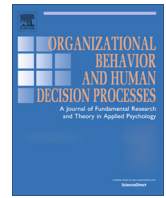




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Goal choices and planning: Distinct expectancy and value effects in two goal processes

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ABSTRACT

Expectancy and value have emerged as two major determinants of motivation. However, the exact nature of their functioning is less clear given that previous research failed to test adequately different goal processes. Based on the recent nonmonotonic, discontinuous model of expectancy elaborated by Vancouver, More, and Yoder (2008), two studies were conducted and found that expectancy and value functions in different forms during the goal choice versus goal planning processes. Specifically, the two constructs positively and jointly predicted one's goal choice, whereas they played independent and opposite roles in affecting the allocation of effort during the goal-planning process. These findings address gaps in theories of motivation, allow for more precise specifications of the roles for expectancy and value within such models, and further efforts toward integrating theories of motivation within a goal-centered, self-regulation framework.

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Introduction

Motivating oneself or one's employees to perform well is a constant struggle (Pinder, 2008). Applied psychologists have attempted to help with this struggle by providing theories of, and research on, human motivation (Diefendorff & Chandler, 2011; Kanfer, 1990; Mitchell & Daniels, 2003a, 2003b). Two concepts that emerged early in cognitive theories of motivation and still pervade modern research programs (cf. Hyland, 1988; Miner, 2005) are (a) the *expectancies* one has regarding the possible outcomes that might come to pass given choices, behaviors, or performances and (b) the *value* one associates with those possible outcomes (Kanfer, 1990). Theories that use these constructs tend to be called $E * V$ theories because they described expectancies (E) as interacting with anticipated value (V), also called valence, to predict choice and effort. For example, Vroom (1964) refers to the product of expectancy and valence for an option as the *motivational force* for that option, and decision making theories (e.g., Edwards, 1954) refer to it as the *expected utility* for an option. These theories predict that the probability of an option being chosen is likely to

increase as valued incentives (e.g., money; respect) are increased for outcomes linked to that option (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). The interaction (i.e., the multiplicative function) notion reflects the idea that an option with no outcome of value (i.e., zero valence) or of no believed probability of being obtained (i.e., zero expectancy) has no motivational force and that the motivating force of some specific value increases as the expectation of obtaining an outcome of that value increases (Vroom, 1964).

For a while, $E * V$ theories were the *de rigueur* of motivation theories in applied psychology (Campbell & Pritchard, 1983; Kanfer, 1990). However, lack of consistent empirical support for the multiplicative function (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999; Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996) and the rise of the goal construct within the field (Austin & Vancouver, 1996) relegated expectancy and value concepts to supporting roles (Diefendorff & Chandler, 2011; Klein, Austin, & Cooper, 2008; Locke & Latham, 1990). Current motivational theory defines goals as internally represented desired states whose properties, like difficulty, specificity, and importance, largely determine motivation (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Diefendorff & Chandler, 2011). These goals come about and operate via several goal processes, including goal-choice, goal-planning, goal-striving, and goal-revision (Austin & Vancouver, 1996). For example, goal-choice processes determine what goals individuals strive to achieve and at what level (Klein et al., 2008), and goal-planning processes can, among other things, determine the amount of resources mustered ahead of time to achieve a goal (Vancouver, More, & Yoder, 2008).

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Goal choice and planning processes are considered highly cognitive and thought to use expectancy and value beliefs (Bandura, 1986; Klein et al., 2008).

However, the nature of the relationships expectancy and value have across the goal processes remains an issue for those seeking a comprehensive goal-based model of motivation (Locke & Latham, 2004). In particular, it is not clear whether expectancy and value play roles in all the goal processes, much less, whether the roles are identical. Decades ago some theorists assumed that expectancies and value had similar roles across processes (e.g., Atkinson, 1957; Vroom, 1964), whereas others assumed their roles likely differed (e.g., Terborg & Miller, 1978). Unfortunately, contemporary theories continue to be either non-committal or contradictory with regards to the roles of expectancy and value across the goal processes (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Carver & Scheier, 1998). The purpose of the study is to address this critical gap in order to facilitate further integration of expectancy and value into goal-directed, self-regulation models of motivation given their conceptual importance in these theories (Carver & Scheier, 1982; Hyland, 1988; Kanfer, 1987; Klein, 1989; Locke & Latham, 2004; Seo, Barrett, & Bartunek, 2004; Vancouver, 2008).

One primary reason for the uncertainty regarding the functional roles of expectancy and value is the lack of quality research on $E * V$ theories (Pinder, 2008). First, most research used between-subject designs (Schwab, Olian-Gottlieb, & Heneman, 1979; Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996), despite the fact that most $E * V$ theories focus on describing choices among options an individual faces. That is, $E * V$ theories describe choice as a function of relative motivational force of the *different options* an individual faces (Mitchell, 1974), yet most research examined the expectancies and values *different individuals* had for a particular option.

Second, many studies in applied psychology use passive observational designs with questionable measurement properties (Anderson, 1970) rather than experiments, reducing the ability to draw causal conclusions (Hanges & Wang, 2012). For example, when Van Eerde and Thierry (1996) meta-analytically summarized the $E * V$ literature to examine the validity of expectancy theories, they acknowledged that the primary studies that they used were observational in nature, such that “the direction of the effects cannot be established” (p. 582) and concluded that “the results of the current meta-analysis do not increase our understanding of motivated behavior” (p.582). They called for studies using within-subject experimental designs to address the validity of expectancy and value in explaining motivation.

Finally, the empirical protocols used in existing studies often conflated goal processes, obscuring the distinct roles expectancy and value might play across goal processes (Terborg, 1976) or confounding other constructs (e.g., ability). For instance, ability and expectancy are confounded in measures of effort applied during goal striving, and measures of performance likely include the results of multiple goal processes (Kanfer, 1987). Moreover, performance is also affected by third variables such as ability (Phillips & Gully, 1997). Instead, a measure of willingness to expend resources in a planning context should more directly assess the motivating role of expectancy and value (Kanfer, 1987; Vancouver et al., 2008).

Fortunately, a recently developed protocol addresses these issues. Specifically, Vancouver et al. (2008) used a repeated-measures design to obtain within-person models of the effect of manipulated levels of expectancy on two motivational measures: choice of whether to pursue a goal and, if chosen, the planned magnitude of effort one is willing to commit to the goal. The use of repeated-measures allowed the researchers to develop within-person models; the use of a manipulation allowed causal inferences; and the use of two measures of motivation applied before the person begins to strive for the goal separated goal-choice (direction of effort) from goal-planning (degree of effort). They found that

expectancies positively affected goal choice, but negatively affected the degree of effort set aside to seek the goal, providing evidence that expectancy plays distinct roles across goal processes.

Yet, the Vancouver et al. (2008) study only looked at the expectancy construct. They did not include a manipulation of value. Thus, the issue of the functional form of the relationships between expectancy and value for the goal-choice and goal-planning processes remains unresolved, i.e., whether either or both concepts are involved in both processes, and what forms their joint effects take (i.e., are they multiplicative or additive). In the current paper, we present two studies that examine the functional roles of value, in addition to the role of expectancy, on direction and degree of effort using the Vancouver et al. (2008) protocol. In so doing, we address many of the above-mentioned design issues of existing studies that constitute the basis of Van Eerde and Thierry's (1996) meta-analysis and extend Vancouver et al.'s (2008) study by addressing the role of value and more importantly presenting empirical information regarding whether and how value might interact with expectancy in affecting the direction and degree of effort. We begin with a review of the role of expectancy and value within goal theories, and the more recent work by Vancouver et al. (2008) on the role of expectancy across goal processes.

A review of the role of expectancy and value in goal theories

Several scholars have proffered alternative goal-based theories of work motivation (e.g., Cropanzano, James, & Citera, 1993; DeShon & Gillespie, 2005; Klein, 1989; Locke & Latham, 2004; Lord & Levy, 1994; Vancouver, 2008), often based on larger comprehensive theories of human behavior (e.g., Bandura, 1986; Carver & Scheier, 1998; Powers, 1973). These comprehensive goal-based theories conceptualize behavior as a function of discrepancies between what one desires (i.e., goals) and where one is (Hyland, 1988; Lord, Diefendorff, Schmidt, & Hall, 2010; Vancouver, 2008). Moreover, they tend to agree regarding the way goals are adopted via a goal-choice process. Specifically, they incorporate $E * V$ notions to predict that expectancies positively affect goal adoption and the level of self-set goals (e.g., Klein et al., 2008; Locke & Latham, 1990). Likewise, these theories predict that incentives or other sources affecting anticipated value (e.g., valence) will increase the likelihood individuals will adopt or select a goal (e.g., Riedel, Nebeker, & Cooper, 1988). Moreover, most of these theories describe a multiplicative function (i.e., $E * V$). However, Nagengast et al. (2011) noted that in the last decade or so, some researchers have tended to drop the multiplicative notion for an additive one or are ambiguous on this point, whereas others are explicit about retaining it (e.g., Steel & Konig, 2006; Vancouver, Weinhardt, & Schmidt, 2010).

Goal-based theorists also agree that processes beyond goal choice, like goal planning, goal striving, and goal revising are relevant to understanding human behavior (Diefendorff & Lord, 2008). However, one of these processes, goal planning, has received relatively little theoretical or research attention (Gollwitzer, 1990). Yet, goal planning, like goal choice, likely involves beliefs about future conditions, making expectancy and value beliefs potentially relevant (Bandura, 1986). Another advantage to examine goal planning is that resources allocated to one's goal reflects the extent an individual is willing to invest their finite valuable resources; thus, resources allocated represents a more direct measure of motivation as compared with performance, which confounds ability, task difficulty, and other constructs (Kanfer, 1987; Seo & Ilies, 2009; Vancouver & Kendall, 2006).

Yet, on the question of goal-planning processes, many comprehensive goal-based theories are moot. Where planning processes are explicitly considered, the theories appear contradictory. For example, within social cognitive theory Bandura (1986) argued

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