



## Theories of Motivation

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- \* Theories of Motivation



# Motivation

- **Motivation** is what drives people to perform a behaviour, e.g.,
  - seeking food sources, shelter, a mate
  - training harder to achieve success in a particular sport
  - saving money for retirement
  - repeating pleasurable experiences
- Motivation is **complex** and **multi-layered** and differs from person to person, e.g.,
  - Why is it that some people are motivated to commit crime?
  - Why is it that some people are motivated towards **self-destructive** behaviours such as alcohol abuse, relationship sabotage, and hostility towards others?
  - Why is it that some people are motivated by impossible goals while others are motivated to live a quiet life?

## Mechanistic motivation

- **Mechanistic motivation** is driven by **biological** and **evolutionary drives**
- **Freud** claimed that humans are driven by **aggression and sex**
- **Hull** claimed that humans are driven by **sex, hunger, thirst and pain avoidance**
- **Behaviourists** claim that motivation is driven by **reinforcement** (reward reduces drive)
  - E.g., finding food reduces hunger (drive) temporarily
  - The reward of eating reinforces the behaviour to search for food again later
- Mechanistic motivation operates **automatically and unconsciously**
  - People are **not aware** of it
  - It happens **without conscious thought or information processing**

## Self-determination theory

- Unlike mechanistic motivation, **self-determination theory** operates at a **conscious level** as people are **aware** of what motivates them
- This theory explains motivation in terms of choice, awareness and control
- It focuses on:
  - **intrinsic vs extrinsic motivation**
  - **locus of control (LOC)**



## Intrinsic motivation

- **Intrinsic motivation** refers to motivation that comes from **within the individual**.
- Behaviour is driven by **personal satisfaction**, not external rewards
- People do things because they find them **enjoyable, interesting, or meaningful**, e.g.,
  - Jayne and Chris practise ice dancing for a sense of achievement
  - Mahatma spreads peace because it feels like his duty
  - Sigmund studies psychology to prove to himself that he can succeed
- People are **intrinsically motivated** when they
  - enjoy the process of learning or creating
  - seek personal growth or mastery
  - feel fulfilled by achievement itself

## Extrinsic motivation

- **Extrinsic motivation** (the opposite of intrinsic motivation) refers to motivation that comes from **outside the individual**
- Behaviour is driven by **external rewards or recognition**, e.g.,
  - Jayne and Chris want to win a gold medal at the Olympics
  - Mahatma wants fame as a spiritual leader
  - Sigmund wants top grades to get into a reputable university
- People are **extrinsically motivated** when they
  - focus on results, rewards, or social status
  - seek approval or validation from others
  - value outcomes more than the process

## Locus of control (LOC)

- Another aspect of this theory is the difference between **internal and external locus of control (LOC)**

### Internal LOC

- A high internal LOC is evident in people who feel that they have **autonomy** over their lives and **responsibility** for their behaviour
- People with a high internal LOC tend to be **confident, intelligent and achievement-orientated**
- Examples of high internal LOC behaviour might include



Your notes

- accepting responsibility for not passing an exam by admitting that they did not work hard enough
- refusing to work beyond office hours at the weekend for a tyrannical boss
- People with a **high internal LOC** are more likely to be **intrinsically motivated**

## External LOC

- High external LOC is evident in people who feel that they have **no autonomy** over their lives and assume a lack of responsibility for their behaviour
- People with a high external LOC tend to lack confidence, feel **insecure** and have a high need for **social approval**
- Examples of high external LOC behaviour might include
  - blaming the teacher for failing an exam
  - working beyond office hours at the weekend for a tyrannical boss because they do not feel that they can say no
- People with a high external LOC are more likely to be extrinsically motivated