

Your Motivation: Who's Asking, Why and How?

Wednesday, July 21, 2021 10:37:57 AM

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After taking [this motivation questionnaire](#) and determining [your primary goal](#), you might be thinking, what does this mean? Is one goal type better than another?

Before that discussion, let's acknowledge the limitations of self-report assessments like questionnaires. When providing

information directly as you did, **response bias** may have influenced your responses:

- How were you feeling when you took the questionnaire?
- Did you speed through the statements or read each one carefully?
- Did you have any difficulty assessing yourself?
- Were you being honest?
- Did you consider what's socially desirable?
- Did you favor the most extreme options, the most neutral or the most positive?
- Did you choose the same option for most of the statements?
- Did you refer to other statements trying to be consistent?
- Did you think about how the questionnaire would be used or who would have access to your responses?

“I was looking for myself and asking everyone except myself questions which I, and only I, could answer.” - Ralph Ellison

An assessment using a rating scale intentionally limits the range of response options. Presented an odd number of options, respondents may gravitate toward the “middle” option, skewing the results, whereas an even

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number forces respondents to commit to more definitive responses. Too many or too few options can also be problematic. Our questionnaire had only four possible options, each with a numerical value:

- 1 - This is never true of me.
- 2 - This is sometimes true of me.
- 3 - This is often true of me.
- 4 - This is always or almost always true of me.

Numbers facilitate quantitative comparisons, like the scores calculated for each goal (learning, approval or advancement).

In contrast, self-report assessments like employment applications and interviews typically pose open-ended questions to solicit qualitative information :

“Why do you want to be a beauty professional?”

“What about the beauty industry most excites you?”

“Where do you see yourself in 5 years?”

Whether written or verbal, your unlimited and personalized responses could still reflect response bias; moreover, quantifying or comparing responses would be difficult.

We must respect that individuals have different goals and motivation even within the same environment.

Let’s consider imagined responses to the question, “Why do you want to be a beauty professional?”

“I want to help people feel better about themselves.”

“I want others to recognize my talent and artistry.”

“I want to make money doing something I love.”

“I’m not sure, but I thought it might be fun,”

There’s no wrong answer, unless it’s not accurate. And there’s always the chance responses will be interpreted and applied in unexpected ways.

Let’s return to your primary goal. One might assume that having learning goals would be optimal, especially in educational environments like beauty schools. Surprisingly, that may not be true. I’ll explain how our understanding of goals and motivation impacts how educators teach and students learn.

If you’d like to share your experience and be featured in a future column, please email me at jaime@precisionnails.com.

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