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| Assignment  Cognitive Psychology  3/25/2020  Submitted to: Dr. Fatima Khurram  Submitted by: Ali Hamza  Urooj Fatima  Maham Aslam  b Kiran Ajmal  Rameesha  Qashqa-Tul-Ain  **Topic:**  Motivation  **Spring 2020**  **Department of Applied Psychology** |

**Motivation**

**‘‘Psychologists define motivation as the process by which activities are started, directed, and sustained so that certain needs are met.’’**

The word is derived from the Latin term motivus (“a moving cause”), which suggests the activating properties of the processes involved in [psychological](https://www.britannica.com/science/psychology) motivation. The idea is that motivation is what guides us to accomplish a goal.

Psychologists study motivational forces to help explain observed changes in behaviour that occur in an individual. Thus, for example, the observation that a person is increasingly likely to open the refrigerator door to look for food as the number of hours since the last meal increases can be understood by [invoking](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/invoking) the concept of motivation. As the above example suggests, motivation is not typically measured directly but rather inferred as the result of behavioral changes in reaction to internal or external stimuli. It is also important to understand that motivation is primarily a performance variable. That is, the effects of changes in motivation are often temporary. An individual, highly motivated to perform a particular task because of a motivational change, may later show little interest for that task as a result of further change in motivation.

Motives are often categorized into primary, or basic, motives, which are unlearned and common to both animals and humans; and [secondary](https://www.britannica.com/science/secondary-motivation), or learned, motives, which can differ from animal to animal and person to person. Primary motives are [thought](https://www.britannica.com/topic/thought) to include [hunger](https://www.britannica.com/science/hunger-physiology), [thirst](https://www.britannica.com/science/thirst-physiology), [sex](https://www.britannica.com/topic/human-sexual-activity), avoidance of [pain](https://www.britannica.com/science/pain), and perhaps [aggression](https://www.britannica.com/science/aggressive-behaviour) and [fear](https://www.britannica.com/topic/fear-emotion). Secondary motives typically studied in humans include achievement, power motivation, and numerous other specialized motives.

Motives have also sometimes been classified into “pushes” and “pulls.” Push motives concern internal changes that have the effect of triggering specific motive states. Pull motives represent external goals that influence one’s behaviour toward them. Most motivational situations are in reality a combination of push and pull conditions. For example, hunger, in part, may be signaled by internal changes in blood glucose or fat stores, but motivation to eat is also heavily influenced by what foods are available. Some foods are more desirable than others and exert an influence on our behaviour toward them. Behaviour is, thus, often a complex blend of internal pushes and external pulls.

**Motivation vs. Emotion**

While motivation and emotion can be intricately linked, they are two fundamentally different things. Motivation describes the wants or needs that direct behavior toward a goal; in contrast, an emotion is a subjective state of being that we often describe as a feeling. Emotion and motivation are linked in several ways: both influence behavior and can lead us to take action, and emotion itself can act as a motivator. For example, the emotion of fear can motivate a person to leave a stressful situation, while the emotion of happiness can motivate a person to be more productive on a project that reinforces that emotion.

**Types of motivation**

There are different types of motivation.

* Extrinsic motivation
* Intrinsic motivation

**Extrinsic Motivation**

It refers to behavior that is driven by external rewards such as money, fame, grades, and praise. This type of motivation arises from outside the individuals.

**Intrinsic Motivation**

"Intrinsic motivation occurs when we act without any obvious external rewards. We simply enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn, and actualize our potentials." This type of motivation exists within the individual.

**The Study of Motivation**

[***Psychological***](https://www.britannica.com/science/biological-psychology)***approaches***

Motivation may also be analyzed at the individual psychological level. Such analyses attempt to understand why people act in particular ways and seek to draw general conclusions from individual cases. Through studies of individuals, for example, it has been found that both men and women proceed through a series of identifiable stages of [arousal](https://www.britannica.com/science/activation-psychology) during behaviours leading to and culminating in [sexual intercourse](https://www.britannica.com/science/sexual-intercourse). The finding may be applied to people in general.

Motivation of an individual is also influenced by the presence of other people. Social psychologists have been active in discovering how the presence of others in a given situation influences motivation. For example, students and teachers behave in predictable ways in the classroom. Those behaviours are often quite different, however, from the way students and teachers behave outside the classroom. Studies of conformity, obedience, and helping behaviours (which benefit others without reward) are three areas in this field that have received considerable attention.

**Physiologists’ contributions**

Motivational research has also progressed through discoveries made in the field of [physiology](https://www.britannica.com/science/physiology). The discovery of separate nerve fibers for sensory and motor information first suspected by the Greek physician [Galen](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Galen) and separately confirmed by the English anatomist [Sir Charles Bell](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Bell-British-anatomist) in 1811 and the French physiologist[François Magendie](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Francois-Magendie) in 1822 led naturally to the development of the stimulus-response approach to motivation, which has become fundamental to the field.

[](https://cdn.britannica.com/81/28581-004-4ECAA720/Charles-Bell-detail-portrait-oil-canvas-John-1821.jpg)

Sir Charles Bell, detail of a Portrait by John Stevens, oil on canvas, c. 1821; in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London

[](https://cdn.britannica.com/38/36438-004-603A649D/Magendie-detail-lithograph-Deneux-Gregoire.jpg)

Magendie, detail of a lithograph by Gregoire and DeneuxBoyer/H. Roger-Viollet

The discovery of the electrical nature of the [nerve impulse](https://www.britannica.com/science/nerve-impulse), first suggested by the Italian physician and physicist [Luigi Galvani’s](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Luigi-Galvani) experiments in the 1770s and ’80s with frogs and later directly measured by the German physiologist [Emil Du Bois-Reymond](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Emil-Heinrich-Du-Bois-Reymond) in 1848–49 using a galvanometer, showed that nerves are not canals by which animal spirits flow through the body, as had been commonly thought, but are rather the conveyors of signals sent from one area of the body to another. The German psychologist [Georg E. Müller](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Georg-Elias-Muller) added the concept of specific nerve energies, which proposed that the electrical signals passing along the nerves were specific, coded messages, while the German scientist [Hermann von Helmholtz](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hermann-von-Helmholtz) measured the speed of the nerve impulse and found it to be about 100 miles (160 kilometers) per hour. These discoveries made it clear that the [nervous system](https://www.britannica.com/science/nervous-system) could be studied and paved the way for examination of its role in the motivation of behaviour.

[](https://cdn.britannica.com/21/144221-050-BACB1810/Luigi-Galvani-illustration-Le-Journal-de-la-1880.jpg)[](https://cdn.britannica.com/17/12217-004-5AE28460/engraving-Du-Bois-Reymond-1900.jpg)

Galvani, LuigiLuigi Galvani in an illustration from Le Journal de la Jeunesse, Paris, 1880.

Studies of the localization of function within the nervous system, especially the brain, derived at least in part from the phrenology of the German physician [Franz Josef Gall](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Franz-Joseph-Gall) during the early 1800s. Although phrenology has been thoroughly discredited, it indirectly contributed to the localization of motivational systems within such brain areas as the hypothalamus.

**Biological Approaches To Motivation**

The biological microtheories of motivation can be divided into three categories: genetic contributions to motivated[behaviour](https://www.britannica.com/science/behaviour-genetics), [arousal](https://www.britannica.com/science/activation-psychology) mechanisms, and biological monitoring systems.

**Genetic contributions**

As indicated above, the idea that some motivated behaviours are the result of innate programs [manifested](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manifested) in the [nervous system](https://www.britannica.com/science/nervous-system) had been proposed by James and McDougall in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These early instinct approaches fell into disfavour during the 1920s because of their proponents’ inability to discriminate between instinctive and learned behaviours and because of the realization that labeling an observed behaviour as instinctive did not explain why the behaviour occurred. In Europe, however, a group of biologists interested in the evolutionary significance of animal behaviours kept the concept alive and continued to study the genetic basis of behaviour. Three of these researchers (the Austrians [Karl von Frisch](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Karl-von-Frisch) and [Konrad Lorenz](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Konrad-Lorenz) and the Netherlander [Nikolaas Tinbergen](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nikolaas-Tinbergen)) were awarded a [Nobel Prize](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nobel-Prize) in 1973 for their work on the subject. They were early entrants in the field of study known as [ethology](https://www.britannica.com/science/ethology), which studies the behaviour patterns of animals in their natural habitat. Ethologists argue that the evolutionary significance of a particular behaviour can best be understood after a [taxonomy](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/taxonomy) of behaviours for that species has been developed as a result of observation in nature. They propose further that the significance of a behaviour is often clearer when observed in the [context](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/context) of other behaviours of that animal. Ethologists use naturalistic observation and field studies as their most common techniques.

[](https://cdn.britannica.com/17/149717-050-25FE422A/Konrad-Lorenz.jpg)

Konrad Lorenz.AP

The research conducted by the ethologists showed that some behaviours of some animal species were released in an automatic and mechanical fashion when conditions were appropriate. These behaviours, known as [fixed-action pattern](https://www.britannica.com/science/fixed-action-pattern)s, have several [salient](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/salient) characteristics: they are specific to the species under study, occur in a highly similar fashion from one occurrence to the next, and do not appear to be appreciably altered by experience. Furthermore, the stimulus that releases these genetically programmed behaviours is usually highly specific, such as a particular colour, shape, or sound. Such stimuli are termed key stimuli or sign stimuli and when provided by a conspecific organisms (a member of the same species) are known as social releasers.

One thoroughly researched example of this type of genetically programmed behaviour is the courtship behaviour of the three-spined [stickleback](https://www.britannica.com/animal/stickleback), a small fish. During the reproductive season, male sticklebacks become territorial and defend a portion of the streambed against other intruding stickleback males. Ethological analysis of this [aggressive behaviour](https://www.britannica.com/science/aggressive-behaviour) reveals that it is a series of fixed-action patterns released by the reddish coloration of the ventral (under) surface of the intruding males. A female stickleback entering the territory is not attacked because she does not possess the red coloration. Instead she is courted through a complex series of movements termed the zigzag dance. This behaviour pattern performed by the male stickleback is released by the shape of the ventral surface of the female, which is distended as a result of the eggs she carries.

**Biological monitoring systems**

For some basic motives such as hunger, thirst, and sex, a biological approach emphasizing regulatory mechanisms has dominated the [thinking](https://www.britannica.com/topic/thought) of researchers. The fundamental [premise](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/premise) has been that such basic motives are homeostatically regulated—that is, the [nervous system](https://www.britannica.com/science/nervous-system) monitors levels of energy, fluid balance, and hormone production (in the case of sex) and alters motivation when these levels deviate too far from some optimum level.

[**Hunger**](https://www.britannica.com/science/hunger-physiology)

The question of why we eat when we do appears to involve two separate mechanisms. The first mechanism, typically called short-term regulation, attempts to take in sufficient energy to balance what is being expended. It is usually assumed that time between meals and meal size are determined by this short-term mechanism. A second mechanism, called long-term regulation, is directed toward storing away sufficient energy for possible later use should the short-term mechanism fail to adequately replenish energy expended. Energy for long-term use is stored in the form of fat within the fat cells of the body. Short-term regulation processes have generally been assumed to monitor the blood glucose (blood sugar) level and to initiate eating when this level falls below some predetermined optimum. Long-term regulation processes appear to monitor fat levels and to initiate eating when fat stores fall below some optimal level.

Explanations of short-term regulation of hunger motivation have revolved around two basic ideas. The earlier of these two, known as the local theory of hunger, suggested that the hunger signals that initiate eating originate in the [gastrointestinal tract](https://www.britannica.com/science/gastrointestinal-tract), specifically the stomach. Hunger pangs were thought to be the result of stomach contractions. Considerable research has shown that such an analysis is inadequate to explain hunger motivation. For example, it is known that much of the stomach can be removed without the loss of hunger motivation. Similarly, it is known that severing the [vague nerve](https://www.britannica.com/science/vagus-nerve), which causes stomach contractions to cease, does not eliminate the experience of hunger.

When it became apparent that the local theory of hunger was incomplete, researchers began to look for the hunger-initiating mechanism in the brain. It was quickly discovered that the [hypothalamus](https://www.britannica.com/science/hypothalamus), a small structure lying below the thalamus of the brain, is involved in the regulation of eating. Damage to the ventromedial (lower, middle) area of the hypothalamus produces a condition known as [hyperphagia](https://www.britannica.com/science/hyperphagia), in which animals overeat and gain enormous amounts of weight. Damage to a different area known as the lateral hypothalamus (located on the sides of the hypothalamus) produces a total lack of eating known as [aphagia](https://www.britannica.com/science/aphagia), as well as a lack of drinking, or aphagia. It was assumed that these two areas share in the control of hunger motivation by activating and deactivating hunger as glucose levels within the blood change. It was further assumed that the specialized cells (glucoreceptors) monitoring the levels of blood glucose reside in these two hypothalamic areas. This belief was weakened, however, when these glucoreceptors could not definitely be located in the brain. Additional research suggests that such glucoreceptors may reside in the liver, where new arrivals of glucose are first received and whence signals about glucose content are sent to these hypothalamic areas.

Less is known about the long-term regulation of hunger motivation, but one suggestion has been that there exists in each individual a genetically programmed body-weight set point that determines how much energy is stored away as fat within the fat cells. According to this theory, hunger motivation would serve to keep individuals close to this set point, even though the fat level maintained may not be what the individual desires nor what society dictates as beautiful or healthy. Such a system would help to explain why weight loss is so hard to maintain in many persons.

[**Thirst**](https://www.britannica.com/science/thirst-physiology)

Processes similar to the physiological control mechanisms of hunger are thought to regulate thirst motivation and sexual behaviour. In the case of thirst, the desire to drink appears to be initiated by fluid loss from within specialized brain cells known as [osmoreceptor](https://www.britannica.com/science/osmoreceptor)s and also from fluid loss from the area outside of cells, such as from bleeding. Thirst, therefore, would seem to be triggered by mechanisms controlling the fluid [integrity](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/integrity) both within and around the cells of the body. Cells within the hypothalamus also seem to be involved in the control of thirst motivation.

[**Sexual**](https://www.britannica.com/topic/human-sexual-activity)**motivation**

In most animals [sexual motivation](https://www.britannica.com/topic/sexual-motivation) is under stricter hormonal control than is the case in humans. The female of most species is not interested in sexual behaviour until cyclic hormonal changes produce [estrus](https://www.britannica.com/science/estrus). The male, however, is usually sexually ready but is prevented from engaging in sexual behaviour by the female until estrus occurs. Research indicates that the anterior (front) portion of the hypothalamus is involved with the estrous cycle of female mammals; it has been demonstrated that destruction of these hypothalamus cells eliminates estrus. Similarly, destruction of the anterior region of the hypothalamus reduces or eliminates sexual behaviour in male rats. Since [hormone replacement therapy](https://www.britannica.com/science/hormone-replacement-therapy) in both males and females is ineffective in reestablishing sexual behaviours reduced by anterior hypothalamic damage, it has been suggested that this region contains receptors sensitive to changes in the levels of circulating sex hormones. Damage to the ventromedial hypothalamus (VMH) also arrests estrus in females and sexual behaviour in males, but hormone replacement therapy successfully restores these functions, suggesting that VMH is involved with the expression of sexual behaviour when hormonal conditions are appropriate.

**Cognitive Theories relating Motivation**

Cognitive theories of motivation assume that behaviour is directed as a result of the active processing and interpretation of information. Motivation is not seen as a mechanical or innate set of processes but as a purposive and persistent set of behaviours based on the information available. Expectations, based on past experiences, serve to direct behaviour toward particular goals.

Important concepts of cognitive motivation theory include expectancy-value theory, [attribution](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attribution) theory, [cognitive dissonance](https://www.britannica.com/science/cognitive-dissonance), self-perception, and self-actualization.

**Expectancy-value theory**

According to expectancy-value theory, behaviour is a function of the expectancies one has and the value of the goal toward which one is working [expressed as B = f(E × V)]. Such an approach predicts that, when more than one behaviour is possible, the behaviour chosen will be the one with the largest combination of expected success and value. Expectancy-value theory has proved useful in the explanation of social behaviours, achievement motivation, and work motivation. Examination of its use in achievement motivation can serve to represent the various types of expectancy-value motivations.

Achievement was initially recognized as an important source of human motivation by the American psychologist [Henry Murray](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Murray) in the late 1930s. Although Murray identified achievement motivation as important to the behaviour of many people, it was the American psychologists David McClelland and John Atkinson who devised a way of measuring differences in achievement motivation. These researchers used Murray’s [Thematic Apperception Test](https://www.britannica.com/science/Thematic-Apperception-Test) (TAT), a series of [ambiguous](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ambiguous) pictures about which people were asked to write stories (as a determination of [personality](https://www.britannica.com/topic/personality) traits), to measure differences in achievement motivation. Using a technique known as [content analysis](https://www.britannica.com/topic/content-analysis), the stories were scored for achievement imagery. Based on a substantial body of research, a theoretical model was developed that rested upon the fundamental concepts of expectancy and goal value.

The expectancy-value model of achievement motivation proposes that the overall tendency to achieve in a particular situation depends upon two stable motives—a motive for success and a motive to avoid failure—and the subjective evaluation of the probability of success in the situation. The motive for success is regarded as a relatively stable personality characteristic by the time adulthood is reached. One’s motive for success is believed to result from learning in prior achievement situations where the individual has performed successfully. Thus, someone who has, for the most part, had successful experiences in the past is thought to be highly achievement-oriented. The motive to avoid failure is also assumed to be relatively stable by adulthood and represents the [compilation](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/compilation) of those prior instances where achievement behaviours were unsuccessful. It is argued that someone who has made many unsuccessful attempts in achievement situations will develop a strong motive to avoid failure.

Since almost everyone has experienced both successes and failures during development, the theory assumes that each person has differing degrees of both motivation for success and motivation to avoid failure. These two motivations are opposing tendencies, and as a result the difference in strength between the two will determine whether a given individual is an “achiever” or not. People with high motivation for success and low motivation to avoid failure will be achievement-oriented, while people with strong motivation to avoid failure and weak motivation for success will try to avoid most achievement situations if possible.

The expected probability of success in a particular achievement situation is also important in this achievement theory. The theory predicts that persons highly motivated for success will tend to choose to participate in achievement situations that they judge to be moderately difficult, while the theory also predicts that people highly motivated to avoid failure will tend to choose tasks that they judge to be either very easy or extremely difficult. The choices made by people either highly motivated to achieve success or to avoid failure differ because of the differing value of easy, moderate, and difficult goals for these two types of people. The model mathematically predicts that goals that require moderate effort to achieve will have the greatest value for persons highly motivated for success. Stated another way, high achievers want to obtain goals that are difficult enough to have some value but not so difficult as to be impossible or so easy as to be worthless. Persons with strong motivation to avoid failure believe they are likely to be unsuccessful. For this [reason](https://www.britannica.com/topic/reason), the theory predicts that they would prefer easy tasks where success is likely or tasks so difficult that little embarrassment would ensue if they fail.

Attempts to test these predictions have met with mixed results. Some studies have found that people scoring high in motivation for success do often choose tasks that they consider moderately difficult, while other studies have failed to find such results. Also, persons scoring high in motivation to avoid failure do sometimes choose very easy tasks, as the theory predicts, but often do not choose very difficult tasks as also predicted. Clearly much research remains to be done before the model’s accuracy in predicting achievement behaviour can be judged.

**Attribution theory**

A second major approach to achievement motivation rejects the expectancy-value formulation and analyzes instead the [attributions](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attributions) that people make about achievement situations. In general, attribution theory concerns how people make judgments about someone’s (or their own) behaviour—that is, the causes to which they attribute behaviour. Considerable research has found that people typically attribute behaviour either to stable personality characteristics, termed [dispositions](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dispositions), or to the situations that were present at the time the behaviour occurred.

In regard to achievement behaviour, the attributions of ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck are argued to be especially important in determining future achievement motivation. For example, when a person is successful at a task and attributes that success to ability, that person is likely to approach new achievement situations in the future. Similarly, if the success was attributed to an intense effort, future achievement behaviour would depend upon a willingness to expend such effort in the future. Task difficulty appears to be judged from social norms. If most people are unsuccessful at a task, it is judged to be difficult, and, if most people are successful, the task is judged to be easy. The attribution of success to task difficulty therefore, would be expected to modify future achievement behaviour. If success was judged to be due to the fact that the task was very easy, future achievement behaviour would not be expected to change much; however, success in a task judged to be very difficult might prompt a person to expand the range of tasks he or she is willing to attempt. Ascriptions of luck in an achievement task would also influence future achievement behaviour. Basically, luck is assumed when a person expects to have no control over the outcome in the task. Success attributed to luck is not expected to increase future achievement behaviour much, nor would failure attributed to bad luck be expected to decrease it much.

Research on the attributions people make in achievement-related situations suggests that the four causal ascriptions mentioned above and perhaps other ascriptions as well can best be understood as falling along three dimensions: locus, stability, and controllability. Locus refers to the location, internal or external, of the perceived cause of a success or failure. Ability and effort, for example, are seen as internal dispositions of a person, while task difficulty and luck are situational factors external to the person. Stability refers to how much a given reason for success or failure could be expected to change. Ability and task difficulty are stable and therefore not expected to change much, while effort and luck are unstable and could therefore change dramatically over time. Controllability refers to how much control the individual has over the events of the situation. Causes such as effort are considered to be controllable, whereas luck is uncontrollable.

[**Cognitive dissonance**](https://www.britannica.com/science/cognitive-dissonance)

One of the most popular [cognitive](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cognitive) approaches to the study of motivation has been the theory of cognitive [dissonance](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dissonance), first systematically studied by the American psychologist [Leon Festinger](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Leon-Festinger). This theory proposed that people attempt to maintain consistency among their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. According to this theory, a motivational state termed cognitive dissonance is produced whenever beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours are inconsistent. Cognitive dissonance is considered to be an aversive state that triggers mechanisms to bring cognitions back into a consistent relationship with one another. Much of the research on cognitive dissonance has centred around what happens when attitudes and behaviours are inconsistent. This research suggests that behavior inconsistent with one’s beliefs—if there is insufficient justification for the behaviour—will often bring about modification of those beliefs. Suppose, for example, that a person is required to undergo a stressful initiation in order to join a select group. After undergoing this initiation the person discovers that becoming a member of the group does not provide the satisfaction originally expected. Such an outcome should produce cognitive dissonance because the behaviours required and the current belief about the group are inconsistent. As a result, the theory suggests that motivation will be triggered to bring the dissonant elements back into a consistent relationship. The behaviour cannot be changed because it has already occurred; the belief, on the other hand can be changed. Under these conditions dissonance theory predicts that the person’s [attitude](https://www.britannica.com/science/attitude-psychology) will change and that he will actually come to believe that he likes the group more. Several studies have supported this prediction.

**Self-perception theory**

Cognitive dissonance approaches have not gone unchallenged. An [alternative](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alternative) approach, known as self-perception theory, suggests that all individuals analyze their own behaviour much as an outside observer might and, as a result of these observations, make judgments about why they are motivated to do what they do. Thus, in the example above, self-perception theory would argue that the person, in observing his own behaviour, assesses the effort involved and decides that the initiation was endured because he really wanted to be a member of this group. Dissonance theory and self-perception theory are not necessarily mutually exclusive; several studies suggest that both processes can and do occur but under different conditions.

[**Self-actualization**](https://www.britannica.com/science/self-actualization)

Cognitive motivational approaches have also explored the idea that human motivation is heavily influenced by a need for competence or control. Although there are several varieties of these theories, most have in common the ideas that [human behaviour](https://www.britannica.com/topic/human-behavior) is at least partially motivated by a need to become as much as one can possibly become. One example of this approach is the self-actualization theory of [Abraham Maslow](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-H-Maslow) previously mentioned.

Maslow has proposed that human motivation can be understood as resulting from a [hierarchy](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hierarchy) of needs. These needs, starting with the most basic physiological demands, progress upward through [safety](https://www.britannica.com/topic/safety-condition) needs, belonging needs, and esteem needs and culminate in self-actualization. Each level directs behaviour toward the need level that is not being adequately met. As lower-level needs are met, the motivation to meet the higher-level needs becomes active. Furthermore, as an individual progresses upward, it becomes progressively more difficult to successfully fulfill the needs of each higher level. For this [reason](https://www.britannica.com/topic/reason) Maslow believed that very few people actually reach the level of self-actualization, and it is a lifelong process for the few who do.

Based on his observations of individuals he believed to be self-actualized, including historical figures such as the U.S. presidents [Abraham Lincoln](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-Lincoln) and [Thomas Jefferson](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Jefferson), Maslow outlined a cluster of 14 characteristics that distinguish self-actualized individuals. Summarized, these characteristics define individuals who are accepting of themselves and others are relatively independent of the [culture](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture) or society in which they live, are somewhat detached but with very close personal ties to a few other people, and are deeply committed to solving problems that they deem important. Additionally, self-actualized individuals intensely appreciate simple or natural events, such as a sunrise, and they sometimes experience profound changes that Maslow termed peak experiences. Although difficult to describe, peak experiences often involve a momentary loss of self and feelings of transcendence. Reports of peak experiences also include the feeling of limitless horizons opening up and of being simultaneously very powerful, yet weak. Peak experiences are extremely positive in nature and often cause an individual to change the direction of his or her future behaviour. Maslow believed that everyone is capable of having peak experiences, but he believed that self-actualized persons have these experiences more often.

**Applications in Society**

Attempts have been made in society to use motivational methods to achieve certain goals. In the control of [animal behaviour](https://www.britannica.com/science/animal-behavior), for example, it is clear that depriving an organism of [food](https://www.britannica.com/topic/food) is a powerful means for accomplishing reinforcement. Appropriate use of food under these circumstances is an effective procedure for shaping an animal’s behaviour, maintaining it, and controlling the rate of its occurrence. Likewise, it is clear that animals have preferences (within, for example, the range of foodstuffs) and that their behaviour can be controlled with relatively greater effectiveness by the proper selection of preferred substances for use in training.

In many [cultures](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cultures), [deprivation](https://www.britannica.com/topic/sensory-deprivation) cannot be used so readily with human beings as it can be with other animals, although there are many human examples. Thus, some success has been reported in effecting desired behaviour in the classroom by depriving children of some of their recess time when they behave in ways deemed undesirable by the school authorities. Economies based on the use of tokens (e.g., poker chips) have been set up in schools, psychiatric hospitals, and institutions for retarded people. The result typically has been an improvement in the subjects’ behaviour and personal care and in the ease with which they may be managed. In such economies, tokens can be exchanged for privileges and commodities (e.g., candy and toys). The individual’s ability to obtain tokens is made [contingent](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/contingent) on socially desirable acts, such as making beds, being personally clean, being cooperative, and being generally acceptable to others. There have been reports of marked improvement in scholastic achievement among institutionalized juvenile delinquents who have been placed in such token economies.

The effectiveness of these and similar procedures has been most easily demonstrated in institutions, in which the situation permits a great deal of control over the subjects’ conditions of life and over their activities. In society at large, of course, this degree of control is effectively not [feasible](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feasible). There also are widely [endorsed](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/endorsed) [moral](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/moral) or [ethical](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethical) concerns about the desirability of instituting such control even if it were possible. The use of particular kinds of motivational devices in the control of [human behaviour](https://www.britannica.com/topic/human-behavior) seems to many to be incompatible with the ethical idea of personal freedom and fraught with potential for immoral misuse in the hands of those who seek to manipulate others for ends that are politically or socially conformist.

On the other hand, it often is observed that many of society’s problems are motivational. This observation usually means that the goals and values of economically [affluent](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/affluent) groups in the Americas, Europe, and Asia are not shared by members of deprived urban populations or by millions of poor people in industrially less-developed countries. Or, it may mean that the goals of those who own or control profit-seeking enterprises (to make a product or deliver a service for the investors’ profit) are not shared by workers below the level of middle management. Many techniques have been tried in business and industry to effect so-called motivational involvement with production on the part of ordinary employees. Some of them have had success. Incentive systems, employee participation in company planning and decisions, and human-relations training exemplify the procedures used. A substantial corps of specialists throughout the world provides programs to industry designed to improve the motivation, morale, and satisfaction of workers at all levels. Although these programs have wide acceptance, most of them have received very little objective evaluation.