Vroom is a researcher and university professor at the Yale School of Management (Vroom, 2007, p. 365). The first part of the essay is a summary of Vroom’s theory of management. The second part is a description of how Vroom advanced our understanding of leadership and management. The final part of the essay is an assessment of whether Vroom’s theories are relevant to managers and leaders in distance education institutions. Victor Vroom’s expectancy theory advances our understanding of leadership and is still relevant to managers of distance education institution.

Summary of Vroom’s work:

The expectancy theory, known as the V.I.E. theory, was developed by Victor Vroom and Edward Lawler in 1964. In the V.I.E. theory, the letters stand for valence, instrumentality and expectancy. This theory uses three factors, valence, instrumentality and expectancy, to explain a person’s motivation in the workplace (Manolova, Brush, Edelman & Shaver, 2012, p. 9). Valence is defined as the importance or the anticipated satisfaction with the results (Manolova et al., 2012, p. 9). Instrumentality is how a person perceives the relationship between the performance on the job and the job awards (Pool & Pool, 2007, p. 355). Valance is defined as how much the workers value the rewards (Pool & Pool, 2007, p. 355). The main point of the expectancy theory is the more attractive the reward, the stronger the perception (Halepota, 2005, p. 16).
The expectancy model is a theoretical foundation for studies in psychology, organizational behavior, consumer behavior and management accounting (Chen et al., 2004, p. 25). This theory uses an explanation that assumes people have predictable behavior in their environment. According to the expectancy theory, motivation of a person depends on belief that effort leads to good performance (expectancy I) and performance leads to receiving a reward (expectancy II) (Malik, 2012, p. 361). Expectancy II is defined as the relationship between a worker’s good performance and receiving a reward, such as increased pay, promotion or recognition (Malik, 2012, p. 361). This theory argues that a person’s motivation depends on his or her ability to complete the job and the value placed on the job rewards (Halepota, 2005, p. 16). This theory is significant to management because it can be used to analyze the consequences of changing the employees working conditions.

**Description of how Vroom’s theory advanced leadership/management:**

Elements of Vroom’s theory contributed to a new understanding of leadership and management. Psychology is an important part of management, because it focuses on the individual employee’s motivation and learning (Stanley, 2012, p. 19). Managers need to understand which influences will increase creativity of employees and maximize their productive efforts (Stanley, 2012, p. 19). The expectancy theory can be used by managers to explain an employee’s motivation during their job. This theory states that managers can have an influence on the employees’ level of commitment to perform well at their jobs (Malik, 2012, p. 361). Performance management is a continuous cycle when the manager uses feedback, goals and rewards to improve the job performance of employees. Vroom’s theory expands on the idea of managers who make an effort to communicate with their employees.
Management is about understanding human behavior. When principles of management are used, there are more chances of being a successful manager (Stanley, 2012, p. 21). It is important for management to understand the employees’ motivation and its impact on the organization’s philosophy (Pool & Pool, 2007, p. 356). Vroom’s theory measures motivation of employees by analyzing three factors: expectancy, instrumentality and valence. A person will decide how much effort to give towards a successful job performance after assessing these three factors. The theory argues that motivation depends on an employee’s ability to complete a work task, the reward associated with the job performance and the value of the reward (Halepota, 2005, p. 16). Managers who care about their employees will make adjustments to their employees’ needs.

The leader is responsible for the motivation and activation of subordinates. Managers need to motivate employees in order to reconcile their needs with the goals of the organization (Mintzberg, 1975, p. 55). Taylor was concerned about the problem of wasted human effort in the workplace and called education a part of the managing employees (Phelps et al., 2006, p. 10). A leader is able to provide ideas and give structure in order to reduce the risk of failure (Greenleaf, 2010, p. 91). Strategic leadership is when a person can maintain flexibility and work well with other people to bring changes which improve the organization’s future (Greenleaf, 2012, p. 65). According to the expectancy of motivation, the roles of a strategic leader includes the following: understanding the employees’ needs, increasing rewards in order to motivate them, helping the followers achieve goals, making expectations easier to understand and reducing barriers to good performance (Malik, 2000, p. 361). Expectancy motivation suggests people will be influenced by their self-interest and will choose the actions with the higher chance of a positive outcome.
How Vroom’s theory is relevant to Distance Education leaders:

Vroom’s theory is relevant to leaders and managers of distance education institutions. Leadership is very important in a distance education organization. Leaders should know the personal details about each employee, such as their full name, to be able to lead them effectively. It is more difficult to a distance education leader, because the employees are located in different time zones and geographic locations. A distance education institution needs a leader with strong listening skills, empathy and negotiation skills (Greenleaf, 2010, p. 881). Vroom’s theories can be used by leaders of distance education institutions to measure the motivation levels of the employees. Leaders can use the expectancy theory to understand how changing working conditions, such as overtime, can affect the motivation of employees. This theory is relevant, because the employees’ motivation levels influence both personal and organization’s goals.

Victor Vroom’s expectancy theory advanced our understanding of leadership and is still relevant to managers of distance education operations. The first part of the essay is a summary of the theorist’s work. The second part, describes how Vroom’s theory contributes to a new understanding of leadership and management. The final part, discussed how Vroom’s theory is still relevant to leaders and managers of distance education institutions. This theory is used to predict how the motivation of employees is affected by the work conditions. The expectancy theory of motivation is significant because it can be used to explain the motivation levels of employees in the workplace.
References


