

Theories of motivation research paper example

[Psychology](#), [Motivation](#)



Introduction

Motivation is the driving force that makes us do things that we do. Our needs generate our behavior which in turns tries to satisfy our needs. The basic concept of motivation is based on the relationship between these three - needs-behavior-satisfactions. Our needs vary in nature. Depending on the nature of our needs - social, biological, emotional and cognitive, we take actions to fulfill those needs. There are a number of theories developed by researchers to explain the force of motivation behind our action. This paper will touch upon four such theories - Maslow's hierarchy of needs, cognitive evaluation theory, equity theory and drive theory.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's motivation theory is based on hierarchy of needs. Maslow has divided human needs into five categories - self-actualization, esteem, belongingness, safety and physiological. Maslow gives the utmost priority to the lower section of needs and that is physiological needs of food, water and sex which, according to him, are the most basic needs surpassing all other needs. Thereupon comes the need for safety. If one doesn't have job security or job safety, it is unlikely that he will marry to expand his family. All these five hierarchical needs are interrelated. Once the lower needs are met, then only one will be motivated to think of self-actualization or develop the desire to utilize his potential.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory

Cognitive Evaluation Theory suggests of two motivational forces - intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation derives from within the person like his

competence, sense of responsibility and achievement. Extrinsic motivations are external forces beyond the person's control like pay packages, promotion, appraisals etc. Intrinsically motivated people make efforts for their own sense of achievement and satisfaction. They lose their motivation when they feel that they are doing because of some extrinsic motivators which are beyond their control.

Equity Theory

Equity theory suggests that it is not the actual rewards which motivate employees to perform better; rather it's in comparison with the rewards and efforts of others that motivates people. If an employee receives 15% raise and another receives 5%, then the employee who has received lower raise will compare his efforts with the employee who has received the higher raise and will feel unhappy. He wouldn't have felt unhappy if both of them got equal raise. However, this theory is unable to predict the actions of people accurately because it depends on person to person whether equity or inequity of rewards make any difference. Some people are led by the long term consequences and they might completely overlook short term inequity of rewards. Further, the information of rewards and efforts of others could be based on assumptions and not facts.

Drive Theory

The drive theory developed by Clark Hull suggests that motivation derives from biological needs. Hull explains that people feel motivated to perform in order to decrease the amount of tension caused by unsatisfied needs. For instance, one might be motivated to eat in order to reduce his state of

hunger. But the problem with this theory is that human actions cannot always be justified by this theory because people tend to eat even when they are not hungry.

Conclusion

Motivation is the driving force that makes us take certain actions. Motivation is based on the relationship between needs, behavior and satisfaction. There are a number of motivation theories developed by researchers over the years. This paper has highlighted upon four such motivational theories - Maslow's hierarchy of needs, cognitive evaluation theory, equity theory and Hull's drive theory. Maslow has divided human needs into five categories to explain his idea of motivation. Cognitive evaluation theory recognizes intrinsic and extrinsic needs as forces of motivation. Equity theory suggests that it is the comparison with the rewards and efforts of others that determines our actions and finally Hull's drive theory which states that our actions are motivated by our desire to reduce tension caused by unmet needs.