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How much effort will I put into my work?

It depends on your type of motivation

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Overview

Why do some employees put a lot of effort into their job, while others don't? Several motivational theories have shed light on this issue, resulting in a vast literature of diverging theories all of which propose various determinants of employee motivation. Classical theories include reinforcement theory, Maslow's need hierarchy, expectancy-value theory, and goal setting theory. Recently, Self-determination theory (SDT) has been introduced in the field of work motivation, and provides an encompassing framework to understand the (proximal and distal) personal and situational influences of motivation. SDT starts from a positive perspective on humanity and proposes that employees put the most effort in their job when they are satisfied in their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. The level of need satisfaction experienced on the job relates to the way that individuals feel motivated to perform their work, ranging from intrinsic motivation on the one hand (which is the most autonomous form of motivation) to extrinsic motivation on the other (which is the most controlled form of motivation), as well as one's intrinsic and extrinsic values. After describing the classical views on motivation, this chapter presents each of the personal influences of motivation, and describes their relation with work effort and other outcomes, as well as their situational antecedents. Building on SDT, this chapter provides an overview of various motivational factors that stimulate employees to put effort in the job.

Introduction

Sara drags herself to work. She hardly takes any initiative and really only works for the money. She picks up her “real life” every evening and weekend. At work, she has to be directed from one task to another and must be closely supervised. Doing the bare minimum to make sure she doesn’t get fired, she doesn’t put a lot of effort into her work and feels drained at the end of the day. David, on the other hand, is highly energized, consistently trying to do his best. He often seeks new challenges and goes the extra mile in new projects. David’s performance exceeds not only his supervisor’s expectations but also his own goals.

Sara and David clearly differ in how much effort they put into their work, but how can such differences be explained? Motivational psychologists contend that people put effort in their work (or work hard) when they have the motivation to do so, that is, when they have the energy that directs their behavior and determines its form, direction, intensity and duration (Pinder, 2008, p.11). Throughout the years, work motivation has been studied from various perspectives. Influential frameworks to understand motivation in the context of work include reinforcement theory (Thorndike, 1911; Skinner, 1969), Maslow’s need hierarchy (Maslow, 1943) expectancy-value theory (Vroom, 1964), the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), as well as goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), to name a few. We elaborate on some of these theories next (see Ambrose & Kulik, 1999 for an overview).

Classical Motivational Theories

Reinforcement Theory

Throughout history, motivation has been approached from different perspectives by practitioners and scholars alike. One of the oldest perspectives on motivation is reinforcement theory, which is grounded in the behaviorist tradition (Thorndike, 1911; Skinner, 1969). Rather

than focusing on people's internal states, reinforcement theory focusses on the idea that people's behavior is determined by its consequences, with rewards increasing the likelihood of a behavior and punishment decreasing the likelihood of a behavior. In an organizational context, reinforcement theory could be used to modify behavior by rewarding individuals for engaging in desirable behaviors and punishing them for engaging in undesirable behaviors. Over time, this would produce more desired behaviors and fewer undesired behaviors. For example, David may receive a bonus for his exceptional effort on a project, while Sara could be reprimanded for checking Facebook during office hours. In both instances, the consequences attached to these behaviors will impact the likelihood of the behaviors being repeated in the future. Reinforcement theory is still valuable in understanding the impact of different pay schemes such as pay for performance, piece rate and profit sharing (Fall & Roussel, 2014).

Maslow's Need Theories

Although reinforcement theory remains popular in many organizations, scholars such as Maslow (1943) have criticized reinforcement theory arguing that not all rewards (or punishments) would have the same effect on all employees. He contended the effect of rewards and punishments would depend on the degree to which the rewards and punishments impacted employees' current needs. Specifically, Maslow theorized five hierarchical needs: (1) physiological needs (e.g., hunger, thirst, air), (2) safety needs (safe and predictable environment, free of illness), (3) belongingness and love (e.g., interaction and affection from others), (4) esteem (stable high self-esteem and esteem from others), and (5) self-actualization, the growth need where one 'becomes everything one is capable of becoming.' Maslow's theory of inherent needs brought the importance of needs –and psychological processes in general— to the attention of organizational researchers and managers as a source of motivation in workers and raised awareness for other need theories such as the socialized needs for achievement, power and

affiliation (McClelland, 1965; Murray, 1938).

Empirical research shows that the satisfaction of all Maslow's theorized needs contributes to people's well-being (Tay & Diener, 2011) and Maslow's argument that the general work environment needs to be tailored to satisfy employees' needs is currently reflected in the literature on idiosyncratic deals, in which employees negotiate for more flexibility, developmental opportunities or better working conditions to satisfy their needs (Rousseau, 2001). Although these further developments of Maslow's theory are fruitful and Maslow's hierarchy of needs itself has received some empirical support, many of the tenets of Maslow's theory remain unsupported by empirical evidence and thus should not be leveraged as part of evidence-based organizational practices.

Maslow's theory also gave rise to the differentiation between Theory X and Y by McGregor (1960), which represent two different points of view on employees managers may hold. Theory Y argues that employees are motivated by Maslow's growth need of self-actualization and want to work, develop their talents and take responsibility. This contrasts with Theory X stating that employees are only motivated by Maslow's lower order needs, are lazy and will engage in work only when they are closely monitored, controlled and rewarded. Notably, when taking the latter perspective, managers assume that employees likely want to do nothing at all and need to be directed around, as is the case for Sara in our opening example. Although such an approach may cause employees to move, true motivation will still be lacking. For employees to be truly motivated -that is, to be energetic, directed towards a goal and persistent - managers need to adopt a Theory Y perspective, in which employees are assumed to be inherently energetic. From a Theory Y perspective, managers only need to nourish and channel the inherent energy employees have so that the employee can direct themselves and persist, for example in putting effort into their work. When managers assume all employees are like David, they just

have to make sure to provide their employees with enough variation and challenges. The differentiation between Theory X and Y shows that managers' view on motivation causes them to rely on different motivation theories and managerial practices.

Expectancy Value Theory

In contrast to Maslow's needs hierarchy, expectancy value theory (Vroom, 1964) reflects a cognitive decision making process in which motivation for an activity (and perhaps a job) is a result of the evaluation of extent to which (a) exerting effort will result in a particular level of performance (expectancy), (b) performing the activity will lead to valued outcomes (instrumentality), and (c) the outcomes associated with an activity are desirable (valence). The combination of these three factors produces the overall motivational force for the activity. When deciding what task to pursue (or perhaps the level of performance for which one should strive), individuals are theorized to choose the option with the highest motivational force. For example, David may choose to engage in additional projects because he feels competent in taking charge (expectancy) and is convinced doing well on these projects will help him obtain a promotion (instrumentality) which is something that he greatly values (valence). Expectancy value theory has received some support, but is generally better in predicting employees' attitudes than their performance (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996).

Elements of expectancy value theory have been incorporated into the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which added the social context as an important determinant of individual motivation. The theory of planned behavior suggests that perceived behavioral control (similar to expectancy) and attitude (similar to valence) towards a particular behavior are important in determining motivation, but the social context (social norms or what others will think) will also play a role. Moreover, these factors are expected to predict behavioral intentions, which have the most proximal connection to actual behavior. For example, David may see himself as capable of

taking on additional projects (perceived behavioral control) and see it as valuable to develop his leadership skills (attitude); however, his intention to engage in additional projects may –to some degree—also depend on whether or not he thinks his coworkers or boss are likely to appreciate it (social context). Although incorporating social norms is conceptually useful, research suggests that this factor may be the least important antecedent (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

Goal Setting Theory

Goal setting theory is among the most well-known theories of employee motivation. Hundreds of studies have been conducted in support of this theory, showing that difficult, specific goals that are accepted by employees result in better performance than easy or “do your best” goals (Locke & Latham, 2002). Goal specificity is beneficial because individuals know precisely what is expected of them, making subsequent feedback about one’s performance more meaningful. Goal difficulty is a function of goal level and the experience or capabilities of the employees. As such, it is important for managers to understand how to appropriately calibrate individuals’ goals so that they are not too difficult (resulting in low commitment or low acceptance) or not too easy (resulting in the employee not reaching his/her potential). Another thing to consider is the ways in which managers can foster employee goal acceptance and commitment. If an employee is not committed to a goal, the goal will have no effect on behavior. One way to foster commitment is to engage in participative goal setting, which is when the manager and employee jointly determine the goals that an employee will pursue. Having a say in one’s goals has been shown to lead employees to feel more ownership for the goals and be more likely to strongly commit to pursuing them (Locke & Latham, 2002).

Goal setting theory has led to management practices such as management by objectives, where employees are involved in setting the goals for the company, and popular motivational concepts such as the formulation of SMART-goals, that is, specific, measurable, attainable,

realistic and timely goals.

Current State of Motivation Theory

In recent years, several motivational theories have been proposed emphasizing factors such as the difference between learning and performance goals, basic tendencies to approach valued objectives versus avoid unwanted outcomes, the importance of fit between the employee and the organization, the importance of employee feelings of fairness with regard to rewards, organizational processes, and interpersonal treatment, as well as the need to design jobs that enhance worker motivation. Within job design research, employees are assumed to be most motivated when they can use their skills, strongly identify with their work, see the benefit of their work in the lives of others, have autonomy, and get informative feedback (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The plethora of theories, that each only describe some aspects of motivation, has led some scholars to characterize the current state of motivation theory as being dominated by mini-theories - lacking an integrative and overarching theory.

Efforts to integrate the older well-established theories and the current mini-theories have for example resulted in the classification of work motivation determinants in terms of personal and situational factors. According to this framework, motivation develops from an interplay between personal (e.g., personality, affect) and situational (i.e., HR-practices, one's job) factors that can be distal, serving as a background against which employees engage in a particular behavior (such as personality and HR-practices), or proximal, closely attached to the context in which the behavior occurs (such as affect and one's job). As outlined in Figure 1, employees' engagement in particular tasks and hence their work behaviors and well-being are mostly determined by proximal personal factors (Diefendorff & Chandler, 2011). These, in turn, are shaped by more distal personal influences (e.g., stable personality and values) as well as proximal external influences (e.g., job design, equity and fairness), and distal external influences (e.g.,

national and organizational culture).

One modern motivational theory that attempts to bridge the micro-theories and addresses both personal and situational influences on motivation is self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000). As a result, SDT has been called a “grand theory” of motivation. SDT has been used to understand people’s motivation in a variety of life domains including education, sports, health care, and organizational contexts (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In adopting a broad perspective, SDT incorporates various aspects of different theories, but also adds to the field by arguing that different types of motivation (i.e., different reasons for pursuing activities) may lead to qualitatively different outcomes for individuals and organizations. In other words, what is important is not just the amount of motivation, but also the nature or source of the motivation.

We focus on SDT in this chapter as a means to understand why employees put effort in their job and focus on three important elements: psychological need satisfaction, the distinction between qualities of motivation (autonomous and controlled motivation), and intrinsic and extrinsic values.

Meta-Theory of Human Motivation

SDT's View of Humanity

SDT is based on the assumption that individuals are growth-oriented, (inter-)active organisms (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Rather than seeing employees as passive, reactive entities which need to be forced into particular behaviors, SDT argues that people are active human beings who are inclined to strive towards intra- and interpersonal growth (Figure 2). People thus aim to actualize their inherent potential: they want to continuously learn, develop their talents and integrate their experiences into a coherent and meaningful sense of self and therefore grow as a person. Moreover, at the social level, people’s growth orientation stimulates people to connect with others and to engage in meaningful interactions that are based on mutual care and respect.

According to SDT, people want to build important social relationships and to become interconnected with others. To realize this growth, people are assumed to actively interact with their environment and to engage in activities that support their development and connectedness with others. Rather than merely responding to their environment or being pushed and pulled around, they actively seek to interact with the environment and potentially even shape their own environment.

Comparing and Contrasting SDT against Other Theories of Motivation

SDT's positive view on mankind contrasts with many other motivational theories (Sheldon, Turban, Brown, Barrick, & Judge, 2003). First, not all theories assume that people are active by their very nature. For example, reinforcement theory assumes that people can only be motivated to put effort in their job by rewarding or punishing them, thus assuming people are simply re-active rather than active. Second, not all theories expect people to be directed toward personal growth. For example, goal setting theory argues people set goals (or commit to assigned goals) that create a difference between their current situation and a desired situation. The difference thus causes psychological tension that motivates individuals to pursue the goal with the intention of alleviating the tension and thus returning to a state of homeostasis. This view does not directly acknowledge the importance of higher-level goals related to personal growth and integration that can shape the selection of lower-level work goals.

SDT's positive view of mankind is similar to several existing theories of human motivation including Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) and Theory Y (McGregor, 1960), assuming that people are -in essence- growth oriented. Despite assuming all people are active growth-oriented individuals who interact with the environment, SDT also acknowledges that this growth orientation does not come about automatically. For people to realize this inherent positive

tendency, they need to satisfy their basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness, which are considered the nutriments of human motivation and individual thriving.

Basic Need Satisfaction as Proximal Determinants of Motivation

Definition of SDT's Basic Needs

Consistent with Maslow's argument that needs are fundamental aspects of employee motivation, SDT maintains that needs play an essential role in understanding and determining people's motivation. However, SDT's conceptualization of needs differs somewhat from Maslow's. According to SDT, employees (and people in general) require that their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are satisfied in order to function well psychologically, as much as plants need water, sunshine, and minerals to flourish.

The need for *autonomy* is defined as an individual's inherent desire to act with a sense of choice and volition, and to feel psychologically free. This need aligns with the construct of locus of control which describes the feeling of being the author of one's actions rather than a pawn being pushed and pulled around by others. Importantly, this does not mean that people always need to decide for themselves and be independent. Independence and the satisfaction of the need for autonomy are not synonymous nor are they necessarily linked. For example, employees may execute a task assigned by their supervisors and act in a non-independent manner, but if they see value in that task and volitionally engage in it, they will feel satisfied in their need for autonomy. In contrast, if supervisors adopting a laissez-faire leadership style, that is, if they leave their employees all by themselves, without giving any guidance or support, employees might be independent but feel little satisfied in their need for autonomy, as they would rather have some instruction and attention from their supervisor.

The need for *competence* is the desire to feel capable of mastering the environment and to bring about desired outcomes. This need shares resemblance with notions such as expectancy and

feeling capable of reaching one's goals as outlined in expectancy-value theory and goal setting theory, respectively. People feel satisfied in their need for competence when they explore and actively seek out challenges in which they can extend their physical and psychological skills. Satisfaction of the need for competence helps people to develop their skills and to adapt to complex and changing environments.

The need for *relatedness* is the inherent propensity to feel connected to others, to be a member of a group, to love and care for others and to be loved and cared for in return. The need for relatedness is satisfied when people experience a sense of communion and maintain close and intimate relationships. Employees who feel part of a team and feel free to express their personal concerns and positive experiences are more likely to have their need for relatedness met than employees who feel lonely and lack social support. The notion of relatedness is acknowledged in the role of social support and the motivating power of helping others (Grant & Parker, 2009).

Distinguishing SDT's Needs from Other Need Theories

SDT's construct of basic psychological needs differs somewhat from other need concepts. Maslow, Murray and McGregor (mentioned above) have mostly defined need constructs that people develop during their life span through socialization or particular life experiences. For example, employees who have frequently been praised after accomplishing a task may develop a strong need for achievement. The strength of these needs will subsequently drive employee behaviour until those particular needs are satisfied and homeostasis is reached. In this view, need strength is an individual difference variable and should therefore only be seen as a distal personal influence on motivation (Diefendorff & Chandler, 2011).

In contrast to these ideas, SDT postulates that the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are innate and do not necessarily develop as a result of particular experiences. Rather, each of the needs is an inherent part of human nature and all people have these needs,

whether or not one is conscious of them. Thus, the focus is not on how strong one's need is, but rather on the extent to which one's need is satisfied. This approach is analogous to a focus on physical needs in which it is not the variation in the need for food that is predictive of people's physical well-being, but rather the degree to which people feel their need for food is satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Although employees from different age groups and different cultures may express and satisfy their basic needs in different ways, everybody is likely to benefit from having the basic psychological needs satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This focus on need satisfaction allows for a focus on needs as proximal personal antecedents of employee motivation.

Evidence Supporting the Consequences of SDT's Needs

Although Maslow's need hierarchy and related theories are often mentioned in the management literature, empirical support for their assumptions is often limited. In contrast, the beneficial effects of need satisfaction from an SDT perspective have been frequently supported. A recent meta-analysis of about 100 empirical studies (Van den Broeck, Ferris, Rosen, & Chang, in press) provides strong support for the argument that basic need satisfaction at work allows employees to put effort into their job, have positive attitudes towards work, and feel well. Specifically, satisfaction of each of the basic needs is associated with a series of positive behavioural outcomes, including productivity, creativity, and proactivity. Employees who feel satisfied in their needs show less deviant behaviour and are less absent than employees who lack the satisfaction of their basic psychological needs. Need satisfaction also promotes positive attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and increases well-being in terms of positive affect and engagement, while preventing burnout and strain.

Need satisfaction therefore represents a prerequisite for employees to put effort in their jobs, become deeply engaged in their work, develop positive attitudes towards their jobs, and feel well at work (see Figure 1). This is a particularly important conclusion given very few other

theories of motivation have extended the criterion space beyond performance to include factors such as employee well-being and attitudes.

Research on SDT's Needs: The Antecedents

When looking at the antecedents of need satisfaction, both personal and contextual influences come into play, as also mentioned in the overarching framework of motivation of Diefendorff and Chandler (2011). With regards to distal personal influences, it may be that some employees tend to have an easier time in satisfying their psychological needs. These employees are usually optimistic, mindful, proactive, have secure self-esteem, and score high on the big 5 personality factors (i.e., agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion and openness). For example, proactive employees seek-out new challenges in their work environment. The self-starting nature of proactivity satisfies an employee's need for autonomy while tackling a challenging new task satisfies the need for competence. Furthermore, employees who are highly agreeable, extraverted, and emotionally stable generally have an easier time forming close and meaningful relationship at work thus satisfying their need for relatedness.

With regard to the situational influences on motivation, the work environment can also play an important role in satisfying the basic needs, as employees encountering high job demands, role stressors, work family conflict or job insecurity find it more difficult to satisfy their basic psychological needs, whereas more need satisfaction is experienced when jobs contain various job resources ranging from opportunities to use various skills, task identity, autonomy, social support, and feedback (see Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Going beyond job characteristics, needs satisfaction is also fostered when supervisors are authentic or transformational as well as when organizations support employees and strive for fair exchanges, allow little politics and support feelings of fit with the employees (Van den Broeck et al., in press). In short, the literature

has linked various personal and contextual influences to basic need satisfaction, providing managers with various pathways through which they can enhance employee motivation.

According to SDT, the basic needs are the key to understanding why people put effort in their jobs and the cornerstone of employee motivation. We can expect that Sara feels little need satisfaction at work, while David is likely experiencing autonomy, competence and relatedness, and as a result, thrives in his job. Need satisfaction is also closely intertwined with other important aspects of motivation including different types of motivation (as another proximal personal antecedent of motivation) and the pursuit of values (as a distal personal antecedent of motivation). These aspects are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

Autonomous and Controlled Motivation

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Motivation Theories

Although several factors may serve as proximal personal influences on work motivation (Diefendorff & Chandler, 2011), in addition to need satisfaction, SDT predominantly points at the importance of different types of motivation. SDT begins by differentiating between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which are thought to reside at the extreme ends of their motivation continuum (Deci & Ryan, 2000). *Intrinsic motivation* is the engagement in an activity because it is fun, inherently interesting, or otherwise enjoyable. David may, for example, genuinely like and enjoy his work and feel satisfied by engaging in it. *Extrinsic motivation*, in contrast, reflects engagement in an activity in order to obtain an outcome that is separable from the activity itself (i.e., obtain a reward or avoid a punishment). Sara may mostly put effort in her work to receive a paycheck. The importance of intrinsic motivation has been acknowledged by several other theories within the work context, for example, when considering the added value of motivational job designs.

Different Types of Extrinsic Motivation

Perhaps it goes without saying, but not all jobs are intrinsically enjoyable. Indeed, many jobs contain boring, stressful, or mind-numbing tasks that can only be done out of extrinsic motivation (Sheldon et al., 2003). This may be problematic, as various laboratory studies have found that extrinsic motivation can be harmful to individual well-being (Deci, Ryan, & Koestner, 1999). Interestingly, SDT argues that not all extrinsic motivation is the same and that it can vary in the extent to which it is experienced as controlling or autonomous. Specifically, SDT identifies four types of extrinsic motivation that are arranged on a continuum from completely external and controlled to more internal and autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 2000, see Figure 3).

Starting with the most controlling form of extrinsic motivation, *external regulation* refers to the engagement in an activity to obtain external rewards or to avoid punishments administered by others. Such rewards and punishments can be material, such as when a consultant puts effort in his job to obtain a bonus or job security, but rewards and punishments can also be social in nature, such as when interns work hard to be praised and not neglected by their supervisors. The central role of both rewards and punishments is consistent with earlier behavioristic reinforcement theories. Moving along the extrinsic continuum, *introjected regulation* refers to being motivated by internalizing the extrinsic pressures to perform, resulting in the motivation to perform an action so as to feel proud or to avoid guilt and shame. For example, a consultant who works overtime on a project to avoid feeling ashamed and embarrassed for not meeting a client's deadline would experience introjected regulation. Moving further along the continuum, *identified regulation* involves employees endorsing the reason for the behavior and considering the behavior to be important or valuable. This is an autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. Consultants may spend hours preparing projects for clients, not because they enjoy it, but because they feel the project is important and will have a positive impact on the client's organization and its members. The most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is *integrated regulation*,

employees see the activity as aligned with their broader set of values, beliefs and –ultimately– their identity. Consultants identifying or internalizing their jobs would, for example, put in extra time and effort in working with clients because they see helping clients achieve their outcomes as consistent with who they are as individuals.

Autonomous and Controlled Motivation

External and introjected regulations are typified by a lack of internalization and by feelings of pressure, derived from others or one’s self. These types of motivation are therefore considered to be *controlled* in nature (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In contrast, in the case of identified and integrated regulation, employees experience a sense of volition. These types of motivation are grouped into *autonomous motivation* together with intrinsic motivation, which reflects individuals’ inherent, spontaneous interests in a particular activity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In sum, SDT replaces the classic distinctions between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with the grouping of the motivational types into autonomous and controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation is fueled by the satisfaction of the three basic needs and fosters the ability of employees to put effort in their jobs, while still feeling well. Controlled motivation, in contrast, frustrates the basic needs and is suggested to be detrimental for both employee well-being and performance.

Consequences and Antecedents of Autonomous and Controlled Motivation

SDT’s assumptions on the consequences of autonomous and controlled motivation are supported by an increasing body of research. Because of its close relationship with basic need satisfaction autonomous motivation relates to positive work behaviors, favorable attitudes, and higher well-being (Gagné et al., 2015), while controlled motivation is generally unrelated to these beneficial outcomes and may even be detrimental to employees. Recent research has revealed profiles in autonomous and controlled motivations, resulting in situations in which individuals can be high in both or high in only one form of motivation. The results of several studies suggest

that in the presence of high autonomous motivation, the degree of controlled motivation (low or high) did not negatively impact employee performance or well-being; however, when autonomous motivation was low, having high controlled motivation was linked to deficiencies in performance (Moran, Diefendorff, Kim, & Liu, 2012) and well-being (Van den Broeck, Lens, De Witte, & Van Coillie, 2013). These findings suggest that controlled motivation might not always be problematic, as long as it is combined with high levels of autonomous motivation.

Antecedents of autonomous and controlled motivation have focused on personal and situational influences. In terms of (distal) personal influences, several traits seem relevant: those who are high in self-esteem, emotional stability, and internal locus of control are more likely to be autonomously motivated than those scoring low on these personality dimensions. Some employees have also learned - through socialization - to search for the meaning and pleasure in their activities, while others are mostly driven by controls in the external environment or inside themselves. These employees are said to have an autonomous versus controlled general causality orientation, respectively (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). In terms of environmental influences, distal factors such as an organization's culture and compensation system can shape employees' motivation (Gagné et al., 2015). More proximal factors including job design, perceptions of equity and fairness, as well as leadership can also shape employees' motivation at work (Diefendorff & Chandler, 2011) and may contribute to the tendency to experience work as autonomously motivated or controlling.

In sum, SDT differentiates between different types of motivation and argues that controlled and autonomous motivations lead employees to put forth effort, but autonomous motivation results in enhanced well-being and thriving, whereas controlling motivation results in decreased well-being and the thwarting of one's psychological needs. Indeed, this is a primary contribution of SDT over something like goal-setting theory, which focuses on simply trying to

increase effort toward goal attainment. SDT argues that, while goals can lead individuals to action, controlling goals can do so at the cost of personal well-being, whereas autonomous goals can enhance well-being. Returning to Sara and David, we see that Sara is high in control motivation and feels she *has* to work which also means she finds her work draining and exhausting. David, on the other hand, is autonomously motivated and *wants* to work which is why he feels energized at work and is actively engaged in his tasks.

Distal Personal Antecedents: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Work Values

Values across Motivational Theories

The distal personal antecedents of work motivation include a variety of individual differences caused by genetic, biological and development influences (Diefendorff & Chandler, 2011). Within SDT, individual differences are mostly studied in terms of *values*, which are defined as enduring beliefs that particular modes of conduct or outcomes are more preferred than others. Values therefore serve as guidance for the development of our attitudes, choices and behaviors (Rokeach, 1973).

The pursuit of values is a critical aspect in motivational theories. Most scholars have addressed how strongly employees value work or its aspects. Working from expectancy-value theory, scholars would argue Sara chooses to put little effort into her work because she doesn't really value what she's doing. If she would value her work more, she would be more likely to actively engage in her work tasks. Similarly, in goal setting theory, scholars state that employees are motivated to achieve the goals they highly value: The more David is committed to his projects, the more effort he will put into completing them. Other scholars have adopted a slightly different approach by also considering the content of values. Schwartz (1999) for example postulates that employees may hold several different values and therefore strive for different outcomes. For example, Sara might value hedonism (seeking pleasure and enjoyment) more than

she values achievement. These values would translate into Sara coaxing through work and avoiding demanding tasks instead of putting in a great deal of effort.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Values in SDT

SDT suggest the pursuit of different values may lead to qualitative different outcomes, even when both values are closely attached to work. Specifically, SDT differentiates intrinsic from extrinsic work values (which are not to be confused with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation). *Intrinsic values* are prosocial in nature (Figure 4). They include contributing to the community, affiliating to others, and developing oneself. *Extrinsic values*, in contrast, are oriented towards materialism and refer to accumulating wealth, acquiring fame and achieving power (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). According to SDT, striving for intrinsic values aligns with people's growth-oriented nature, supporting the satisfaction of the basic needs and results in more adaptive outcomes as opposed to the pursuit of extrinsic values, which are less likely to contribute to the satisfaction of an individual's basic needs and growth-oriented nature, and may in fact undermine one's needs (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007).

Consequences of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Values

Although a vast amount of research supports SDT's view of intrinsic and extrinsic values in the educational or marketing context, research within the work domain is still scarce (e.g., Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). Initial research in the work context suggests that holding extrinsic values might result in fleeting feelings of satisfaction; however, employees holding intrinsic values are more likely to experience long-term engagement, job satisfaction, as well as reduced emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). The pursuit of extrinsic values has also been shown to prevent unemployed people from adapting flexibly to the labor market, even though a more flexible approach might increase their chances of finding high-quality employment (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, Lens, & De Witte, 2010).

Apart from these main effects, an intrinsic versus extrinsic orientation may also help employees to interact with the environment to realize an employees' growth potential. Employees who endorse intrinsic values are more likely to benefit from learning opportunities and increased levels of autonomy at work, than those who attach less importance to intrinsic values. The same pattern was also observed in terms of work engagement and exhaustion such that the endorsement of intrinsic values supported work engagement and decreased exhaustion (Van den Broeck, Van Ruysseveldt, Smulders, & De Witte, 2010). Recently, these results were replicated at the within-person level, meaning that intrinsically oriented employees experience high levels of work engagement on days they have opportunities to develop their skills, while being little engaged on days they cannot use their skills so much (Van den Broeck, Schreurs, Guenter, & van Emmerik, 2015).

Interestingly, the beneficial effects of individual intrinsic values and organizational intrinsic supplies align with the person-environment fit perspective (see part III, chapter 6). While a suitable fit between the individual's values and the organization's values may be desirable, a fit in extrinsic values, seems to result in less beneficial results. In contrast to the person-environment fit perspective, but in line with SDT, research among students shows that a focus on extrinsic values leads to lower levels of effort, persistence and well-being even when the context is rather extrinsic (Vansteenkiste, Timmermans, Lens, Soenens, & Van den Broeck, 2008).

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Values as Situational Influences

Apart from values as personality traits, studies also provide evidence for the beneficial (vs. detrimental) effects of intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) team and organizational values. They show, for example, that team members are more engaged when they see their team as holding more intrinsic as compared to extrinsic values (Schreurs, Van Emmerik, Van den Broeck, & Guenter, 2014), and see more flexibility in doing different jobs with their employer when they see their

organisation as promoting intrinsic rather than extrinsic values (Van den Broeck et al., 2014). SDT's differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic values thus not only provides insights in the distal personal antecedents of employee task engagement, but may also provide a fruitful framework to study team or organizational – or even national — culture, which is one among the most important distal environmental determinants of motivation (Diefendorff & Chandler, 2011).

Summary

In sum, motivation is a critical determinant of whether and in what ways employees will put effort into their jobs. Various motivational theories exist providing a range of distal and proximal contextual and personal influences on whether or not employees work hard. Within this chapter, we focused on self-determination theory (SDT) as one of the most encompassing contemporary theories of motivation, which may provide a multilayered answer as to why employees may put effort into their work. To truly motivate, managers should focus on the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for autonomy (control over their work tasks), competence (can complete tasks and be challenged) and relatedness (feel connected to, and cared for by work colleagues) to stimulate work effort. Managers could also increase employees' work effort by explaining the importance of the work, as well as by making work pleasurable and interesting as a way to enhance autonomous motivation (another proximal personal antecedent), and by focusing on how the job may allow one to develop and contribute to society to highlight intrinsic values (a distal personal antecedent). Interestingly, research on motivation in general, and SDT in particular, provides several insights explaining how proximal (e.g., job design) and distal (e.g., organizational culture) contextual factors can impact work motivation. Given the right circumstances, all employees, such as Sara and David, can truly flourish at work.

Discussion points:

1. Which needs would you consider essential for humans to realize their potential? Which of the needs do you see reflected in the other chapters of this book?
2. Think about an organization with which you are familiar. Think of this organization in terms of its compensation systems, management style, and the type of work it assigns employees. Which theory or theories of motivation do you believe drives the organization's decisions? How would you modify these systems and/or practices in light of what we know about employee motivation?

Suggested further readings

1. This is a video in which Daniel Pink provides an overview of the most important aspects of SDT: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc&feature=youtu.be>.
2. Diefendorff, J. M., & Chandler, M. M. (2011). Motivating employees. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology, Vol 3, Maintaining, expanding and contracting the organization. APA Handbooks in Psychology*. (pp. 65–135). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association. In this chapter, you will find broad an overview of the many mini-theories that have been used to understand employee motivation, arranged in terms of the distal and proximal situational and personal antecedents of motivation.
3. This website explains SDT, groups all articles that have been published in the theory across different domains, provides a list of scholars working on the theory and much more: www.self-determinationtheory.org.
4. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, *11*(4), 227–268.
doi:10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01. This is the introductory article of Self-determination theory.

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Figure 1: Overview of the different determinants of motivation

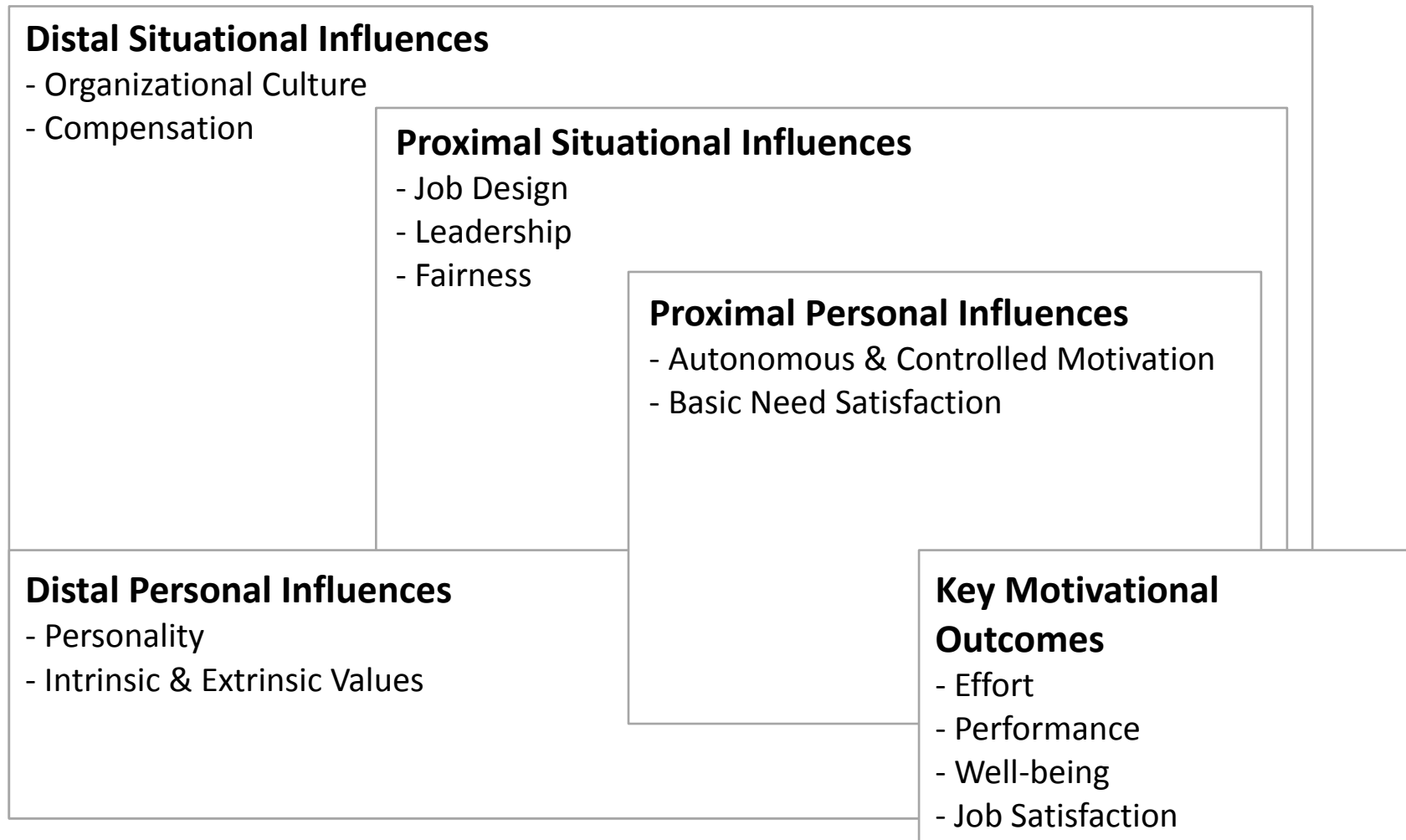


Figure 2: View on Humanity

View	Negative	Positive
Basic assumptions: employees ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are passive • Are reactive • Need to be controlled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are active • Are growth oriented • Interact with their environment
Motivational Practices: managers need to ...	Push and pull employees around	Provide a good working environment

Figure 3: Different types of motivation according to SDT

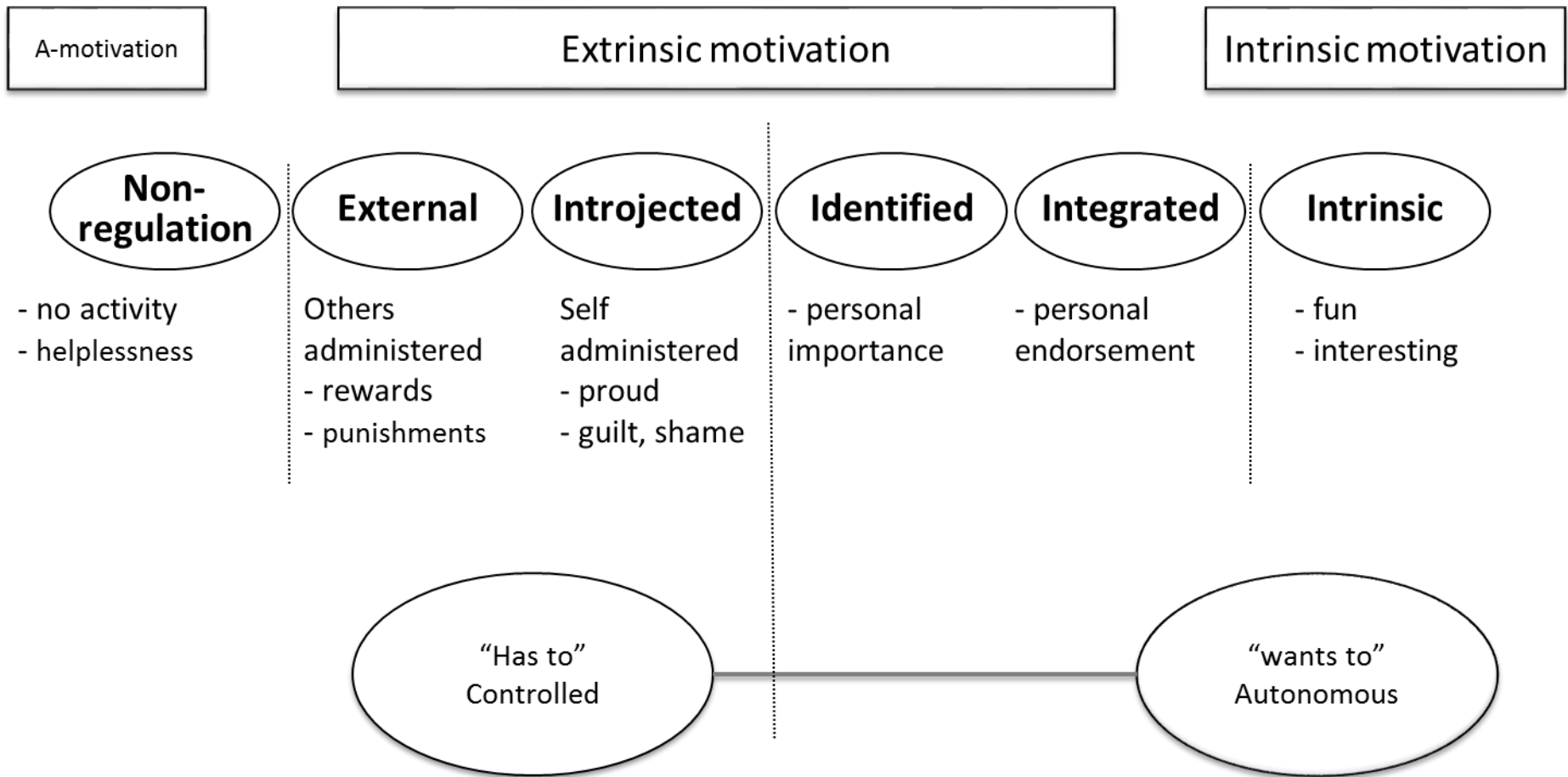


Figure 4: Intrinsic and extrinsic values

