

An Islamic Perspective on the Expectancy-Valence Theory

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The most commonly used classification of motivation theories among organizational behavior scholars is the content and process theories (Altman, Valenzi, and Hodgetts 1985). While content theories address what motivates employees, process theories speculate about how to motivate them (Bedeian 1980).

When Muslim scholars have discussed motivation theories, they have explained the Islamic perspective on the content approach. For example, Sharafeldin (1988) compared content theories with the socialist approach of motivation. He emphasized the extrinsic motives of Islamic values and concluded that these values are alternative motivators for Muslims to achieve better performance. Ahmad (1988, 3) also reviewed content theories and argued that the ritual aspect of the human personality is an intrinsic motive other than the "materialistic-orientation" of the content theories. In addition, Shareef (1988, 11) noted that while certain Islamic actions will fulfill the self-actualization needs, "economic incentives are motivators only in life-threatening situations."

Despite this focus on the content approach of motivation theories, Muslim scholars have given less attention to how to motivate employees. They also have not provided sufficient conceptualization for an Islamic process by which Muslim employees make their motivational choices within an Islamic context.

This paper addresses this gap in Islamic organizational behavioral literature by a) presenting an Islamic model of motivation process drawn from the Qur'an; b) discussing the model's dynamics in relation to both social learning theory and Vroom's expectancy theory; and c) introducing an Islamic expectancy and exploring its instrumentalities and implications.

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An Islamic Model of the Motivation Process and Its Dynamics

The Qur'an, in its role as a guide for human performance (Al Faruqi 1976; Rahman, 1982; Williams 1976), uses a consistent process to direct individuals to the achievement of desired behavioral goals. Consider the process explained in table 1:

Table 1: Example of the Islamic Model of the Motivation Process (Qur'an 93: 3-11)

Process	Situation (1)	Situation (2)	Situation (3)	Deci & Ryan (1985)
1. Expected Rewards	Allah did not forsake thee	The last will be better	Allah shall give thee	Antecedent stimuli
2. Reinforcements	Allah found thee an orphan and sheltered thee	Allah found thee erring and guided thee	Allah found thee ready and suffered thee	Mediated cognitive events
3. Required Performance	Do not oppress the orphan	Do not scold the beggar	Declare Allah's blessings	Behavioral goals

As table 1 explains, there are three required performances of behavioral conduct: a) not to oppress the orphan; b) not to scold the beggar; and c) to declare Allah's blessings (Arberry 1955, 342). The expected rewards for each performance are explicitly stated in order to motivate the Prophet Muhammad to achieve these behavioral goals. All rewards are positive reinforcers and correspond to what Deci and Ryan (1985, 215) called "antecedent stimuli." Accordingly, these rewards are contingent on the performance of the desired behavior and "strengthen the tendency to perform the task on future occasions" (Kruglanski 1978, 20). Schultz and Schultz (1986, 302) noted that "the person's perception of the psychological value of the outcome—the valence of the outcome—determines its motivating strength."

It is interesting to note that the first reward (i.e., Allah did not and will never forsake you) has been awarded in the past and is promised to be awarded in the future. Thus this reward functions as a further reinforcement to the second and the third rewards. According to the social learning theory (Rotter 1982, 10), "a reinforcement acts to strengthen an expectancy that a particular behavior or event will be followed by that reinforcement in the future." Nadler and Lowler (1983, 73) noted that "a person's motivation to exert effort towards a specific level of performance is based on his or her perceptions of association

between actions and outcomes." Rotter (1982, 10) argued that "the occurrence of a behavior of a person is determined not only by the nature or importance of goals or reinforcements, but also by the person's anticipation or expectancy that these goals will occur. Such expectations are determined by previous experience." Thus, the three reinforcers used in the Islamic model drew their instrumental value from the fact that their reinforcing properties lie in the proven past satisfaction. While rewards are extrinsic in nature, the reinforcers are based on intrinsically generated needs that were satisfied in the past. The need for shelter for the orphan, spiritual guidance, and provision of economic resources are all basic needs (Maslow 1960).

The final observation on the Islamic model of the motivation process concerns its sequence. First, the promised rewards are explained, followed by reinforcement from past satisfaction experience, and then the required performance is clearly stated. Deci and Ryan (1985, 215) identified this process as a cognitive model of motivation which involves "antecedent stimuli, mediating cognitive events, and behavior." (See table 1, last panel.)

This process is consistently used throughout the Qur'an to motivate Muslims to achieve the required behavioral conduct (i.e., 14:7; 16:97; 79:27-41).

Implications of the Islamic Model of the Motivation Process

The Islamic model of the motivation process suggests several implications for Muslim managers to consider when motivating employees. First, the explicit statement of expected rewards for each performance should be explained in advance. Second, managers should state targeted performance clearly and link it to the expected rewards. Third, the use of extrinsic rewards should be reinforced with the past experience of satisfaction. This implies that the motivation process is not a short-term action which ends with the performance achievement, but rather a long-term process where the fulfillment of past promises of rewards is taken into consideration by the individual while evaluating the probability of obtaining the promised rewards.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory

There are several expectancy theories available in the organizational behavior literature (See Deci and Ryan 1985; Lawler 1971 for a summary.) We selected Vroom's theory for two reasons: a) it is considered "the principal process theory of motivation" (Hampton, Summer, and Webber 1982, 5) and

b) it is presented in “a set of algebraic formulae that allow one to quantify what Vroom called ‘force toward action’ (i.e., the motivation to engage in particular behavior)” (Deci and Ryan 1985, 215). This promised to be a desirable framework for introducing expectancy theory and exploring its motivational power.

Vroom (1964) used three conceptual components to propose his theory: performance (F_i), valence (V_j), and the expectancy that performance will lead to outcomes or rewards (E_{ij}):

$$F_i = f [\sum_{j=1}^n E_{ij} \cdot v_j]$$

This equation explains that the motive to perform the i th action is “a function of the algebraic sum of the valence of each outcome (l) multiplied by the expectancy that action i will lead to outcome j ” (Deci and Ryan 1985, 215). The motivation to perform will be maximized if the expectancy of occurrence of certain outcomes and the valence placed on each outcome are maximized. This proposition suggests that there are two subjective expectancies to which the individual attaches probabilities as to their occurrence. There are the expectancies that a) the effort will lead to performance and b) that the performance will be rewarded. Bedeian (1986) used these two expectancies to argue that the motivational power proposed by Vroom can be expanded as follows:

Motivation = [(Expectancy 1) (Expectancy 2)] (Value attached to rewards)

Comments on Vroom's Assumptions

There are two caveats about Vroom's assumptions. First, while Vroom focused on extrinsic motives, his process model did not sufficiently employ the power of intrinsic motives. Maslow (1960, 35) explained that “the full definition of the person or of human nature must . . . include intrinsic values, as part of human nature.” Thus intrinsic motives cannot be ignored in any attempt to theorize the motivation process. Second, Vroom's process focused on the short-term motivation process in a given work situation. In other words, he did not expand his proposition to explain how the individual can be motivated in both the short and the long term. Maslow (1965, 84) addressed the problem of the short-term motivation process and explained that a motivation theory “should stress and center itself upon ultimate or basic goals rather than partial or superficial ones, upon ends rather than means to these ends. Such stress would imply a more central place for unconscious rather than conscious goals.” Maslow further explained that such unconscious goals represent higher motives

The dotted line in figure 1 explains the hypothesized function of expectancy three. First, it is postulated that expectancy three will induce the intrinsic motive to exert the effort even when the probabilities given to expectancy one, two, or both are low. Second, with expected rewards from Allah, it is postulated that the intrinsic motive to perform at the highest possible capacity will be increasingly stimulated in order to obtain these rewards, since they are linked to performance as explained by the Islamic process of motivation. Third, expectancy three is expected to function as a supplement for the lack of a supply of motives in the environment. That is, if the individual placed high valence on his/her expectations and did not obtain the expected rewards, the belief that he/she will be justly rewarded by Allah will compensate for the individual's frustration. In this case, expectancy three will pull the individual back to the higher level of motivation maintained before. Thus, the value of expectancy three lies in the fact that it will, predictably, maximize the valence of each expected reward even if the expected reward is not obtained. The motivational power in this case can be calculated as follows:

$$\text{Motivation} = [(\text{Expectancy 1}) (\text{Expectancy 2}) (\text{Expectancy 3})] (\text{Valence})$$

Thus, the Muslim will have three expectancies of each activity he/she will perform. The first expectancy is that effort will lead to performance. Islamic beliefs confirm this expectancy with the assurance of rewarding every minor effort. The second expectancy is that the performance will be rewarded. Many examples in the Qur'an assert that the reward of each performance will be awarded in this life (i.e., 16:97; 21:105; 24:55). Expectancy three, however, suggests that both effort and performance will also be rewarded in the life hereafter. There is no need to stress that this is a fundamental conviction in Islamic theology. Islamic literature is replete with evidence on its implications.

Value of Expectancy Three

This paper argues that expectancy three will employ what Maslow (1960) called metaneeds, (i.e., spiritual satisfaction). This is accomplished by providing the metamotivation that satisfies the spiritual part of the human personality. It is expected that this will activate the intrinsic motives that include "... challenge, excitement, task accomplishment, and a sense of doing something worthwhile" (Chung and Megginson 1981, 148). One could speculate, for example, that the activation of these motives could be effective in supplementing for motivators among those employees who are looking for more challenge in their work. Also, the satisfaction of the metaneeds

through expectancy three could be perceived as an additional internal reward (i.e., self-actualization) which could not be provided by external means.

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