's sense of self, whereas activity with a perceived external locus of causality is seen as being brought about by events or pressures outside of one's integrated sense of self.” (p. 111)

According to the individual's perceived locus of causality, Deci and Ryan (1985) initially distinguished two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation was defined as having an internal locus of causality whereas extrinsic motivation was defined as having an external locus of causality. Later, SDT distinguished different types of regulation within extrinsic motivation, ranging in a continuum from an external perceived locus of causality to an internal perceived locus of causality (Gagne & Deci, 2002). With an external perceived locus of causality, there are two types of regulation: external (behavior motivated by contingent rewards) and introjected (behavior motivated by external norms). An example of external regulation is: I do something because I want to get paid. An example of introjected regulation is: I do something because if I don't, others might think ill of me. With an internal perceived locus of causality, besides intrinsic motivation, there is integrated regulation (behavior motivated by coherence among goals, values, and regulations). An example of integrated regulation is: I do something because it fits with my internal standards and values. These four types of motivation are similar to those identified by Katz and Kahn (1966) and also to the motivations derived from an outcome-based analysis (see Table 1).

**Figure 1. Relationship among motivational patterns identified by different theories**

Outcome	Katz and Kahn	SDT	OBT
Reaction of the reactor to the individual	Instrumental rewards	External regulation	Extrinsic
Internal consequences for the individual	Self-expression	Intrinsic motivation	Intrinsic
Consequences for the reactor	Internalized values	Integrated regulation	Contributive
Consequences for the relationship	Legal compliance	Introjected regulation	Relational

Locus of causality, however, is insufficient to categorize the different outcomes defined in OBT because it does not distinguish the recipient of the outcomes. We need, then, to incorporate a new dimension that refers to the individual's perceptions about the recipient of the outcomes: *the perceived locus of consequence*. Following Deci and Ryan's definition of locus of causality, we define perceived locus of consequence.

“Activity that is perceived as having an *internal locus of consequence* is seen as directly affecting the individual, whereas activity that is perceived as having an *external locus of consequence* is seen as directly affecting somebody or something outside the individual.”

With this new dimension, we can characterize the four types of motivation in a two-dimensional space (see Figure 1). Extrinsic and relational motivations belong to the category of perceived external locus of causality because, in both cases, action is seen as being brought about by events or pressures outside of one's integrated sense of self. In the case of extrinsic motivation, the individual's action is induced by an external reward contingent to the action. In the case of relational motivation, the individual's action is seen as brought about by external norms (explicit or implicit) that affect the relationship between the individual and the reactor. The most extreme case of relational motivation is when there is a threat to the continuance of the relationship.

Intrinsic and contributive motivations belong to the category of perceived internal locus of causality because, in both cases, action is congruent with one's sense of self. In the case of intrinsic motivation, the action itself is interesting or fun for the individual (even if it involves a real sacrifice for the reactor). In the case of contributive motivation, the action is important for the individual because it fits with his or her value system (even if it involves a real sacrifice for the individual).

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivations belong to the category of perceived internal locus of consequence because, in both cases, action is seen as directly affecting the individual. In the case of extrinsic motivation, the individual expects to receive some contingent rewards from the reactor as compensation for the action (salary, recognition, and so on). In the case of intrinsic motivation, the individual expects to obtain a positive experience by performing the action (learning, fun, and so on).

Contributive and relational motivations belong to the category of perceived external locus of consequence because, in both cases, action is seen as directly affecting somebody or something outside the individual. In the case of contributive motivation, the action is expected to have a direct impact on the reactor (for example, another person, a group, or a

company). In the case of relational motivation, the action is expected to have a direct impact on the relationship between the individual and the reactor (which is outside the individual).

In summary, we propose that the four output-based motivations may be classified in terms of the individual's perceptions of locus of causality and locus of consequence. This suggests that these motivations are perceived as different by individuals and may be relevant from a decision-making point of view. We can now introduce a third proposition of OBT:

**Proposition 3:** Different types of motivation arise from the individuals' perceptions about locus of causality and locus of consequence. Extrinsic motivation arises from perceptions that have an extrinsic locus of causality and an internal locus of consequence. Intrinsic motivation arises from perceptions that have an internal locus of causality and an internal locus of consequence. Contributive motivation arises from perceptions that have an internal locus of causality and an external locus of consequence. And relational motivation arises from perceptions that have an external locus of causality and an external locus of consequence.

### ***Multiple Sources of Motivation and Motivational Profile***

A consequence-based definition of work motivation changes the traditional way we treat simultaneous sources of motivation. In an outcome-based framework of work motivation, there are four types of consequences of behavior, or motives, which can motivate people to act. These consequences are not exclusive but interrelated. Therefore, individuals generally act based on a combination of extrinsic, intrinsic, contributive, and relational motivations, each one having a particular weight. The particular weight that an individual assigns to the different types of motivation constitutes what we call that individual's motivational profile.

Initially, self-determination theory, due to its emphasis on locus of causality, treated the different types of motivation as competing sources of motivation. Later, it acknowledged that some types of extrinsic rewards (those that are not seen as controlling) do not necessarily undermine intrinsic motivation. Other authors, such as Amabile (1993), have provided different points of view for the relationship among types of motivation. Amabile argues that extrinsic and intrinsic motivations do not operate in a simple additive fashion or in simple opposition. The increase in one type of motivation may, in some cases, reduce other types of motivation, whereas, in other cases, it may maintain or increase other types of motivation. Thus, when adopting a decision about incentives, managers should take into account the effect on total motivation, not only on the specific types addressed.

The concept of motivational profiles is not new. In self-concept theory, Leonard et al. (1999) propose that individuals have motivational profiles that reflect the relative strength of the different types of motivation. Several studies support the idea of a motivational profile. Using an exchange perspective, Cardona, Lawrence, and Bentler (in press) present evidence that an individual's relationship with the organization depends on a combination of perceived economic rewards, perceived job characteristics, and perceived organizational support. Perceptions of high economic rewards tend to foster extrinsic motivation, perceptions of a job with interesting characteristics (such as variety or autonomy) tend to foster intrinsic motivation, and perceptions of a supportive organization tend to foster contributive motivation through the internalization of the norm of reciprocity. The results of this study suggest not only that these motivations exist together but also that they are positively correlated.

Dermer (1975) found that, in a work setting, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations are not independent. More evidence on the combination of different motivational dimensions can be found in Thompson and Bono's (1993) study of motivation for volunteer firefighters. In their survey, 90% of the firefighters in the sample said they are motivated by the autonomy of the job, while 87% said they are motivated by the opportunity to make "a real contribution to an important activity" (p. 330). In sum, it seems likely that different types of motivation coexist in the decision process.

Proposition 4: Individuals' behaviors are motivated by a particular motivational profile, including extrinsic, intrinsic, contributive, and relational motivations. This profile defines individuals' willingness to act in a particular social context, at a particular moment in time.

### ***Motivational Conflict and Learning***

Motivational profiles are not fixed; they may change as a result of the individual's experiences. More generally, decisions among conflicting alternatives have an impact on individuals' decision-making rules. Here, we will refer to motivational learning in a decision-making perspective, and define it as the creation, reinforcement, or refinement of an individual's decision rule.

We will focus on learning as a result of direct experience, although, as noted by Wood and Bandura (1989), the same learning phenomena may result from observation of other people's behavior and of the consequences of it. Individuals may even learn out of self-reflection, usually as a product of external circumstances. For example, the death of a loved one may lead to a process of self-reflection that may change dramatically the individual's motivational profile and, thus, his or her decision rule.

Different motivation theories propose pre-determined decision mechanisms by which the individual selects alternatives according to a set of given conditions. In need-based theories, for example, the decision criteria are the relative salience of needs, which Maslow (1954) organized as a hierarchy of needs. In these theories, individuals select the alternative that meets the lowest level of their currently unmet needs. In norm-based theories, such as those regarding self-concept, individuals choose the alternative that is most consistent with their self-perception or that matches their ideal self (Leonard, et al., 1999). According to both of these theories, people do not exercise real freedom in their choices. They are bound to a specific location on a theoretical map of decision criteria. Thus, in these theories, learning is a structural process of fulfilling needs or adapting to different social identities.

In self-determination theory, the learning process is called internalization and it consists of transforming externally enforced rules into internally integrated values. Through this process, the locus of causality changes from external to internal, and the motivation changes from extrinsic to intrinsic. In outcome-based theory, we are interested in the consequences of action. Thus, learning is conceptualized as the process of creating complete expectations of the different consequences of action, and more specifically, as the capacity to incorporate the social environment in the individual's decision-making process.

In OBT, motivational learning is the product of how the individual resolves motivational conflicts. These conflicts appear in situations in which the individual needs to choose among several alternative actions, each one having different potential combinations of extrinsic, intrinsic, contributive, and relational motivation for that individual. Sometimes one alternative is clearly superior to all others –it simultaneously engages the individual's

extrinsic, intrinsic, contributive, and relational motivations. In this situation, the individual's decision is trivial. We say that, although the individual may learn operationally, no motivational learning is experienced in this case, because the individual's decision rule remains the same. However, very often the decision is not so trivial because the individual experiences a conflict among the different motivations involved in his or her choices. We distinguish between two types of motivational conflict: intra-motivational and inter-motivational.

An *intra-motivational* conflict occurs when the conflict arises among different motives of the same type, such as a decision between money and status, both of which engage the individual's extrinsic motivation. The decision-maker may resolve this kind of conflict by calculating the results –costs and benefits– of the different alternatives, and by choosing the one that has the highest value. After his or her decision, the individual tests whether he or she obtains the expected results. Through this experience he or she may reinforce or refine the decision-making rule. We call this process calculative learning.

Proposition 5: Resolving intra-motivational conflicts, that is, conflicts among motives of the same kind, results in calculative learning.

An *inter-motivational* conflict occurs when the conflict arises among motives of different types, such as money and learning, which engage the individual's extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, respectively. Resolving this conflict requires more than a simple calculation because the two motives are like apples and oranges: the value of their outcomes cannot be directly compared. First, the individual needs to consider the relative value of the motivations involved. For example, the decision between two alternatives that result in money and learning does not depend only on the amount of money or the kind of learning. It requires the individual to assess the relative importance that he or she assigns to extrinsic and intrinsic motives. Once the person assigns relative weights to the different motives, he or she can then assign costs and benefits to each alternative and select the best one. As in the previous case, the person learns by assessing whether his or her decision results in the expected outcomes.

Through this experience the individual may not only reinforce or change his or her decision-making rule in terms of the values of individual motives, but also in terms of the relative importance of the different types of motivation. For example, a person who sacrifices making short-term money for the sake of learning by going to a community college may find a better job in the future and reinforce the decision rule that, in the long run, learning is more important than short-term money. But this is not just an adjustment at the calculative level; it implies also a deeper learning: a learning to defer external pressures for the internal consequences of the behavior. We call this second type of learning *evaluative* learning.

Evaluative learning, as opposed to calculative learning, implies a change in the individual's motivational profile. It is the variation in the individual's capacity to value the consequences of any type of motivation. For example, a little boy may value only the extrinsic consequences of his behavior: obtaining a reward or avoiding punishment. Little by little he may learn to defer his external drives and acquire effective personal habits. Finally, the boy may learn to appreciate the effect of his behaviors on others. Thus, in our view of learning, decision rules and motivational profiles are neither fixed, as are traits, nor situation-specific attributes that are formed for each decision. They are part of the individual's personal development.

Proposition 6: Resolving inter-motivational conflicts, that is, conflicts among motives of different kinds, results in evaluative learning.

Through an active process of making decisions to resolve motivational conflicts, individuals reinforce or change their evaluation of the different consequences of their behavior. In this process, they may learn to appreciate those consequences, and give them more weight in their decision rule. For example, a person who does not care about the impact of his or her behavior on others, may learn to appreciate that impact and start acting accordingly. Assuming that breadth in understanding consequences of behavior leads to better decisions than narrowness, we call this process, *positive evaluative learning*. However, it is also possible that a person makes decisions in ways that decrease his or her ability to appreciate those consequences. For example, if a person steals money from another, he or she is favoring the extrinsic motivation over the contributive motivation. If the thief is successful, he or she may reinforce the decision making rule that values the extrinsic consequences of action and does not value the consequences of action for others. We call this process *negative evaluative learning*.

Proposition 7: Positive evaluative learning leads to increasing the number of consequences, or their weight, that an individual considers in the decision process, whereas negative evaluative learning leads to decreasing the number of consequences, or their weight, that an individual considers in the decision process.

### **Discussion and implications for future research**

By explaining work motivation with a focus on the expected outcomes, we provide a new framework for understanding motivation. This framework identifies four types of consequences that lead to four different types of motivation: extrinsic, intrinsic, contributive, and relational. We then categorize these types of motivation in a two-dimensional space according to their perceived locus of causality and their perceived locus of consequence.

Outcome-based theory of work motivation may contribute to different research streams within organizational behavior. For example, applying this theory to research about in-role and extra-role behaviors and, in particular, studies on organizational citizenship behavior, may help us simplify our currently diverse explanations. For example, previous research on organizational citizenship behavior provides a diverse set of antecedents, including individual characteristics, task characteristics, organizational characteristics, and leadership behaviors (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). Scholars have suggested a motivational basis for organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1990), but have yet to explicate or empirically study how motivation theory fits these antecedents.

Another area where OBT may be important is the field of procedural justice. Research on procedural justice implies the existence of contributive motivation (Cropanzano & Folger, 1996; Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Robbins, Summers, Miller, & Hendrix, 2000). Folger and Konovsky suggest that procedures have instrumental and noninstrumental aspects, where “noninstrumental procedural justice can be interpreted in terms of features –actions taken and opportunities provided by a decision maker– that convey respect for employees’ rights and imply that employees are ends rather than means” (p. 127). Future studies may explicitly relate noninstrumental procedures, motivated by the well-being of employees, with the decision maker’s contributive motivation.

Organizational commitment is another important topic in OB research that may be enriched by including the different types of motivation proposed by OBT. Allen and Meyer (1990) identified three types of organizational commitment, each with different antecedents. Some of these antecedents were studied by Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002), who correlated several motivational aspects with the different types of commitment. Motivational aspects regarding work experiences (intrinsic motivation) correlate highly with affective commitment. Motivational aspects regarding organizational support (contributive motivation) correlate highly with normative commitment. No motivational aspects correlate highly with continuance commitment. We believe that these results are due to the different motivational nature of continuance commitment. The motivation behind this type of commitment should be the desire to strengthen or weaken the relationship. Therefore, we believe that relational motivation may be an important antecedent of continuance organizational commitment.

This four-category framework of outcome-based work motivation provides a practical tool to promote work motivation in organizations at the individual, group and organizational levels. At the individual level, it helps identify the different motivational profiles of employees. For example, there may be employees who focus on extrinsic motives in their job, whereas others may have a broader motivational profile that includes all four types of work motivation. By understanding the motivational profiles of individual employees, managers can better tailor incentive systems to encourage employees' contributions to the organization.

Employees' motivational profiles also influence group and organization level activity such as commitment, conflict, and turnover. For example, when there is a merger between two organizations, the resulting company may be very different in terms of incentives, promotion opportunities and culture. By understanding employees' motivational profiles, managers can better predict how these changes are likely to affect employees' willingness to work for the new company.

Thus, OBT is important because of its direct implications for leaders, managers, employees, and human resource practices, including selection processes, incentive systems, and retention of talent. Also, it can be applied to leadership, looking at the motivations of the followers in the relationship. Competitive advantage in modern organizations frequently involves employees who contribute more than what is contractually required. Organizations must move beyond extrinsic and relational motivation systems. This requires that leaders learn how to create conditions that facilitate the development of richer motivational profiles in their followers. In other words, leaders need to find ways to promote, in their followers, intrinsic and contributive motivation to work. □

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