

What are the sources of external and internal motivation for people?

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



What are the sources of internal and external motivations for people's action? Xu Zhijun 24087 Warsaw School of Social Sciences and

Humanities Motivation is the reason of people starting, directing and maintaining activities, not the result (Zimbardo, Johnson & Weber, 2000).

The reason why people take action can be different; basically there are two big aspects: internal and external motivation. Internal motivation is to do something for your own sake. It can be your personality interest or the value which you pursue; it's very similar with intrinsic motivation.

The external motivation is to do something for other's sake. It sounds similar with extrinsic motivation, but it is a different concept which I will present precisely. I suggest if people want to change or maintain some particular behaviors, the best way is to transfer the external motivation into internal motivation. According to Maslow's humanistic theory (1943), there is a pyramid of needs wait people to fulfill. The first level: biological aspect, needs for food, water, oxygen, rest, sexual expression, release from tension.

People look for food to eat when they are hungry or they are under big pressure, food can help them release the tension at the moment. And people choose dance, sing or talk to their close people to release their tension as well. People sleep when they are tired. People have sexual life because they have sexual drive. Each organism seek a state of balance – homeostasis. (Hull, 1943, 1952). The second level is safety. It means needs for security, comfort, tranquility, freedom from fear.

When facing threaten, may hurt, people will automatically try to avoid. Seeing a sharp blade falling down, people will evade. Anthony Robin said, “

I'm scared, so I have to take action right now – run to the direction which I want. " The third level is attachment. It means needs for belong, to affiliate, to love and be loved. Human are social animals, that's the reason people don't want loneliness. When people feel lonely, they meet friends, talk to others or even will make more effort to keep in contact with others.

People need love others and in turn they need to be loved. The forth level is esteem. It means needs for confidence, sense of worth and competence, self-esteem and respect of others. People need others' acceptance. People need confidence. Without confidence, people couldn't accomplish any goals. So people are seeking ways to be confidence. People positively take action to prove they are not worthless in this world. The fifth level is self-actualization, it means needs to fulfill potential, have meaningful goals.

When people meet all four levels described above, they pursue the value of life by self-actualization. These are the nature of human being. These points we can call internal motivation; people are born with this priority oriented character. People take action for pursuing the pleasure and avoiding the pain (Epicurus 341BC), and avoiding the pain can be more influential on people's action. The reason of people cannot be motivated to act is just his need for happiness is not big enough; he can still hold the pain of threatens. (Mood Story, August 30th, 2007).

Consider how the self influences our memory, a phenomenon known as the self-reference effect: when information is relevant to our self-concepts, we process it quickly and remember it well (Higgins & Bargh, 1987; Kuiper & Rogers, 1979; Symons & Johnson, 1997). The more self-relevant, we connect

outside with ourselves, the more effectively on our behaviors. Whatever the reinforcement is, if we take it to our mind, analyze it, and then digest it, it would work efficiently next time, and we may be more motivated. Based on locus' control (Rotter 1973), people are divided into two aspects, one is internal and the other one is external.

The internal people believe they control their own destiny. They contribute the fault to themselves and more self centered. The external people feel chance or outside forces determine their fate . The external people attribute the error to the environment. Those who see themselves as internally controlled are more likely to do well in school, successfully stop smoking, wear seat belts, deal with marital problems directly, earn a substantial income, and delay instant gratification to achieve long-term goals (Findley & Cooper, 1983; Lefcourt, 1982; Miller & others, 1986).

Previous research has shown that internals to have better mental health than externals (in terms of being less likely to be suffering from neuroses or psychoses), to have more self control, and to be more achievement oriented (Lefcourt, 1966; Joe, 1971). And employees who are internal locus of control are more motivated to work than externals , performance better, and see working hard as being instrumental in obtaining what they want (Lauri, 1975). In other words these internals, who see themselves as controller, or we can say they connect outside more with themselves than externals.

External motivation here I regard it as doing something for outside world. Any rewards, punishments, pressure, responsibility and obligation from others can motivate people, cause people's action as well. Through the

rewards and punishments, what we get is more about the subjects' emotion, is about their expectation for us. A reward can be a compliment, praise, an ice-cream, or bonus for hard-working employee. This is the way they give and try to influence us. But how we understand it and whether we get the essence are not certain, and couldn't be easily predict.

In October, 2008, there was a thirteen-year boy, couldn't bear the pressure from both school and family, went to suicide just because of being frightened to get physical punishment. He left a letter and poisoned himself. (" Anhui Court Net, " 2008). It was a very sad news, but on the other hand, we realized that if we only give stimulation without central route persuasion, and no object relevant explanation, the result may go to another direction which we don't want to see. When people don't know about new things, they learn from the others.

It is one aspect of learning theory called classical conditioning. When people were young, all of us may experienced that if we did a good job, parents would give us some benefits as reward, this method may encourage us to do the same thing again in order to get the reward which we want from parents; or we didn't do well on which parents requested, we would get punishment soon. The general thesis here is that internal motivation activates that subject sufficiently to produce a wide range of responses. If one of these responses leads to a reward, i. e. a reduction of drive, the tendency to repeat that response will be increased. The wide range of irrelevant activities is gradually narrowed as the tendency to make the rewarded response is increased, until the subject is directly and efficiently performing the response

that leads to the reward (Kendler, 1952). In Chinese society, small children's parents are discussing intensely about whether reward is more effective or punishment on teaching their child. There is a very famous saying which many parents take it as a motto—spare the rod and spoil the child.

It emphasizes the negative reinforcement's importance. We can understand it in the sense that punishment can bring the good result. It happens. In 2005, there was an Asian Youth Piano Competition; a thirteen- year girl won four champions, two silver medals. Her father said he slapped his daughter over 400 times during her training. It was so terrible to hear that. Maybe in the US, this father would definitely be arrested. However, this father then regretted, and this small girl became love piano by her real heart. I think here is a very important element during the transformation, which is time.

Non-stop stimulation can change people's inner interests to keep some particular behaviors. This tortured girl gradually fell in love with piano. Time allows her to think about the piano playing and within her grown up, she may got confidence, high self-esteem, respect from playing or even self actualization, she has love for piano now. That's why she still holds onto it. If not, she would either quit or just work less productively. If the reinforcement has nothing to do with people's embedded life interests or innate outlook, it will lose its effectiveness soon.

A highly salient, task contingent reward is more detrimental to intrinsic interest than a relatively non-salient was investigated (Ross, 1975). Such stimulation would make the subject confused his real interest, his inner motivation – love for doing something. We may experience that when we do

something in which we are interested, we just do it for fun, for our own sake. Like leisure activities, such as cycling, playing the guitar, play the music. This point has similarity with intrinsic motivation. We can hold these activities for long time.

We don't play for others; it's like our own free choice. We do it because we like it, we are good. I help you because I do it for my own pleasure, I didn't expect anything from you, and you don't have to give any substantial reward to me. I am on diet, just because I want to be more healthy, more energetic, I am not losing weight for pleasing others. I study because I want to get the knowledge from the book rather than follow the tendency to go to college. If anyone gives a feedback like a gift, some bonus which doesn't match our inner embedded life interests, it will change the way we used to be.

It may confuse the real motivation of our behaviors. Once the stimulation stops, the source of motivation will disappear too. Motivation is not a donation from the public, it's a game, and the only player is you. Behaviors' source is internal, all the stimulation from outside works by inside transformation. Social psychologists agree that our actions influence our attitudes. (David G. Myers 2009 P98), thoughts decide actions (Diao, 2004). Behavior and thoughts interact in mutual ways. Behavior can change the thoughts, and the thoughts will lead the behavior.

Baker and Brownell (2000) suggested that exercise may play a key role in long term weight management by influencing psychological aspects like self-efficacy, body image, or mood. And increased general self-determination and exercise motivation seem to facilitate improvements in eating self-regulation

during weight control in women. (Mata, Silva &Vieira2009) Persuasion researchers Richard Petty and John Cacioppo(2005) and Alice Eagly and Shelly Chaiken (1993) report that persuasion is likely occur via either a central or peripheral route. (Zimbardo et al.) Focusing on the arguments, explain clearly about the issue, this is central route to persuasion; focusing on the cues that trigger acceptance without much thinking is the peripheral route to persuasion. As for central route, the audience is analytical and motivated; the processing is elaborate, with high effort, the result is agree or counter argue; persuasion is cogent arguments evoke enduring agreement. The other way goes peripheral route, the audience is not analytical or involved; the processing, with low effort by using peripheral cues; cues trigger liking and acceptance but often only temporarily.

So I can assume that in order to maintain some sort of particular behaviors in a long term, we need a transformation in our mind. Transform those information which conveyed by others. Change the way we think that we want not you want. I do it for myself not for others. Whatever the value which you pursue, intellectual challenge, a comfortable lifestyle, prestige or even money, try to make that as your own desire. Stimulation can change people's behavior, but may not help keeping the behavior.

Only if people realize by his heart he need to do for his own good, the stimulation matches with his inner pleasure, the action will maintain for long term. Perseverance derives from love, the very inner true feeling. This internal feeling will create passion, and willpower to support you taking action and keeping it. References 1, Guthrie, E. R(1934). Reward and

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