

# Research paper on individual differences in motivation theories

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



For a long time, individual differences have been considered as significant factors that influence human behaviour and consequently motivation. Researchers such as McClelland, Murray, Atkinson, and Clark empirically noted numerous individual differences in motivation. The most notable was the Need for Achievement (nAch). However, despite the massive support for motivation theories that conceptualized individual differences, the systematic study of various individual differences in motivation significantly slowed down in the 1970's and 1980's. It was noted that individual differences have a statistically insignificant influence on human behaviour at their workplace. The few empirical results which statistical significance did not have any practical application. Consequently, most researchers downplayed the importance of individual differences in their motivation theories. At that time, most motivational theories and research were centred on situational and cognitive. These theories include; Job Characteristic Model by Hackman and Oldman(1976), Expectancy theory by Vroom(1964) and Self-efficacy theory by Bandura (1982) among others.

Researchers in the 21st century came to appreciate the influence of individual differences on motivation theories. The renewed attention of I/O, O/B and HRM scholars is attributable to two discoveries. The first one is the discovery that measures of an individual's integrity not only predicts the individual's performance but they do so without an adverse impact regarding minorities and women. The second one was the development of the Five Factor Model( FFM).

There are several arguments used to support inclusion of individual differences in motivation theories. First, individual traits are real. Secondly,

an individual's personality can be described using their unique traits. Lastly, the current emphasis by organizational leaders to identify individuals who are versatile, flexible and tolerant of uncertainty makes it necessary to study individual differences. Consequently, theories that were developed incorporated the influence of individual differences. They include; Self regulatory/self monitoring personality by Ruth Kanfer(1997) and Goal orientation by Farr, Hofmann and Ringenbach (1993).

## References

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