

## CULTURE AND MOTIVATION

Motivation is concerned with the drive, effort or energy behind an individual's behavior. People behave to satisfy certain needs; this is true in all cultures.

Basic physical needs (e.g., hunger, reproduction, sleep, etc.) have a biological basis, most other needs such as security, social and esteem needs are learned through socialization whereby people learn acceptable ways to satisfy needs in their culture. The importance people place on certain needs may differ among cultures as well as how people become motivated. This section will examine some possible impacts culture may have in affecting motivation in the work setting, *ceteris paribus*.

Since we are concerned with motivation at work, this section examines culture's influence on: (1) the value of work (col. 1 of the tables), (2) *what* motivates people, i.e., needs (see col. 2) and (3) *How* people are motivated (see col. 3) , e.g., goal setting, equity, reinforcement, and expectancies.

In some cultures work is more central to one's life than in other cultures (MOW, 1987). In culture's that value work, people's self-identity is derived from their work; they "live to work". In culture's that place less value on work, people's self-identity is tied to other factors such as family, friends, etc.; they "work to live". Motivating workers in culture's valuing work can, in part, come from the work itself and not the manager's actions.

"*What*" seems to motivate people is the satisfaction of certain needs. Based on the work of Maslow (1954), Herzberg (1968) and McClelland (1966), needs can be classified into two broad groups extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Extrinsic motivators are those provided outside the individual and the job, e.g., physical conditions, security, social relations, etc. Intrinsic motivators are derived from performing the job and come from within the person, e.g., esteem, achievement, and self-actualization (becoming all that one can be). While these needs tend to be universal, they are more important in certain cultures than others, and therefore, more motivating.

"*How*" people are motivated is a more complex process. This section examines culture's impact on four explanations. Based on the work of Locke and Latham (1990), people are motivated by setting clear, specific, and challenging goals. A popular process for developing these goals is Drucker's (1954) *Management by Objectives* (MBO) whereby individuals and their manager's jointly help set goals for the individual against which his/her work will be evaluated. Another explanation concerning "how" people are motivated is provided by Adams's (1963) *Equity theory*. In essence, people compare their performance to that of others. If the rewards or outcomes they receive are not comparable to those of others, given similar inputs, then the individual is motivated to do something about restoring equity. B.F. Skinner (1971) proposed that people are motivated by the consequences of their actions, both positive and negative consequences. Positive consequences are expected to have the best results in insuring desired work behavior in the long run.

Finally, a more complex explanation of how people are motivated is provided by Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory. According to this explanation, when deciding how much effort to put into a task, a person must decide if making the effort will lead to a desired performance level. If they believe their effort may lead to success, then the individual determines if successful performance may lead to a desired outcome or reward. If the latter is true, motivated behavior will occur. Individually none of these explanations is a sufficient explanation. One or more of these explanations may be sufficient depending on the circumstances of the work behavior under consideration.

In the last column of the culture and motivation tables, culture's impact on the types of rewards preferred is explored. Motivated work behavior only occurs when the reward/consequence of the behavior is valued by the individual because it satisfies their need(s).

### Assumptions and Motivation

The value of work itself appears to be affected by only one assumption, human nature. In cultures where people are seen as evil or not willing to take on responsibility, work is largely viewed as a necessary evil, a means to an end; whereas, cultures that believe in the goodness of human nature (people willing to take responsibility; work is often viewed as a responsible undertaking or an important end in itself.

The needs that motivate people from different cultures appear to be affected by their assumptions about the environment and human nature. People from control cultures feel they can control their destiny so there is a belief that work can be personally satisfying for success can help them improve their situation. Intrinsic

motivators (esteem, achievement) are valued in such circumstances. People who believe that their actions have little impact on their outcomes are motivated more by extrinsics such as pay, security, social relations, etc. what others can provide them as a result of acceptable work. Extrinsic motivators have to be applied to those whom people believe are essentially irresponsible (evil human nature); whereas, good responsible people can be self-motivated so intrinsic motivators are valid in such cultures.

How people are motivated varies with different assumptions about the environment and people. The use of MBO, reinforcement and expectancies may be valid under conditions where people feel their actions either affects their outcomes or their actions can be guided so as to improve their outcomes (e.g., MBO). Cultures who believe in the goodness of people are also more likely to consider them responsible enough to work at jointly setting relevant goals (MBO) or at viewing the use of positive reinforcement as a way of insuring positive outcomes. Those who believe that people are evil are more likely to perceive the use of negative reinforcement as the most effective way to perform at a satisfactory level.

People from monochronic cultures who like to perform things sequentially are likely to find expectancy theory an acceptable explanation for how people are motivated because the expectancies are in sequence from effort to performance and then performance to outcomes.

Finally, assumptions about context appear to influence the type of reward valued. Low context cultures value results; whereas, high context cultures value trust in their relationships so behaviors leading to trust are likely to be motivating in high context cultures.

### ASSUMPTIONS AND MOTIVATION

<u>ASSUMPTIONS</u>	<u>Attitude toward work</u>	<u>Needs</u>	<u>How Motivated</u>	<u>Rewards Preferred</u>
<u>Environment :</u> Submit Control	- -	Extrinsic physical/security  Intrinsic esteem/achieve.	-  MBO, Reinforcement, Expectancy	- -
<u>Human Nature:</u> Evil  Good	Work to live  Live to work	Extrinsic physical/security  Intrinsic esteem/achieve.	Negative reinforcement  MBO, Positive reinforce.	- -
<u>Time :</u> Mono  Poly	- -	- -	Expectancy  -	- -
<u>Space:</u> Private  Public	- -	- -	- -	- -

<b>Context:</b>				
<b>Low</b>	-	-	-	<b>Results</b>
<b>High</b>	-	-	-	<b>Trust</b>

### Values and Motivation

High UA cultures often live to work because it provides important structure to their lives, and reduces uncertainty; whereas, low UA cultures "work to live" as they are willing to take some risk in their lives by having unstructured time for other activities. People from masculine cultures live to work because work produces results. People from feminist cultures tend to work to live as the development and maintenance of good social relations takes up a considerable amount of time and is highly valued.

What motivates people appears to be affected by three of the four values. Low UA cultures place importance on intrinsic motivators especially achievement which involves some risk; whereas, high UA cultures find security needs to be more motivating in order to reduce uncertainty in their lives. People from collective cultures value social relations. Individualist cultures are motivated by intrinsic motivators such as esteem and achievement which focus on satisfying self. People from feminist cultures also place a high priority on social needs for they emphasize cooperation with others; whereas, more masculine cultures place an emphasis on results so achievement needs are deemed more important.

All four values appear to influence preferences for explaining how people are motivated. Low power distance (PD) cultures are comfortable with MBO reinforcement and expectancy explanations. Since they minimize differences between superiors and themselves Low PD cultures are comfortable in jointly determining their goals with their superiors within an MBO framework. Reinforcement and expectancy theory suggests that, regardless of one's status, if one performs at a certain level, they will receive certain consequences or outcomes. However, high PD cultures believe that their consequences or outcomes are more dependent on the power of their superiors than on their own performance levels.

Low UA cultures can bear the risk associated with setting one's own goals (MBO) and with the fluctuating performance /rewards that may occur under expectancy explanations. These two situations are deemed too risky for high UA cultures. People with individualist values find MBO, equity, reinforcement and expectancy theories satisfactory explanations of how people are motivated because they all focus on individual behavior. Collective societies prefer harmony over the potentially competitive equity explanation. They also stress group norms over individual goals and reinforced behavior of an individual.

People from masculine cultures who value output/results, find MBO appealing because setting goals focuses on accomplishments as do expectancies which focus on performance and related outcomes.

The four cultural values also appear to be associated with preferences for certain rewards. Low PD cultures favor equality; whereas, high PD cultures favor rewards that convey status to the recipient.

People from low UA cultures favor rewards that are performance based whereas high UA cultures find this too risky due to the potentially fluctuating nature of the rewards given different levels of performance overtime. Collective cultures favor rewards that are non-material and based on group performance; whereas, individual cultures prefer rewards based on individual performance. People from feminist cultures prefer non-material rewards that improve the quality of life such as more leisure time; whereas, masculine cultures like the results

represented by material rewards.

Motivation is a complex behavioral process that is not fully understood. This section has illustrated ways culture may affect the process. In general, one can see that the affect of culture on motivation is pervasive. It affects one's orientation to work, needs as well as how we respond to different rewards. Other significant factors affecting motivation not considered here include a person's skill level, job type and level, economic development of the country, etc.

[References: 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 22, 28, 30]

## VALUES AND MOTIVATION

<b>VALUES</b>	<b>Attitude toward work</b>	<b>Needs</b>	<b>How Motivated</b>	<b>Preferred</b>
<b>Power Distance :</b> <u>Low</u>  High	-  -	-  -	MBO; Reinforcement; Expectancy  -	Equality  Status symbols
<b>Uncertainty Avoidance:</b> <u>Low</u>  High	Work to live  Live to work	-  -	MBO Expectancy  -	Based on performance  Based on seniority, loyalty
<b>Self-orientation:</b> <u>Collective</u>  Individual	-  -	Social  Intrinsic: esteem/achievement	Harmony vs. equity Group norms vs. MBO; Reinforce.  MBO, Equity, Reinforcement; Expectancy	Based on group performance  Based on individual perf.
<b>Assertiveness:</b> <u>Feminine</u>	Work to live	Social	-	Non-material

**Masculine**

**Live to work**

**Intrinsic: esteem,  
Achievement**

**MBO  
Expectancy**

**Material**

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