Theories of Motivation

II. Process Theories of Motivation

1) Equity Theory

Developed by J. Stacy Adams, the equity theory of motivation is based on the logic of social comparisons and the notion that perceived inequity is a motivating state.

![Equity Theory Diagram]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs vs Outputs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>effort, enthusiasm, productivity</td>
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When employees will put forth a level of effort that they perceive to be in balance with the rewards they are given.

Perceived inequities occur whenever people feel that the rewards received for their work efforts are unfair given the rewards others appear to be getting.

Adams predicts that people will try to deal with perceived negative inequity by any one or more of the following:

- Changing their work inputs by putting less effort into their jobs
- Changing the rewards received by asking for better treatment
- Changing the comparison points to make things seem better
- Changing the situation by leaving the job
In respect to pay, two equity situations mentioned earlier in this course are worth remembering.

**Gender Equity** – it is well established that women, on average, earn less than men

**Comparable Worth** – people doing jobs of similar value based on required education, training and skills should receive similar pay.  
Eg. Nursing and accounting

Critics argue that ‘similar value’ is hard to define.

Based on the predictions above, what actions might a woman who feels that she is a victim of gender equity take?

How about the nurse who is paid less than the accountant?
2) **Expectancy Theory**

Victor Vroom’s expectancy theory of motivation is based on the logic that a person will be motivated to put forth a higher level of effort if they believe their efforts will result in higher performance and therefore, higher rewards.

Vroom suggests that the motivation to work depends on the relationships among three expectancy factors:

1. **Expectancy**: the belief that working hard will result in high performance
2. **Instrumentality**: the belief that successful performance will be followed by rewards
3. **Valence**: the value a person assigns to the possible rewards

In the expectancy theory, motivation \( M \), expectancy \( E \), instrumentality \( I \), and valence \( V \) are related to each other in a multiplicative fashion:

\[
M = E \times I \times V
\]

Mathematically speaking, a zero at any location on the right side of the equation will result in zero motivation.

Managers must aim to maximize all three factors.

Suppose the teacher has advised that one student will be made an offer to attend a promotional event at Queens University. Attending this event will look very admirable on a resume.
The typical assumption is that all students will work hard to attend the event.
Is this true?

- **expectancy** may be low; Zack might feel that even if he works hard, he won’t achieve Sam’s success, so why try?
- **instrumentality** may be low; I might perform to a high standard, but don’t believe that I will be chosen anyway
- **valence** is low; even if I am chosen, the event is of no interest to me anyway.

As shown in the figure below, the management implications of expectancy theory include being willing to work with each individual to maximize his or her expectancies, instrumentalities and valences in ways that support organizational objectives.

![Figure 14.6 Managerial implications of expectancy theory.](image-url)
3) Goal-setting Theory

The goal setting theory described by Edwin Locke focuses on the motivational properties of task goals. The basic premise is that task goals can be highly motivating if they are properly set and if they are well managed.

- goals give direction to people in their work
- goals clarify performance expectations

Key issues and principles in the goal-setting process:

- set specific goals
- set challenging goals
- build goal acceptance and commitment
- clarify goal priorities
- provide feedback on goal accomplishment
- reward goal accomplishment

Participation in goal setting….

- allows for increased understanding of goals
- provides greater acceptance and commitment of goals