



SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH ON TEACHER MOTIVATION

Most often when educators contemplate motivation, they think in terms of motivating students to learn and to abide by school regulations. Equally important, though, with respect to educational leadership is the motivation of teachers and other staff members to perform effectively. As both theory and research indicate, school administrators and supervisors can play a crucial role in motivating staff and thereby enhancing student outcomes. Even in the most inflexibly structured school districts, building-level leaders have considerable discretion that can be directed toward elevating teachers' motivation.

Two theoretical frameworks that are especially relevant to the issue of staff motivation are the job factors approach originally articulated by Herzberg (1966; Herzberg and others, 1959) and the expectancies approach set forth by Vroom (1964). Each of these frameworks has generated a substantial body of research and bears important implications for practice.

The Job Factors Approach

Herzberg (1966) maintained that all human beings have two basic types of needs that they seek to fulfill at work and in other settings, the need to avoid pain and the need for psychological growth. Both types of needs, he found, are gratified to a greater or lesser degree in different work settings by virtue of various aspects of the tasks and the work environment. More specifically, certain facets of the job can fulfill psychological growth needs and thereby generate both feelings of satisfaction and motivation to invest effort in the work. Other facets of the job, on the other hand, can fulfill

pain avoidance needs but do not generate either feelings of satisfaction or motivation to work harder. Herzberg called the growth-enhancing facets motivation factors and the pain-avoidance facets hygiene factors.

The motivation factors tend to be intrinsic to the work itself; they render tasks more enjoyable, interesting, and psychologically rewarding. These factors include achievement, recognition, work, responsibility, advancement, and possibility of growth. The hygiene factors are generally extrinsic to tasks; they are associated with the context or setting in which work is performed. These facets of the job include: organizational policy and administration, technical supervision, salary, working conditions, status, job security, effects on personal life, and interpersonal relations with superiors, peers, and subordinates.

Herzberg and his associates conducted their research in various types of business and service organizations by asking employees to think of a time when they felt especially good (or bad) about their job and to describe the events and feelings associated with that episode. They found that when describing good or exceptionally pleasant episodes, respondents mentioned the motivation factors much more often than the hygiene factors, and those interviewed mentioned the desire to work harder as well (Herzberg and others, 1959). When describing bad or unpleasant episodes, employees more frequently cited hygiene factors, but they did not indicate decreased effort.

Educational research following the Herzberg interviewing procedures has generally tended to support the theory. For example, Schmidt (1976) found that high school administrators associated motivators with good events and hygies with bad events exactly as predicted in the theory. Sergiovanni (1966)

found motivators and hygies to be differentiated essentially as predicted, except that work itself and advancement were not mentioned by the teachers in his sample.

When the theory has been tested by techniques other than interviews—for example, rating scales or checklists—the findings have been mixed. Dunnette and others (1967) found support for the theory, while Wernimont and others (1970) did not. However, the rating scale studies have been quite consistent in their findings that motivation factors are better predictors of job attitudes than are hygiene factors (Weissenberg and Gruenfeld, 1968; Halpern, 1966; Armstrong, 1971). In a recent study of 36 varied organizations, Oldham and Hackman (1981) found that aspects of the tasks performed at work were very closely related to employees' motivation and satisfaction.

A conservative conclusion that we can draw from the diverse studies pertinent to this theory is that the aspects of work that are intrinsic to the tasks themselves are significantly related to individuals' attitudes and their levels of motivation. Educational leaders can influence the sense of achievement, recognition, challenge, responsibility, advancement, and growth possibilities that teachers and other staff members experience at work. Therefore, there is a strong probability that they can have considerable impact on teachers' degrees of satisfaction and levels of motivation.

The Expectancies Approach

A radically different approach to the study of motivation was offered by Vroom (1964) as what has come to be called the Expectancy Model. Vroom viewed motivation as a drive or force within individuals to perform particular actions. According to this theory, all people are essentially hedonistic; they

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Highlights from Research on Teacher Motivation

School administrators can have significant impact on teachers' levels of motivation. Job factors research indicates that:

- The presence of factors intrinsic to the work—achievement, recognition, interesting work, responsibility, advancement, and growth possibility—results in satisfaction and a desire to invest further effort.
- The absence of adequate contextual elements—policy and administration, technical supervision, salary, working conditions, status, job security, effects on personal life, and interpersonal relationships—results in dissatisfaction but does not affect the desire to invest effort in work.
- Generally speaking, intrinsic factors are more closely linked to job attitudes than are the contextual factors.

Expectancies research indicates that:

- Employees' motivation or drive to perform an action is influenced both by the attractiveness to the employee of a successful outcome and by the employee's expectations that the outcome will be successful.
- The attractiveness of a successful outcome to an employee is influenced by the likelihood that the outcome will lead to other desired results.
- Both the amount of effort invested in a task and the actual quality of performance on the task relate to the attractiveness of the indirect results multiplied by the perceived utility of success for attaining those indirect results.
- Employees who are more inner-directed are more strongly influenced in their behavior by the attractiveness and instrumentality of outcomes; that is, they recognize a closer link between their action and its outcomes than do other-directed or externally controlled individuals.

School administrators can increase the perceived attractiveness and utility of excellent teaching by rewarding good performance. Administrators can also increase teachers' expectancies by providing opportunities to learn the requisite skills and by providing positive feedback when the teaching and its results are good.

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seek to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Thus their internal drive is influenced in intensity and direction by the likely outcomes of their actions. The more likely and desirable the results of a given action, the stronger the drive to perform that action.

Two types of outcomes are important in this theory, the *direct outcomes* or immediate results of an action and the *indirect outcomes* or what happens as a consequence of the immediate results of the action. For example, when a teacher prepares a lesson for class, the result could be a good lesson, a mediocre lesson, or a poor lesson; those are the possible direct outcomes of the act of planning a lesson. If it is a good lesson, the students might be attentive and orderly, they might learn some content, the

teacher might feel good, and the principal might recognize the teacher's accomplishment. If the lesson is poor, the students might be inattentive and unruly, they might create an embarrassing disruption, the principal might disapprove, and so forth. These are indirect outcomes of preparing a lesson.

A person is motivated to perform an action to the extent that the direct outcomes will yield more desirable indirect outcomes and to the extent that the desired direct outcome is feasible. In lesson planning, the teacher will be motivated to plan the lesson if the results of a good lesson are highly attractive to that teacher and if the teacher believes planning is likely to yield a good lesson.

The expectancy theory deals with individuals' subjective assessments of the

likelihood of certain outcomes. The perceived relationship between direct outcomes and indirect outcomes is called *instrumentality*, and the perceived probability that the desired direct outcome will be achieved is called *expectancy*. The force or motivation to perform a particular act is a function of the instrumentality of its desired direct outcomes times the expectancy that the desired direct outcome will be achieved.

Studies related to the Expectancy Model have often focused on the attractiveness or valence of possible indirect outcomes multiplied by the instrumentality of excellent performance as a predictor of the quality of actual performance. Many of these research findings have indicated that the quality of one's work is indeed a function of the attractiveness of the possible results and the utility of good work for attaining those results (Hackman and Porter, 1968; Lawler and Porter, 1967; Schneider and Olson, 1970; Sheridan and others, 1975). As might be anticipated, attractiveness-times-instrumentality was found to be a better predictor of performance for inner-directed people than for other-directed people (Lawler and Porter, 1967). Inner-directed people have a stronger belief that their own actions will affect the outcomes (higher expectancies of success); therefore, they are more strongly motivated to try.

Some research on this theory has focused on individuals' choices among options. This research indicates quite consistently that individuals select jobs (Vroom, 1966), courses of study (Holstrom and Beach, 1973; Muchinsky and Fitch, 1975), and occupations (Mitchell and Knudsen, 1973; Wanous, 1972) on the basis of the perceived attractiveness of indirect outcomes and the instrumentalities of the various options for attaining those outcomes.

The theory has also been supported in the educational research. Henson (1976) found that college students' studying time and grades were related to the perceived attractiveness of the indirect outcomes times the instrumentality of good grades for attaining those indirect outcomes. In further support of the theory, the relationship between these elements was strongest for students who had high self-esteem and internal locus-of-control. The theory has also been substantiated with respect to teachers' satisfaction and their effectiveness as rated by supervisors (Miskel and others, 1980) and with respect to teachers' innovativeness (Stephens, 1974).

We can conclude from the available evidence that one's actions are influenced by the degree of attractiveness of the indirect outcomes and the instrumentality of the actions for achieving the most desirable outcomes. There have been few studies that specifically examined the impact of one's expectancy that the action will be successful, but the research lends indirect support for Vroom's notion that expectancy is an important component of motivation.

The Two Frameworks Combined

The 16 job factors identified by Herzberg can be interpreted, from the perspective of Vroom's framework, as indirect outcomes of people's actions on the job. The Expectancy Model suggests that motivation factors are likely to be more highly attractive (or unattractive) than hygiene factors and thus will have more impact on individuals' motivation. In addition, motivation factors are the outcomes more closely associated with one's own effort; therefore, they are more likely to be closely linked with expectancies on a day-to-day basis. For example, a teacher can more readily expect praise (favorable recognition), a sense of accomplishment (achievement), and the satisfaction of having learned something (growth possibility) as outcomes of investing effort in teaching than he or she can expect a salary increase, more pleasant surroundings, and better supervision as outcomes of that effort.

The synthesis of these two frameworks is illustrated in Figure 1. This diagram indicates that the motivation to perform an action is affected by the expectancy that a particular outcome can be achieved and by the desirability of that outcome in terms of its indirect effects. Based on past experiences, individuals make subjective estimates of

their own abilities (expectancies) and the attainment of indirect outcomes (motivators and hygienics), which thus affect their motivation to perform future actions.

Some research findings suggest that this combination of frameworks is appropriate. Mitchell and Albright (1972), for example, found that job satisfaction, effort, quality of performance, and retention in the military were all more closely related to valence-times-instrumentality scores for intrinsic outcomes (motivation factors) than to such scores for extrinsic outcomes (hygiene factors).

Implications for Educational Leaders

To the extent that school administrators can control the outcomes of teachers' efforts, they can influence the levels of motivation teachers experience. We can consider this possibility both in terms of instrumentality and in terms of expectancy.

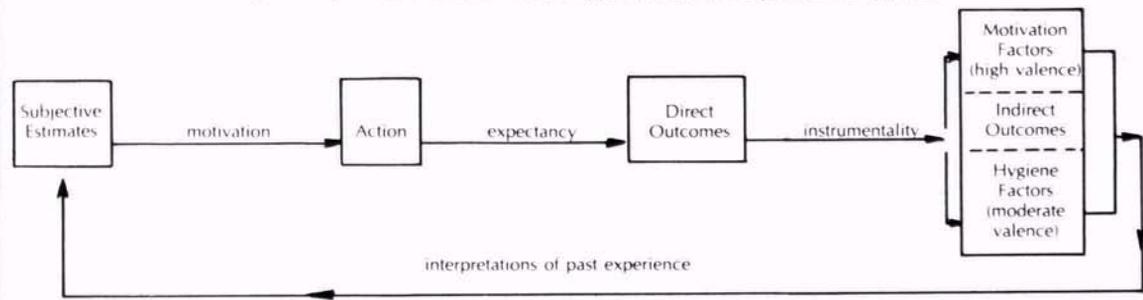
Instrumentality. The more frequently teachers receive praise, interesting responsibilities, growth opportunities, and chances for advancement as results of excellent teaching, the more likely they will be to perceive good teaching as instrumental in attaining these desirable indirect outcomes. That is, the perceived correlation between teaching effort and attractive outcomes is increased to the extent that rewarding outcomes of good teaching actually are forthcoming in the school. Vroom's theory suggests that one's subjective estimates of instrumentality are realistically based on one's experiences in life. Herzberg's theory suggests that the extrinsic factors are but minimal requirements to prevent gross dissatisfaction, but that the intrinsic factors are important to everyone in fulfilling psychological growth needs. The synthesis of both theories suggests that those leaders who most

consistently link teaching effectiveness with teachers' sense of achievement, favorable recognition, appropriately challenging work, interesting responsibility, career advancement, and learning opportunities will have the most professionally motivated teachers.

At times, even in the best of schools, a few teachers do not perform up to par. The instrumentality concept suggests some strategies that principals can use for motivating those teachers in particular. Finding something that can honestly be praised either personally or in writing might be of prime importance. With effort a principal or supervisor can refrain from all criticizing for a period of time and concentrate instead on finding praiseworthy behaviors on the part of undermotivated teachers. If thoughtful observation reveals a teaching skill that was previously not noticed, perhaps the teacher could be invited to share that skill with others at a faculty meeting or staff development conference. On occasion it might be necessary to make the instrumentality of teaching effort more explicit by specifying particular rewards that will be contingent upon the performance of certain teaching behaviors. What is important is that undermotivated teachers become aware that their positive efforts are noted and rewarded; slightly less important is their awareness that absence of effort is also noted and penalized.

Expectancy. The more frequently teachers' efforts result in successful teaching, the more likely they will be to perceive effort as related to quality of teaching. School administrators can influence teachers' subjective expectancies by such strategies as (1) observing teaching and explicitly acknowledging good teaching performance at frequent intervals; (2) specifying in unambiguous terms some of the achievable teaching

Figure 1. Synthesis of the Job Factors Approach and the Expectancies Approach.



behaviors that constitute excellence in teaching; (3) providing genuine training so that many teachers actually gain some of the requisite skills; and (4) informing teachers of their students' learning gains, particularly when those gains are outstanding. Leaders who convince teachers that their actions favorably affect students' learnings will have the most professionally motivated teachers.

In the case of teachers who seem to lack motivation altogether, the expectancy dimension might be the key to poor performance. For these individuals it is particularly important to point out the strengths of their teaching and to explain (in an unpatronizing manner) why these elements are beneficial to students. Also important would be a few—just a few—specific suggestions for actions that could readily be implemented by even the most lackadaisical teachers. Follow-up visits would then be opportunities to recognize the effective implementation of those recommended actions. Just as youngsters often mask their own sense of inadequacy by a show of indifference, some teachers conceal their feelings of ineptness behind a facade of hostility or indifference. By keeping this in mind, school administrators might become able to concentrate on building the ego strength of undermotivated teachers through honest and insightful praise, specific suggestions, and inservice training.

Conclusion

The close relationship between leaders' behavior patterns and employees' motivation has been articulated by Georgopoulos and others (1957) and by House (1971) as the path-goal theory of leadership effectiveness. This framework, which combines elements of the job factors approach and the expectancies approach as well as analysis of leadership styles, maintains that leaders can make excellent performance the best path to the goals employees have. School leaders can ensure that excellent teaching is the most direct path to desired outcomes by rewarding such teaching in meaningful ways and by reinforcing teachers' expectations that their efforts will result in excellent teaching. Changing teachers' levels of motivation cannot be accomplished overnight. It requires a thoughtful strategy, insight, and persistence over time. ■

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The Applicability of Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

In the years since Herzberg first proposed his motivation-hygiene theory, results of a number of studies have cast doubt on its validity. One of the most common criticisms is that the theory itself is "method bound"—tied to Herzberg's "critical incident" method of collecting information (Vroom, 1964; Ewen, 1964, 1966; House and Wigdor, 1967). Many of those whose research did not support Herzberg's initial findings also concluded that worker satisfaction and dissatisfaction exist on a single continuum, and that, if present, those factors that generally give a worker the greatest feeling of satisfaction can, if not present, also lead to the greatest amount of dissatisfaction (Ewen, 1966; House and Wigdor, 1967). The theory has been reported to have limitations due to occupational level, age, education, and salary (Centers and Bugental, 1966; Friedlander, 1963, 1966; Singh and Baumgartel, 1966; Williamson and Karras, 1970; Shoukry, 1964; Herzberg, 1957).

I recently made a study based on Herzberg's theory, using as subjects 70 teachers from a small Midwest suburban school system. The subjects themselves were almost equally divided among males and females; taught at all three organizational levels (elementary, junior high school, and high school); and were of varying degrees of age, experience, and training. I used a questionnaire I constructed in an attempt to duplicate Herzberg's theoretical model, taking criticisms of Herzberg's procedures into consideration.

It appears that those factors that most often contribute to the satisfaction of teachers are also, if absent, most often the cause for teacher dissatisfaction. They are those factors identified by Herzberg as "motivators" and are associated with the higher level needs of recognition and self-actualization identified by

Maslow. Moreover, it seems that education as a profession can provide much satisfaction to those individuals employed within it because of the intrinsic nature of the work itself and the sense of accomplishment derived from it. However, the teachers responding in this study did not seem to feel their work was being recognized or appreciated enough by those with and for whom they work.

Furthermore, within each group of teachers responding, there were subgroups that seemed to have more specific needs. Young men midway in their teaching careers needed more opportunities to advance within the profession and gain status from teaching as a career. Women teachers needed to have strong, positive leadership and needed to perceive teaching itself as being economically on a par with other professions.

Apparently, the longer teachers are in the profession the more they become concerned with the work environment, or as Herzberg called it, the work context. Possibly, these "older" teachers are at a stage in their lives when they and their families need greater stability with regard to job security and pay; and, possibly, they have reached a time in their careers when the drudgery of teaching or "teacher burnout" has begun to take control over their lives. Thus, these individuals may derive less satisfaction from the work itself and more from those aspects identified as hygiene factors.

In general the teachers responding in this study seemed to be motivated by those factors that most often have drawn people into the profession in the past—the sense of accomplishment and responsibility that the work itself gives to those involved with it. However, teachers are increasingly concerned with (or dissatisfied with) the *lack of recognition* of their worth in society and are expressing a need to have their work reinforced through

better pay and other forms of tangible recognition.

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