

Role of RFT in the Indian context: A case & comparison of selected sectors

Introduction-

Higgins (1997) observed that early motivational theories that used hedonism as the basis of analysis failed to describe the intricate relationship between concentration and avoidance of motivation, because they did not explain how or why people seek the same happiness or avoid pain, just for what do. In order to develop the basic principles of approach avoidance motivation, Higgins (1997, 1998) introduced Regulatory focus theory by combining the final state that forms the basis of hedonic motivation (approaching happiness and avoiding pain) with self-regulation of emotion, behavior, and cognition. Therefore, Higgins (1997, 1998) established the promotion of Regulatory focus and the prevention of Regulatory focus as two independent and self-regulating strategic behavior selection systems, in which individuals approach happiness and avoid pain in different ways. It needs to be clear that Regulatory focus and approach/avoidance motivation are orthogonal, because each aspect includes approaching the desired final state and avoiding the unwanted final state. These aspects are manifested as a unique preference for motivational goals, intentions and outstanding results. The antecedents of Regulatory focus include needs, values, and context settings (Higgins, 1997).

The Regulatory focus theory is different from the theory that emphasizes the difference between approaching the desired end state and avoiding undesired states (Carver & Scheier 1990), because both the promotion system and the prevention system are close to the desired end state, namely profit and no loss respectively, and Avoid unwanted end states, namely loss and no profit, respectively. The Regulatory focus theory is also different from the achievement motivation theory that distinguishes performance mastery and goal-oriented achievement motivation.

Motivation of research-

During the summer internship I have worked briefly with Prof. Atri Sengupta, IIM Sambalpur on RFT. That time we were working on a review paper while the sample size was almost 80. Hence after studying near about 60 papers I can conclude one thing about this topic that it is totally new in the Indian context. I am yet to find a paper based on Indian data & by an Indian researcher. Our country which is the second most populous country in the earth has the enormous opportunity for research in this field. This theory will reveal a lot of things about employees & their mindset. It can be observed that people find them in a safest position while they are in a government job, they just don't want to go ahead. They are preventive in nature, while the corporate sector people are always in a hurry to get a promotion as they are promotion focused in nature. We are witnessing a series of privatization in our country where the employees need to be promotion focused. We can see in our country that many employees from the corporate world leave their journey in order to take up the entrepreneurial journey. Higgins et. al. (2004) was the 1st one to focus on the RFT & entrepreneurship. We can take up the research on different aspects

i.e. decision making, management, entrepreneurship etc. Implementing this research in the Indian corporate sector will help us to assess whether the workforce is promotion or prevention focus. The outcome of this research will help the business houses to frame & update their policies. To understand the Indian youths as well as employees this research need to be done in India. I am finding it as a huge research opportunity in our country while the outcome will be implemented in both govt. & private sector.

Research questions-

RFT will not only gauge the mood of employees, teachers & students it will also help the policy makers to frame the policy. Understanding the employees' perception will lead to better work productivity & lower burnout rate. By implementing this theory in the organizational set up we will also enhance the cost reduction method. In India Industry & services sector provides 60 % jobs (Neill 2021). In the same report a trend can be seen that services sector is booming in which people are always on a race for promotion or hike. By undertaking this project I would like to address some specific questions in the job market.

- 1- Employees from which sector are more promotion focused?
- 2- Are the government employees more promotion focused or prevention focused?
- 3- Among the married and unmarried employees who are more promotion & prevention focused?
- 4- To be more promotion focused is there any difference in the aspect of gender?

Objective-

The aim is to undertake this project in various sectors & to do a comparison, which will also be a blue print for the upcoming employees. I am aiming to undertake this project in IT, edtech & banking industry. These sectors are booming the Indian market.

- 1- To review the available literature & to set future research agenda.
- 2- Among the employees of IT, ed-tech & banking, who is more promotion focused?
- 3- What is the government employees' orientation? Promotion or Prevention.
- 4- Who is more promotion focused? A comparison between Married & unmarried employee.
- 5- Which gender is more prone towards promotion?

Methodology-

For the objective 1, I am going to follow the SLR approach along with the help the VOS Viewer & citespace. For objective 2, 4 & 5, I am going to follow SPSS 20. In which I will perform different kind of tests Such as factor analysis, ANOVA etc. I am going to follow the qualitative approach (Interview process) for the objective number 3.

Literature Review-

Gino & Margolis (2011) found suggestive evidence that when consistency between organizational characteristics and the individual's own RF focuses on prevention, these characteristics can predict moral behavior, and when characteristics focus on promotion, consistency can predict unethical actions behavior. Their research also shows that compared to cues related to the priority of prevention, cues related to promoting priority are more likely to stimulate dishonest behavior, leading to a higher level of unethical behavior. These findings indicate that contextual cues can trigger a person's RF, which in turn affects their moral behavior. **Graham et. al. (2015)**, he studied the role of leadership style, framework, and follower promotion, focusing on the willingness of employees to engage in unethical organizational behavior. They also found that when the loss framework is used, people with high promotion priorities are less susceptible to inspiring and charismatic transformational leadership, so there is no difference in the effectiveness of the UPB leadership style under gain or loss conditions. **Carker et al. (2015)** studied the potential mechanism of transformational leadership and transactional leadership to influence employee safety behavior. His current field research proves for the first time that the contextual advocacy method can play a central role as a mechanism to produce such an impact. **Johnson et al. (2015)** mentioned in their review article that RF was evaluated from a multi-level perspective of organizational behavior, human resources, strategic management, and entrepreneurship.

Chang & Teng (2017) studied the Focus on employee creativity and job performance, especially in the context of the hotel industry. The results of current research confirm that employee creativity is a positive intermediary between creative personality and job performance in the hotel workplace. Research results of **Johnson et al. (2017)** shows that the impact of RF on leadership in general, especially full-time leadership theory, is broader and more subtle than currently recognized, and we encourage further work in this field. The promotion method of the supervisor has a significant indirect influence on the promotion method of the subordinates by changing the behavior and conditional rewards. According to **Higgins and Pinelli (2020)** the universality of the experience of promotion and prevention methods, and it not only represents personality variables, but also can be induced in the context, making RF and adjustment structures particularly attractive and organized for companies. This article reviews the main research results related to these concepts in recent years.

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