

What are Employee Motivation Theories?

Worksheet

Motivation theories explain what drives employee performance. Major frameworks are Maslow (needs hierarchy), Herzberg (hygiene vs motivators), Taylor (efficiency & incentives) and McGregor (Theory X vs Y).

Questions

1. Maslow's highest-level need is...

- A) safety
- B) esteem
- C) self-actualization
- D) social

2. Herzberg classified salary as...

- A) a motivator
- B) a hygiene factor
- C) an esteem need
- D) a critical motivator

3. Taylor's approach emphasised...

- A) human relations
- B) efficiency, time-motion and incentives
- C) hierarchy of needs
- D) Theory Y

4. A Theory X manager style is...

- A) delegating authority
- B) trusting workers
- C) controlling and supervising closely
- D) developing staff

5. A factory worker has a stable, safe job but feels unchallenged and bored. Which motivation theory explains this?

6. An employee is dissatisfied despite earning above-market salary. HR reviews job content. Which theory guides this?

7. A manager trusts team members to work independently with minimal oversight. Which McGregor theory does this reflect?

8. Define: What is Maslow's hierarchy of needs?

9. Define: Herzberg's two factors are...

10. Define: Taylor's scientific management focuses on...

Answer Key

1. C) self-actualization - Self-actualization is at the pyramid's top - realising one's full potential and purpose.
2. B) a hygiene factor - Salary is hygiene: adequate pay prevents dissatisfaction but doesn't create motivation.
3. B) efficiency, time-motion and incentives - Scientific management uses work measurement, standardisation and performance-based pay to maximise efficiency.
4. C) controlling and supervising closely - Theory X assumes workers need control; managers direct, supervise and use incentives or threats.
5. Herzberg's two-factor theory: safety and job security are hygiene factors (prevent dissatisfaction but don't motivate). The worker lacks motivators: achievement, recognition, meaningful work. Result: dissatisfaction despite adequate pay.
6. Herzberg's theory: salary is a hygiene factor. High pay prevents dissatisfaction but doesn't motivate. Missing motivators: autonomy, advancement, interesting work. HR must redesign the job to add challenge and responsibility.
7. Theory Y: assumes workers enjoy work, are self-motivated and can self-manage. The manager delegates authority. Contrast: Theory X assumes workers dislike work and need control and surveillance.
8. A pyramid with five levels: physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization. Higher needs emerge once lower ones are satisfied.
9. Hygiene factors (prevent dissatisfaction): pay, conditions, security. Motivators (create satisfaction): achievement, recognition, meaningful work.
10. Efficiency through time-motion studies, standardised work, pay incentives and close supervision to maximise output.

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