

MOTIVATION DEFINITION AND GENERAL CHATACTERIZATION

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Аннотация

Плохо мотивированные дети рискуют задержками и помехами в своём социально-эмоциональном и сcholastическом функционировании. Эта статья рассматривает мотивацию и ее компоненты, для того, чтобы лучше понять факторы и инструменты для увеличения мотивации детей.

Abstract

Poorly motivated children are at risk for disturbances and delays in their socio-emotional and scholastic functioning. This paper examines the motivation and its components, in order to understand better the factors and tools to improve children motivation.

The term motivation derived from the Latin verb *movere* (to move). The idea of movement is reflected in such common sense ideas about motivation as something that gets us going, keeps us working, and helps us complete tasks. Yet there are many definitions of motivation and much disagreement over its precise nature. These differences in the nature and operation of motivation are apparent in the various theories we cover in this text. For now, we will say that motivation has been

conceptualized in varied ways including inner forces, enduring traits, behavioral responses to stimuli, and sets of beliefs and affects.

Many early views linked motivation with inner forces: instincts, traits, volition, and will. Behavioral (conditioning) theories view motivation as an increased or continual level of responding to stimuli brought about by reinforcement (reward). Contemporary cognitive views postulate that individuals' thoughts, beliefs, and emotions influence motivation [2].

Motivation requires activity—physical or mental. Physical activity entails effort, persistence, and other overt actions. Mental activity includes such cognitive actions as planning, rehearsing, organizing, monitoring, making decisions, solving problems, and assessing progress. Most activities that students engage in are geared toward attaining their goals.

Finally, motivated activity is instigated and sustained. Starting toward a goal is important and often difficult because it involves making a commitment and taking the first step. But motivational processes are critically important to sustain action. Many major goals are long term, such as earning a college degree, obtaining a good job, and saving money for retirement. Much of what we know about motivation comes from determining how people respond to the difficulties, problems, failures, and setbacks they encounter as they pursue long-term goals. Such motivational processes as expectations, attributions, emotions, and affects help people surmount difficulties and sustain motivation.

Philosophical antecedents. The philosophical heritage of experimental psychology was of little help in telling the functional psychologists how to think about these problems in dynamics. Philosophy had thought much about human values, but there seemed little possibility of generalizing ethical systems across the broad range of species and phyla that seemed to have motivational components in their behavior. Nor, except as a kind of confused background, do the nonhumans have much to contribute to the chronic debate over hedonism.

Biological contributions. Good deal more was available from the biologist, particularly concepts of instinct and physiological regulation and a knowledge of neurophysiological bases of behavior.

Instinct. Through many revisions, the concept of instinct as a directive force had achieved general acceptance among naturalists and was at hand for the now familiar uses in behavior theory to which it was put by McDougall and by Freud. Evolution, as Darwin saw it, made instinctive behavior clearly adaptive for either the individual or his species. Through the years, this concept of instinct has had an eventful career, being rejected out of hand by the radically empirical behaviorists and being dramatically revived into a new and fruitful usefulness by the zoological ethologists.

In the study of motivation the concept of instinct becomes useful when it is made to represent rather uniform, genotypically shaped behavior patterns operating in the context of self-maintenance or species maintenance. This, then, enables some of the fundamental characteristics of the motivational concept to be easily discerned. An animal's responses are triggered by some internal physiological change, usually acting conjointly with distinctive external stimulus patterns. The responses are selectively oriented to one or another aspect of the environment and show a flexibly shaped succession that is usually relevant to some adaptive end. There then ensues, if the animal is "successful," achievement of some state of affairs that ends the sequence. Expression in its purest forms is unconscious, or at least not fully conscious. We are ordinarily unaware of our style of walking, standing, smiling, or laughing. It is true that we may be made aware of them by moving pictures, phonograph records, caricatures, or imitations. But such are apt to be exceptions or at least uncharacteristic. Expressive acts that are conscious—choosing our clothes, furniture, hair style—are seen as special, unusual, or intermediate cases. But coping may be and characteristically is fully conscious. When it is unconscious, this is seen as exceptional or unusual [5, p.7].

Physiological regulation. Another related set of facts and concepts from biology anticipated the psychologist's concern with motivation and gave him the framework of a model that has had long viability, not only within experimental psychology proper but also, as an inspiration for analogous models, within the social sciences generally. We refer to the facts of physiological regulation.

Neurophysiological bases. In recent years the neurophysiologist and physiological psychologist have been increasingly successful in identifying the neural and endocrine bases for such important motivational conditions as hunger, thirst, and sex; but even before this actual demonstration the functional theories of behavior were assuming that motivation was firmly anchored in the organic needs of the body. This is clearly illustrated in the following quotation from Dashiell's influential textbook of 1928.

The primary drives to persistent forms of animal and human conduct are tissue-conditions within the organism giving rise to stimulations exciting the organism to overt activity. A man's interests and desires may become ever so elaborate, refined, socialized, sublimated, idealistic; but the raw basis from which they are developed is found in the phenomena of living matter [2, pp. 233–234].

Social motives. The second sentence of the above quotation reflects one of the major problems of the contemporary motivational theorist: the nature and derivation of those human motives that do not seem to be connected in any obvious manner to the waxing and waning of organic needs. All possible positions are represented in the writings of psychologists, ranging from Dashiell's view that social motives simply grow out of physiological strivings to the assertion that social motives may be completely unrelated to biological needs in either their development or their full-fledged operation [3].

Thus the familiar negative feedback principle of control can be applied to guidance of the organic system. While regulation frequently is quite automatic and does not require any observable behavioral effort, such is not always the case. As was mentioned earlier, when restoration of system variables to an optimal range consumes substances which must be replaced from sources exterior to the animal or when the environment itself poses local conditions of stress, the animal must make discriminative responses in that environment. That this is so has been recognized for a long time, as the quotation from Dashiell [1] would indicate. What is essentially new is the identification of the mechanisms underlying the processes of the model. It is almost invariably true that significant variations from the optimum of any physiological system variable are signaled by changes in the physical or chemical characteristics of the extracellular body fluids. For example, oxygen lack is signaled by an increase in the carbon dioxide content of the plasma, dehydration is accompanied by an increase in extracellular osmotic pressure, etc. Either these changes or some of their secondary consequences are adequate stimuli for specialized detector cells which, functioning as quasi-sense organs, react to the index of system disturbance by hormonal and/or neural excitation and response. These responses are the direct cause of correctional activity in the case of the automatic regulations and instigate the discriminatory and orienting responses in the case where behavioral components are necessary. In the latter case it is obvious that docility, flexibility, and variability are introduced, furnishing survival criteria of a kind quite different in many ways from those inherent in the more automatic and internally sufficient type of regulatory mechanism. In short, it would appear that the phylogenetic modifications that have led to the superior mammalian nervous system were decisively determined by the demands of survival by external regulation.

In addition to the newly expanded knowledge of neural and hormonal variables in regulation, there has been another development in neurophysiology that has exercised a significant influence on concepts of motivation. The discovery by Horace Magoun and his co-workers of a second sensory and motor neural mediating system, working in conjunction with the classical afferent paths to the brain and the pyramidal efferent motor outflow from the brain, has given the psychological theorist a wider range of physiological properties on which to base his thinking about the relation of brain to behavior. Magoun showed that the reticular formation of the brain stem received innervation from most of the afferent nerves leading from sense organs and that stimulation of sense organs caused excitation to be transmitted not only through the long-known "specific projection pathways" to the corresponding sensory areas of the cortex but also, by means of the reticular formation, diffusely to most or all other parts of the cortex.

Because the reticular formation receives excitation from all sensory channels and because any specificity appears lost in the diffuse transmission to the cortex, this system was called the “non-specific,” or “diffuse,” projection system.

The major feature of the reticular formation seems to be the dependence of the higher regions of the brain on this diffuse excitatory consequence of sensory stimulation for proper transmission and integration of impulses that are carried over the specific projection system. In a classical experiment Moruzzi and Magoun [6,p.44-45] showed that cats with the reticular formation ablated appeared unable to respond to peripheral stimulation, although electrical recording from the sensory areas of the cortex showed that the signals from the sensory nerves were arriving at the cortical sensory projection areas in a normal fashion. It had been known that the electroencephalogram (EEG) recording the spontaneous massed electrical activity of the cortex showed a regular alternation of a roughly sinusoidal character and of a frequency that was directly related to the degree of alertness of the subject—coma and sleep being accompanied by very slow waves; relaxed waking states, by an intermediate frequency; and a shift toward higher frequencies occurring when the subject either was attending to peripheral sensory stimulation, was actively engaged in tasks, or was disturbed by emotional thoughts. The shift from lower to higher frequencies was shown by Magoun and others to be closely related to activity in the diffuse projection system. The phenomenon of increased EEG frequency as a consequence of stimulation has been called activation and as such is an index of the widespread changes in the higher nervous system attending integrated behavior. More broadly, then, “activation” is a term used to denote the generalized, non directional alerting of the subject as a consequence of external or internal stimulation. In this sense, the concept has been called upon to bear an increasingly heavy theoretical load in discussions of motivated behavior.

Considering the importance of activation as a part of the physiological analysis of motivation, at least two main points should be made. To the extent that regulatory imbalance increases the activity level of the animal, it could be surmised that the various deficiency and excess detector mechanisms, like the peripheral sense organs, contribute to excitation in the diffuse projection system in addition to functioning as the origin of signals specific to the particular system out of equilibrium. If this is so, the diffuse projection system is at least a part of the physiological mechanism underlying “drive” and conforms nicely to some of the behaviorally observable properties of motivation. A second, and perhaps more important, possible property of the activation system is that, in its obvious importance for discriminatory awareness, it provides a common physiological mechanism for mediation of tissue-need motivation and the other more complex forms of motivation that appear to originate in peripheral sensory stimulation or in some relationship to the previous learning and memory of the individual. A number of years ago Morgan [7] proposed that the essential physiological mechanism in motivation was a kind of general excitatory process, to which he gave the name “central motive state.” It would seem that the central motive state could well be the diffuse activation process. To the extent that activation is nonspecific it is a process that can be equally at the service of any adequate stimulus situation, be it internal or external, be it changes in physical constants of plasma or changes in patterns of symbolic sensory input.

Psychological aspects of motivation

Turning from the biological material we have been considering to the type of thinking and writing being done by the majority of experimental psychologists, we move from a search for organic substrates to an exercise in theoretically guided research, in which motivational concepts are treated as intervening variables and hypothetical constructs. These constructs are used as mediators between the observable and controllable aspects of stimulation and response, along with such non motivational constructs as habit.[4]

The central issue in the theoretical psychology of motivation has been the relationship of motivational variables to those of learning. In what Hunt

[3.p 31;32] has called the traditionally dominant conceptual scheme, behavior is thought of as starting with general random activity, instigated by drive; the latter may be equivalent to painful

or uncomfortable internal stimulation consequent to tissue needs. Hunt provides an excellent summary[3]. One of the principal features of many “intrinsic” motivational proposals is their emphasis on the role of cognitive processes arising from one form or another of incongruity, either with or without the added assumption that the cognitive process is accompanied by or stimulates affective, or emotional, reactions.

The cognitive theories represent a departure from the classical formulation for the development of motives unrelated to primary needs. The older point of view maintained that drives could be acquired by the familiar process of conditioning and thus were derivable from primary drives.

There are different definitions of motivation, since it is a hard abstract notion. According to business dictionary motivation is the Internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested in and committed to a job, role, or subject, and to exert persistent effort in attaining a goal. Motivation is the energizer of behavior and mother of all action. It results from the interactions among conscious and unconscious factors such as the intensity of desire or need, incentive or reward value of the goal, and expectations of the individual and of his or her significant others. According to Biehler and Snowman, motivation is typically defined as the forces that account for the arousal, selection, direction, and continuation of behavior. Jack Landry sees motivation as the energy that gives you the strength to get up and keep going, even when things are not going how you expected. We like the first definition the most, because it reflects the basic concepts of motivation, such as giving energy to do some task, it affects our behavior, makes us interested to being committed to some role, job or subject. But the most important point this definition provides, is that motivation is the factor in the first place, either external, internal, or both.

General types of motivation

Theorists and researchers of human motivation point out these two generic types of motivation as extrinsic and intrinsic[5 ,pp. 9-20]. “Extrinsic motivation exists when individuals are motivated by an outcome that is external or functionally unrelated to the activity in which they are engaged. “When individuals are extrinsically motivated they hold some desired outcome as a goal (e.g. getting a good grade, avoiding punishment) they recognize that a certain way of behaving is expedient means to that goal, and they make plans to modify their behavior in such a manner that they are likely to experience the desired outcome. “In contrast to extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation exists when someone works because of an inner desire to accomplish a task successfully, whether it has some external value or not. “Intrinsic motivation appears to be a by-product of two self perceptions. People tend to be intrinsically motivated in situations in which they feel both competent and self determining. The simplest example of such motivation would be curiosity, like a child learns about “why the water is wet” because of pure interest. An example of a kid drawing a picture to show it to the adults and get some approval is a little bit more complicated. There are both components of motivation; the intrinsic is in kid’s desire to feel competent in drawing, to draw well. The extrinsic is in need of adults and peers approval, and maybe reward.

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