
MODULE 36

Introduction to Motivation

Module Preview

Motivation is a need or desire that energizes and directs behavior. Under the influence of Darwin's evolutionary theory, the popular view was that instincts control behavior. Drive-reduction theory maintains that physiological needs create psychological drives that seek to restore internal stability, or homeostasis. In addition, some motivated behaviors increase arousal, and we are pulled by external incentives. According to Maslow, some motives are more compelling than others.

Module Guide

Introduction

- ▶ Introductory Exercise: Fact or Falsehood?
- ▶ Lecture: Why Do Students Go to College or University?
- ▶ Exercise: The Hope Scale
- ▶ Feature Film: *A Man for All Seasons*
- ▶ Videos: Module 18 of *Psychology: The Human Experience: What Is Motivation?*; *Discovering Psychology, Updated Edition: Motivation and Emotion*

36-1. *Define motivation as psychologists use the term today, and name four perspectives useful for studying motivated behavior.*

A **motivation** is a need or desire that energizes behavior and directs it toward a goal. The perspectives useful for studying motivated behavior include (1) instinct/evolutionary perspective, (2) drive-reduction theory, (3) arousal theory, and (4) Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Instincts and Evolutionary Psychology

- ▶ Lecture: Evolutionary Psychology

36-2. *Discuss instinct theory and how its underlying assumptions are used by contemporary psychologists.*

Under Darwin's influence, early theorists viewed behavior as being controlled by **instincts**, complex behaviors that are rigidly patterned throughout a species and are unlearned. When it became clear that people were naming, not explaining, various behaviors by calling them instincts, this approach fell into disfavor. The idea that genes predispose species-typical behavior is still influential in evolutionary psychology.

Drives and Incentives

36-3. *Explain how drive-reduction theory views human motivation.*

Drive-reduction theory proposes that most physiological needs create aroused psychological states that drive us to reduce or satisfy those needs. The aim of drive reduction is internal stability, or **homeostasis**. Furthermore, not only are we pushed by internal drives but we are also pulled by external **incentives**. When there is both a need (hunger) and an incentive (smell of freshly baked bread), we feel strongly driven.

Optimum Arousal

- ▶ Exercises: Exploration Index; Sensation-Seeking Scale
- ▶ Video: Program 18 of *Moving Images: Exploring Psychology Through Film: Sensation-Seeking: The Biology of Personality*

36-4. *Discuss the contribution of arousal theory to the study of motivation.*

Arousal theory states that rather than reducing a physiological need or minimizing tension, some motivated behaviors increase arousal. Curiosity-driven behaviors, for example, suggest that too little or too much stimulation can motivate people to seek an optimum level of arousal.

A Hierarchy of Motives

- ▶ Lecture: Maslow's Hierarchy
- ▶ Exercises: A Short Measure of Self-Actualization; Self-Transcendence Inventory; The Meaning in Life Questionnaire
- ▶ Project: An Assessment of Your Present Needs

36-5. *Describe Maslow's hierarchy of needs.*

Abraham Maslow's **hierarchy of needs** expresses the idea that, until satisfied, some motives are more compelling than others. At the base of the hierarchy are our physiological needs, such as for food and water. Only if these are met are we prompted to meet our need for safety, and then to meet the uniquely human needs to give and receive love, to belong and be accepted, and to enjoy self-esteem. Beyond this lies the need to actualize one's full potential. Near the end of his life, Maslow suggested that some people reach a level of self-transcendence in which they strive for meaning and purpose that is beyond the self, that is, *transpersonal*.