

## **MOTIVATION, INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC**

The term motivation derives from the Latin word *movere*, meaning ‘to move’. Accordingly, to be motivated means to be moved to do something. If a person feels no impetus or inspiration to act, she is characterized as unmotivated, whereas someone is considered motivated, if she is energized or activated towards something. Hence, both the direction of the motivation and the energizing of the behavior are of importance.

### **Direction and intensity of work motivation**

The *direction* of the motivation concerns the attitudes and goals that give rise to action.

Motivation theory is thus related to theories of human needs as well as theories of goal attainment. The energy determines the *level of motivation* and is fundamentally a matter of needs.

Every positive or negative outcome that a situation can promise is called an *incentive*. Incentives may be associated with the action itself, its outcome, or various consequences of the outcome.

Each possible action can be associated with specific incentives. The incentives that reside in the activity itself are termed intrinsic incentives. Hence the motivation deriving from these motives can be termed *intrinsic motivation*. Similarly, the incentives that relate to the consequences of the actions, e.g., material and monetary rewards, are termed extrinsic incentives, and the motivation

derived from these incentives is known as *extrinsic motivation*.

Human life is composed of a variety of actions and expressions that impact on the social and physical environment as well as mental activities such as experiencing, thinking, and feeling. Motivation psychology is specifically concerned with activities that reflect the pursuit of goals and form a meaningful unit of behavior. Motivation research is about explaining the direction, persistence, and intensity of this goal-directed behavior. However it is important to understand and structure the work environment to encourage productive behaviors and discourage those that are unproductive. Therefore, this entry is mainly focused on *work motivation*, i.e., the role of motivation's role when influencing workplace behavior and performance.

## **Goals and action**

Striving to achieve a goal, e.g., a budget target, or attempting to complete a task before a deadline is a matter of goal engagement and disengagement, which is fundamentally determined by the interaction between contextual and individual factors, including motive disposition. Thus, motivation is related to action in a more complex way than just being the outcome of a process.

Any positive or negative outcome that a certain situation or action imply for an individual is called an incentive. Some of these incentives are intrinsic, while others are extrinsic. Although it seems straight forward that intrinsic means originating or operating from “within” and extrinsic means originating from “without”, it is often complicated to explain behavior using these terms.

Especially, the study of motives and motivation is complicated, as it is composed of mental

activities that cannot be observed directly by others. The enduring individual motive dispositions, or implicit motives, are often distinguished from explicit motives or goals. These *implicit* motives are preferences for certain types of incentives. In contrast, *explicit* motives reflect conscious verbally expressed values and goals that people attribute to themselves.

It should be noted that motivation theories do not assume that every aspect of a consciously intended action is consciously intended. The end result is intended, but the means, including the physiological automated processes, does of course not require direct conscious control. Control over such actions is indirect. Nor does goal setting as a motivational device assume that every performance outcome is consciously foreseen. Actually, goal setting theory does not assume that the goals people have influence what they will do and how they will perform. Goal setting theory only specifies the factors that affect goals, their relationships, and how they motivate action and performance.

### **Motives and needs**

A need is a discrepancy between an actual state and a desired state, where actual states are characterized by the absence or presence of incentives related to various motives. The contemporary concept of needs or motives is generally traced to the writings of Henry A. Murray who, in his landmark publication *Explorations in Personality* from 1938, offered a theory and a catalogue of human needs.

## **Motive dispositions**

Individual motive disposition plays a major role in both non-professional explanation of behavior and scientific study of motivation. Motive dispositions explain why individual differences in behavior persist across time and situations. These enduring individual motive dispositions, or implicit motives, are affectively preferences for certain incentives.

Often these incentives are classified according to motivational themes. Motivation theory following the tradition of David McClelland often focuses on the Big Three motives: achievement, affiliation, and power. These are far from the only motives, but research on these motives is the most advanced and where the main concepts of motivation psychology are best demonstrated.

The Big Three motives form the basis of much research and are favored by motivational psychologists because they explain the ‘why’ of behavior rather than just ‘how’ people act. In the following, we will use the notion of a *motivation profile* for an individual’s score across the three dimensions.

### **The core motive dispositions: Achievement, power, and affiliation**

The three core motive dispositions considered in this entry are usually expressed as needs: need for achievement (nAch), need for Power (nPow), and need for Affiliation (nAff). Among the three, nAch has gained the most attention in research. Following Henry A. Murray, nAch is defined as the “desire or tendency to do things as rapidly and/or as well as possible” and “to overcome obstacles and attain high standards. To excel one’s self. To rival and surpass others.”

It is a necessary condition that this drive to performance emanates from within oneself, i.e., when individuals feel committed to a standard of excellence and pursue achievement goals on their own initiatives. This does, however, not necessarily mean that self-set goals per se should arouse achievement motivation to a higher extent than goals imposed by others. Still, individuals high on nAch are likely to be more committed to goals of medium difficulty, which offer immediate feedback.

The *affiliation* motive is aroused by the need of being liked and affiliated with others. More specifically, nAff is defined as the concern about establishing, maintaining, or restoring a positive affective relationship with another person(s). The third motivational dimension, *power*, is characterized as the ability or capacity of a person to, consciously or unconsciously, produce intended effects on the behavior or emotions of another person.

In motivation theory two basic psychological distinctions are applicable to all forms of goals; approach and avoidance of the specific motives. Approach tendencies are characterized by a desire to move towards or maintain a positively valenced objective, while avoidance tendencies are characterized by the desire to move or stay away from a negatively valenced object.

Approach and avoidance tendencies are also labeled as hope and fear. Traditionally, motives are measured with respect to both of these components.

### **Motives versus traits**

Studying motives may result in completely different explanations than studying traits, i.e.,

habitual patterns of behavior, thought, and emotion. The implications in relation to for example budget commitment can be illustrated by considering an employee who works hard with long hours of overtime struggling to beat budget targets. Trait theories, like the Five-Factor model, characterize the employee as highly conscientious. From a motivational perspective, the employee could be driven by an *achievement motive* aroused by exceeding standards. But the hard work might also be motivated by an *affiliation motive* if, for instance, a high level of performance helps him maintain and restore important interpersonal relationships, e.g., with the superior or with co-workers. Finally, the behavior may also be due to a strong *power motive*, because employees with high performance receive attention from both superiors and colleagues. As illustrated by the example, situational behavior may serve completely different goals. Taking differences in motive disposition into consideration may explain differences in direction, persistence, and intensity of goal-directed behavior, because organizational action is generally determined by the interaction between contextual and individual factors.

### **Measuring motives and motivation**

Measuring motives and motivation involves operationalizing the theoretical terms and ultimately assigning numbers to the measures. In psychological measurement the key concepts are indirect or latent constructs, i.e., not something that can be observed directly, and the characteristics of the constructs must be inferred from something that can be observed, i.e., some manifest indications or indicators. Establishing the construct validity of the measures is a theoretical question, because we never have a clear operational definition of a construct to know whether the

manifest indicators of that construct are acting in a way consistent with the theory.

### **Projective methods**

Some of the earliest measures of motivation were projective. Participants in a study were presented with an ambiguous stimulus and elicited an unstructured response. The participants then responded to some questions about the stimulus. The responses were coded by experts in terms of the underlying dimensions. The basic idea behind this approach was that the participants project their latent motives into the response.

Henry A. Murray argued that motives may be conscious or unconscious, and that unconscious motives may be reported inaccurately when people are asked directly why they behaved in a specific manner. Accordingly, Murray applied the so-called Thematic Apperception Test in which patients were asked to tell stories about each of a set of pictures rather than using self-reporting questionnaires as is common in motivational research.

Murray's tradition was followed by David McClelland and colleagues, who developed a scoring system for the achievement motive. Similar scoring systems were later developed for nAff and nPow. The basic principle in these so-called projective tests is that respondents write a story based on the pictures while researchers analyze, code, and score according to the scoring system.

### **Self-reporting**

Another approach to measurement of motives has been to use subjective self-report measures based on questionnaires where the respondents are asked about motives and preferences in

specific situations. For several reasons self-reporting is by far the most common type of motivation measures: The measures are easy to administer and score, they have a long history, they are widely used, several construct valid measures exist, and they can easily be analyzed using statistics.

However, studies employing both projective and self-reporting measurement have shown that the two methods often intercorrelate only weakly. This indicates that the methods measure different aspects of motivation. It is therefore common to distinguish between implicit motivational systems or needs as measured by the projective methods and explicit motivational systems as measured by the self-attributing methods.

### **The cultural influence on motivation**

Following Edgar Schein, culture can be understood, at any level of analysis, as a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. These assumptions that have worked well enough to be considered valid are as a subconscious socialization process taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. It is well known that societal cultural differences prevail and that differences in behavior should be explained both by differences in personalities, motivational dispositions, and cultural differences.

#### **Cultural differences**

In the last couple of decades Geert Hofstede's value typology of cultures has been used



extensively when explaining differences in work behavior and management practices across cultures. In its basic form the typology consists of five core values: Individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity, and future orientation.

The cultural values are represented at the individual level as criteria for evaluating the opportunities that various situations offer for satisfying a person's needs. Positive evaluations occur when the situation is perceived as opportunistic for the satisfaction of personal motives, while a negative evaluation means that the situational factors are interpreted as causing dissatisfaction. When people in different cultures base their interpretation on different values, it can be expected that what is perceived as a motivator in some cultures may be perceived as a demotivator in other cultures.

### **Implications for motivation**

The field of motivation, and especially work motivation, has been shaped by Western theories and values. So it is probable, that these theories overlook cultural factors and their potential influence on motivation. Western theories of motivation mostly consider a set of motives that are related to individual self-expression, including to maintain a positive self-view, to experience a sense of self-confidence. Further, well-being as fulfilled by satisfying motives like self-enhancement, self-efficacy and self-consistency.

Even though most motives can be considered to be universal to people in all cultures, they take different forms in different cultures, and different factors influence them. Self-efficacy, for

instance, takes different forms dependent on values of collectivism versus individualism: In collectivistic cultures, efficacy is associated more highly with the group than with the individual. Further, efficacy perception at the group level is a form of collective efficacy capturing the shared beliefs that the group can accomplish a certain task.

The notion of achievement motivation mentioned above is considered to be universal, as it has been identified across cultures. However, achievement is related to the efficacy perception and has a stronger motivational force in individualistic as opposed to collectivistic cultures. Thus, in individualistic cultures (in general North America and Europe), high achievers are more motivated to reach individual performance targets and less intrinsically motivated by the task itself. Further, they are intrinsically motivated if they perform better than their peers.

Individuals formed by collectivist cultures (in general Asia, Africa, and Latin America) are more likely to see the consequences of their actions as a result of collective actions. Consequently, the achievement motivation is related to the success of the collective rather than to the success of the individual.

## **Motivation and goal setting**

From a work motivation perspective one of the most important and influential theories about motivation and job performance is the so-called *goal attainment theory*, which was articulated around the 1980s by the psychologists Edwin A. Locke and Garry Latham. Basically this theory states that goals have the effect of directing attention and action, i.e., choice, as well as

mobilizing energy, i.e., effort. Further, the theory states that the nature of goals determines the prolonging of effort over time, i.e., persistence, and how strategies for goal attainment, i.e., cognition, are developed.

### **What goals are most motivating?**

The goal attainment theory has been supported by a large number of empirical and experimental studies. It has appeal from a managerial perspective as it provides a number of specific advice in relation to how best to motivate employees. Among the conclusions drawn from the empirical literature are the following propositions, some of the most important implications of the goal attainment theory:

1. Specific goals lead to higher performance than no goals, and specific goals are also better than broad goals such as “do your best”.
2. When employees have high goal commitment, they direct their effort towards the goals, and the more difficult the goal, the better the performance.
3. Conditions such as monetary incentives, participation in decision-making, and feedback affect only performance to the extent that they lead to setting or committing to challenging and specific goals.

### **Participation in goal setting**

As it provides managers with an opportunity to exchange relevant information, participation in goal setting tends to increase goal difficulty and increase confidence that goals can be attained.

Therefore, participation helps managers set goals that are realistic and congruent with the employees' abilities. Since the achievement motive is most strongly related to performance if individuals encounter a challenging task but remain free to choose task difficulty, it can be expected that participation in relation to goal setting will make individuals with a high nAch more committed to budget goals.

Consistent with goal-setting theory, experimental research has found that participation has no effect on performance unless it leads to the setting of and commitment to a specific and high goal. Hence, it is not the method by which goals are set that influences performance, but rather the difficulty of the goals. Or stated alternatively: Participation in decision making is not a variable of importance for motivation, rather the variable of importance is the difficulty of the goal.

### **Does pay undermine intrinsic motivation?**

The literature on job choice suggests that pay is among the most important factors taken into account when seeking and accepting a job. But it is more controversial how pay influences motivation and hence persistence and effort put into performing the job. In most studies of work motivation it is found that pay motivates employees when it is closely tied to their perception of their performance. But studies have also shown that paying people for performing tasks that they would otherwise have done voluntarily may decrease motivation and potentially lead to poorer performance with respect to the activity that is rewarded.

## **Self-determination theory**

The Self-determination theory, mainly developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, distinguishes between actions that emanate from an individual's sense of self and those that are accompanied by an experience of pressure and control that are not representative of his or her self. Intrinsically motivated behaviors are performed out of interest and satisfy needs for competence and autonomy, while extrinsically motivated behaviors are executed because they are instrumental to some separable consequences.

Following Self-determination theory it has been claimed that extrinsic rewards, including pay, may undermine intrinsic motivation: If activities are performed for external rewards, e.g., money, a lack of interest is inferred. If the task, on the contrary, is performed without external inducement people are in control and hence intrinsically motivated. Further, not only monetary and other tangible rewards, but also threats, deadlines, directives, and competition may diminish intrinsic motivation, because these factors are regarded as controllers of individual behavior.

## **Pay and work motivation**

The conclusion that extrinsic rewards undermine intrinsic motivation was mainly drawn from experimental research, and although the results have been widely cited, they are much debated.

While the results may be relevant in many areas of human life, including time spend on educational activities, it can be argued that work life almost always tends to include assigned deadlines, standards, and pay. Thus, in motivating performance in job situations pay is likely to be an important motivational factor.

However, discrepancies between motives can cause intrapersonal conflicts because of conflicting behavioral tendencies that can result in impaired well-being. Further, an important premise for goal attainment theory to predict that externally set goals are motivating is that they are perceived as attainable. If goals are perceived as unattainable, offering a monetary reward for goal attainment can lower motivation.

### **The cultural dimension of rewards**

It should also be noted that it is highly cultural dependent what is regarded as a desirable reward. Therefore the motivational effect of a given incentive system is very much determined by its congruence with the cultural values. While pay for performance is an often-used practice in the United States where it facilitates the display of differences among individual achievements, it is less used in collectivistic cultures where people work in groups and where individual rewards may violate the group harmony. Further, pay for performance may also violate prevalent values in cultures characterized by high power distance (e.g. Japan) where seniority based pay systems therefore are more used.

There is fewer consensus in the research based literature on the implications of culture in relation to monetary versus non-monetary rewards and intrinsic motivation in general. This may reflect the socioeconomic conditions that often differentiate Western individualistic cultures and non-Western collectivistic cultures. A poor economy increases the incentive effect of monetary rewards for those whose standard of living is low compared with people living in countries where the standards of living in general is higher. Recognizing how culture shapes motive dispositions in different cultures is therefore crucial in designing work environments that direct employee's

energy towards desired actions with a high motivational intensity.

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See also Employee Motivation, Employee Involvement, Commitment, Empowerment, Organizational Culture, Performance Management, Quantitative Research.

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