

# Theory, explanation and illustration of motivation and related subject research p...

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



Even for psychologists not directly studying motivation, its understanding is critical in all branches of the discipline. Motivation is defined as the force that causes us to do things and think about things. It is the inner drive or force that causes a person to take action towards a specific end. It is termed a “driving force.” Hunger is a motivating force, which drives a person to it. As is thirst, and other primary inborn drives.

In Chapter 11 of Gregory Feist’s *Psychology: Making Connections*, the author establishes just how important motivation is for human behavior. (Feist, 2011) Motivation also comes from other reasons outside of psychological needs. There are social pressures that drive a person to do something. An example of this would be two reasons for going to church. A man might go to church in order to avoid public scrutiny. Another person, a child perhaps, might go to church to avoid being punished by his mother. In this example both child and the man are attending a church service but their motivation comes from different contexts.

There is also internal and external motivation. Internal motivation is driven by a benefit or pleasure a task provides and external motivation is motivation that goes after an outcome. An example of internal motivation would be desiring to watch a TV show because how it makes a person feel. External motivation would be wanting to win a gold medal by placing in the Olympics.

There are number competing theories that explain where motivation comes from and how it is used. These theories, while they may disagree on some points, are important in that they provide different lenses to view motivation with, and an understanding of them give a deeper understand as to what

motivates us.

This essay will explore two theories of motivation and lay out how they operate. To show a stark comparison, I have chosen two theories that appear to be in contradiction with each other in their explanations of motivation:

Incentive theory and Escape-seeking dichotomy model.

Incentive theory is a model developed by behaviorists. It believes that people do things for a reward that they associate as an outcome of the action. A positive outcome is associated with a positive action and this is then repeated due to that. In incentive theory there are reinforcers. An example could be used with drug use. Drug use in some way makes a user feel good by altering the chemical makeup of the brain and seeking this incentive is what motivates a user to continue to use a drug.

Escape-seeking dichotomy model seems to depart from incentive theory in that it seeks to avoid routine, while incentive theory establishes routines based on known positive outcomes. Escape-seeking dichotomy has been used to explain tourist's motivations to leave the comforts of their homes to travel to other countries. (Woo, 1)

Though these two theories seem to contradict each other, they are best viewed as noncompetitive as both models could influence a person. One could use the escape-seeking dichotomy to explain why a person abruptly quit his job and quit his routines and moved to another country, and also if that person were a smoker use the incentive theory as a model to explain his/her smoking.

Motivation is partly explained by how a person is conditioned. Conditioning is something that has widely been studied in psychology and is related to

motivate.

One type of conditioning, “ Operant conditioning” is a term given to a system of learned behavior 1937 by B. F. Skinner that has to do with consequences controlling a person or animal’s behavior. Operant Conditioning is conditioning in which a person acquires a repeated association with a consequence with a certain behavior. An example would be a domesticated dolphin who learns that every time he does a double belly flip in the air he is rewarded with his favorite fish, salmon. After enough instances of receiving a salmon after doing a certain thing, consciously or unconsciously he will continue to repeat this behavior because he has associated a positive consequence with it.

Classical conditioning, coined by Pavlov in his studies of dogs is different from operant conditioning. Pavlov, while he explored a similar subject matter, was more interested in reflex psychology while Skinner’s concern rest in how behavior affects the environment. (Staddon, 2002).

An operant response is behavior that has been prompted by operant conditioning. The dolphin jumping out of the water would be the operant response and the conditioning would be the salmon he has received for doing that.

Operant behavior is the derivative of the end result of operant conditioning.

Operant conditionings lead to a certain pattern of predicable behavior.

Behavior can be influenced by either positive or negative reinforcement.

Negative Reinforcement is behavior that is influenced by removing some undesirable stimulus that has been introduced into the subject’s

environment. An example of this could be ear-splitting music being played at

an unreasonable volume. Perhaps every time a person shares a cigarette with the host of a party the music is turned off during the time the party host smokes the cigarette. If the person hates the music that is playing, this might encourage them to be generous, giving many cigarettes to remove the music, if just for a short time.

Positive Reinforcement elicits an operant response by giving the subject being conditioned something desirable. Fruit Loops, works well to illustrate this. Axiom: All sane people desire fruit Loops. Therefore most people would be likely to increase a certain behavior if they associated it with the attainment of free fruit loops. If, for example, every time one read The New York Times a man appeared with a bowl of Fruit Loops, the likelihood of that person reading that paper would increase dramatically.

A key term to understand Operant Conditioning is knowing what Interval Timing is. There are patterns that have emerged between the rewards, or removal of negative reinforced, that affect that operant response timing and frequency. More simply put, interval timing is how long it takes for the subject to respond to the stimulus. The individual time between the intervals is known as wait time.

Studies have shown that by doubling the interval timing, the chance of a response and learning decreases on course to about 50% of what it is when the interval timing is decreased by half. (Church & Deluty, 1977).

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