Motivation、Leadership

As the mind-map shows, motivation applies to and integrates various theories and concepts, including as Expectancy Theory, Theory X and Y, and the Effective Reward System in the workplace, as well as perceived organizational support. How can motivation have so many applications? Motivation is by definition a process that accounts for an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort with respect to the attainment of goals. In the real world, we pursue different goals by proceeding through different stages. When I was in high school, my goal was to enter a prominent university, and Expectancy Theory explains why I studied ceaselessly. Once that goal was achieved, I then aspired to have the opportunity to participate in a co-op internship. Our life is thus an ongoing process of pursuing and achieving accomplishments (or not). As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "life is a journey not a destination". Motivation is critical during that life journey, as it drives us to perform well in school, succeed in the workplace, and strive to fulfill our dreams.

I had a part-time job in an instrument store, and at the director asked us to recommend particularly profitable brands to customers. At first I was motivated to do so, but two of my co-workers responded to customers passively and seldom tried to spontaneously connect with them. My co-workers did not want to take any responsibility for helping the store to increase its profits. In addition, they were not responsive when I asked for help with problems. Dealing with my co-workers was very tedious, and after a few weeks, I lost my energy for doing my job. In addition, I was frustrated and angry with the director as well as my co-workers.

As Theory Y explains, the director tended to believe that his employees worked hard without his supervision, which just wasn't true for my co-workers. Most people seem to need extrinsic motivators such as pay, bonuses, and other tangible rewards to motivate them to perform well in the workplace. Therefore, I would have suggested that the director implement an effective reward system. There are different variable-pay programs, and the one I would have recommended is merit-based pay, which is based on a performance appraisal rating. If the employees could get rewards for selling more instruments, instead of receiving fixed salaries, I'm sure they would have been motivated to sell as many products as possible. Further, whenever the employees performed well, the director should have utilized an employee recognition program, which would have rewarded employees for their performance. This would have motivated the employees to maintain their high performance level and might also have increased their organizational commitment. Lastly, the director should also have given clear and immediate feedback to employees who performed poorly, which would have helped them to understand their mistakes and reduced the possibility that they would make the same mistakes again in the future.

It should be noted that these methods do not work well in all working environments. For example, they would not have been beneficial at the instrument store if my co-workers had cared little about bonuses and considered leisure to be their top priority. In such a scenario, intrinsic motivators such as challenges and interests might be more effective than extrinsic motivators. This approach reflects Path-goal Theory, which asserts that a good leader should understand employees' needs and priorities in order to design an effective reward system that corresponds to them.

Group Development、Conflict、Communication

Another critical concept that we learned about and explored in the OB class is group development. Our team went through the different stages of group development. The first stage of 'forming' took a while because the team members had different cultural backgrounds, but once we got to know each other better, we moved on to the 'storming' stage. Weak communication was our main problem during that stage, as tended to be unresponsive to each other's viewpoints. However, one person on our team was a skilled problem-solver. He assumed a leadership role by encouraging us to express our opinions in order to resolve our differences, and oversaw our chain of command.

We did our fantasy project during the storming stage, and we obviously did poorly on our presentation. We then went through the norming stage quickly, moving on to performing stage, which was the stage in which we performed best. Our team scheduled a meeting to discuss the case project. Each group member was willing to sacrifice time in order for the team to complete the assignment. Some teammates had a particularly people-oriented communication style when we discussed our main goal for the assignment, whereas others had a more action-oriented style. This created balance in the team, which helped us to function effectively.

Throughout the OB class, I found certain communication and conflict styles were bundled. The people-oriented communication style tends to be accompanied by the avoiding, yielding, or compromising conflict style. People who are more action-oriented tend to exhibit forcing or problem-solving styles when they face conflicts. In my opinion, each communication style has its own unique advantages and disadvantages. However, the problem-solving style is the best for resolving conflicts. It is the only one of the five communication styles than can create a win-win outcome without disadvantaging any parties. This is connected to the concept of pareto improvement , which we were taught in managerial economics class. In reflecting on this connection, I recognize that I was surprised to find that all the concepts we learned about in class were interrelated.

 Leadership、Organizational structure

Organizational culture and structure、Power

Having a leader in our group was crucial to our progression through the storming stage. However, different companies have different expectations in terms of leadership and different leadership outcomes. For example, I have a close friend who interviewed for a flight attendant position with a large airline that had a large, centralized structure and a coercive leader. She said that according to the airline's organizational culture, employees were to do whatever the company asked of them, without question. When asked whether she was a leader or follower, she said the latter, even though it wasn't true. She did this to appear suited to the company's organizational culture in order to be considered for selection. As the company offer competitive salaries and a strong reputation, my friend therefore felt proud to work for it and was very committed to her job.

The leader of the airline company scored low on the openness trait, which was evident in his low acceptance of his employees' opinions. Many leaders – such as Mark Zuckerberg, Barack Obama and Bill Gates – tend to score high on extroversion, conscientiousness, openness, and emotional intelligence. Nevertheless, the example of the airline company shows that scoring low on one or two traits does not prevent a leader from being successful. It should also be acknowledged that the shared organization culture of the airline company might collapse if the owner did not exercise coercive power.

Decision-making

Although leaders make the decisions within an organization, employees do not always to stay with that organization. My friend decided to stay with the company after evaluating it in comparison to other airline companies. The company scored low on factors such as teamwork, communication and flexibility, but she put less weight on those factors. However, it should be noted that the bounds of our rationality cause us to miss certain details and complications when we make decisions. Further, leaders and employees are both vulnerable when they are making decisions that require an increase in commitment.

Value

In conclusion, employees must possess certain traits and skills in order for companies to maintain a high-quality working environment. Regardless of what kind of job a person has, having a positive attitude is one of the most important factors for success. Even if an employer is not the optimal leader that an employee would ideally like to follow, it is always possible to learn from one's own and others' mistakes. Having such a positive attitude will enable employees to have an open mind, to accept others, and to be self-motivated to improve in order to become an ideal person.