

The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Psychology

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KEVIN DURKIN

less frequently attain Postconventional scores
(see Durkin, 1995).

The influence of the Kohlbergian model in
contemporary research is reflected in the ex-
tent and breadth of challenges it has inspired.
These come from both universalistic and rela-
tivist corners. In the former, Turiel (1983)
has proposed an alternative cognitive-devel-
opmental theory which proposes a distinction
between moral prescriptions (concerned with
the value of life, individual welfare) and so-
cial conventions (arbitrary regulations about
social behavior, such as dress code, modes of
greeting), and maintains that development in
the different domains proceeds inde-
pendently. Others have objected that the the-
ory and the instruments show a bias towards

motivation Three sets of phenomena have
traditionally been of concern in the field of
human motivation:

- (1) the choice or selection of a certain course
of action;
- (2) the energization of the implied behaviors;
and
- (3) the regulation of these behaviors.

Accordingly, research on motivation focuses
on the determinants of what type of goals
people choose, and how they go about imple-
menting them (i.e., when and how goal-
directed behavior gets started, is energized,
sustained, and stopped). Taking this broad

and comprehensive perspective, it is evident that any field in social psychology (e.g., HELPING BEHAVIOR, AGGRESSION, INTERGROUP RELATIONS) may potentially be analyzed from a motivational point of view, and this extends not only to how people behave in social situations, but also to their social thoughts and feelings.

The layperson's understanding of the concept of motivation reflects an important insight. People are referred to as unmotivated when they do not live up to their potential, because they fail to exert respective efforts. Issues of what people *can* do, that is, their cognitive capabilities and limitations (*see* SOCIAL COGNITION) are just the starting point of a motivational analysis, which commonly attempts to discover the determinants and processes that underlie a person's willingness to use his/her potential.

The history of motivational theorizing can be summarized in terms of an evolving conception of the basic nature of human functioning and development. Early theories portrayed the human as a machine-like, reactive organism driven by internal and/or external forces that are beyond people's control (e.g., instincts, needs, drives, incentives, reinforces, and so forth). According to Weiner (1992) the following theories embrace the machine metaphor:

- (1) the biological theories of Freud, Tinbergen, Lorenz, and Wilson;
- (2) Hull's learning theory; and
- (3) Lewin's field-theoretical approach.

It is implied that if one could just push or pull the right buttons, motivation would result. There is no room for conscious reflection and free will on the part of the individual. Instead, the proposed motivational forces are assumed to transmit their energy by establishing a state of balance or equilibrium (referred to as arousal reduction, self-preservation, or need satisfaction).

More modern theories of motivation construe the human as Godlike (Weiner, 1992). Accordingly, people are understood as the all-just and all-knowing final judges of their actions. Expectancy-value theories (e.g., Atkinson, 1957) and ATTRIBUTION THEORIES

(e.g., Weiner) are based on this metaphor. Expectancy-value theories assume that people choose goals rationally, based on their comprehensive knowledge about the expected value and the probability of goal attainment. Attribution theories propose that the motivational determinants of a person's behavior are the causal explanations of prior action outcomes. The layperson is seen as an amateur scientist who systematically explores the causes of his or her past behaviors. The type of causes discovered are expected to affect the person's readiness to engage in these or related behaviors by influencing affects and expectations.

Present day theorizing on motivation portrays the human as a flexible strategist. The focus lies on the different kinds of tasks a person has to solve when transforming wishes into actions (Gollwitzer, 1990). Accordingly, humans are conceived of as highly flexible organisms that readily adjust to the demands of the task at hand. When it comes to choosing goals, people apparently try to live up to the ideals of being all-knowing and all-just (God-like) by processing a vast amount of the available information and weighing it impartially. However, when the implementation of an already chosen goal is at issue, people are determined to achieve the desired ends. As a consequence, the human becomes partial, favoring the implementation of the chosen goal. The desirability and feasibility of the chosen goal are seen in the most positive light, and the attentional focus is limited to the chosen goal. Although this determination to achieve the chosen goal invokes the machine metaphor, recent research contradicts this image of the goal-driven human. Goal achievement turns out to be a highly strategic undertaking that demands the flexible use of self-regulatory skills.

In the following paragraphs a select list of issues is presented that characterize present-day research on motivation in social psychology. We will address research on:

- (1) motives and needs;
- (2) expectations, control beliefs, and goals; and
- (3) the willful and skillful regulation of goal-directed actions.

MOTIVES AND NEEDS

Research on motives highlights the relation between motivation and AFFECT. It is assumed that motivated behavior is pulled by the anticipated affect associated with so-called natural incentives. Such incentives are attached to situations and actions that are important for the survival of the species (e.g., to affiliate with others, influence others, master intellectual problems). Accordingly, it is proposed that there is only a limited number of natural incentives, each of which shows an inborn relation to a specific cluster of emotions. The individual preference for certain classes of incentives is defined as the individual's motive disposition.

SOCIALIZATION is said to teach the individual which type of situations are associated with what kind of natural incentives and their respective affective experiences. In addition, people are assumed to acquire the skills which allow them to successfully approach desired incentives. David McClelland distinguishes three basic groups of motives: the achievement motive, the power motive, and the affiliative motives (i.e., the sexual motive, the need for affiliation, and the intimacy motive). Just as having food is the reward or incentive for the hunger drive, so is having improved one's performance on a given task the incentive for the achievement motive (*see* ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION). The incentive of the power motive is having impact, control, or influence over another person, group, or the world at large. How this impact or influence is established depends on the individual's socialization. There are the crude ways of attacking others physically, but also the more sophisticated routes of persuading or teaching others (*see* POWER, SOCIAL INFLUENCE). Finally, the incentives for the affiliative motives extend to sexual pleasures (sexual motive), being together with people (affiliative motive), and experiencing harmony, concern and commitment with respect to another person or a group of people (intimacy motive; *see* INTIMACY, RELATIONSHIPS, SEXUAL BEHAVIOR). It is recognized that all of the outlined motives may entail a fear or avoidance component. Trying to meet a standard of excellence may not solely be motivated by hope for success, but also by fear of failure, and spend-

ing one's spare time affiliating with others may not solely be determined by the anticipated positive feelings of togetherness, but also by a high fear of rejection.

In principle, all humans are seen as possessing the various motives described. There are vast differences, however, in terms of motive strength, which can be assessed by exploring both the array of situations a person interprets in terms of a given motive (e.g., a person high in need for power manages to interpret all kinds of different situations as power related) and the intensity of the anticipated affect associated with having acquired respective incentives. Commonly this is done by employing a Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) which contains pictures of scenes that are loosely related to the motive measured. In the Achievement TAT, for instance, one picture shows an employee knocking at his boss's door. Subjects who take the test are instructed to give free reign to fantasy, talking about what happens in the picture, how the depicted scenario came about, what the depicted persons think, and what will happen next. This procedure (often referred to as operant assessment procedure) is based on the idea that the presented pictures will trigger motive-related thoughts which will then find uninhibited expression in a person's free fantasy. Respondent assessment procedures (i.e., the standard self-report questionnaires) are not appropriate, because they obtain the reflected values people hold with respect to a certain motive. Most people know that achievement, for instance, is highly valued in our society, and many have learned to highly value achievement personally. But when it comes to actually behaving in an achievement-oriented manner in a given situation, a person who highly values achievement may spontaneously pick up the affiliative cues present in this situation, and opt towards enjoying togetherness in favor of achieving. A person's spontaneous fantasy production as stimulated by TAT pictures should reflect such preferences, and therefore provide a more valid assessment of a person's motive disposition than self-report questionnaires.

Being high with respect to a certain motive implies a recurrent concern for acquiring

certain types of incentives, but does this concern select, energize, and guide respective behaviors? The predictions most clearly supported by research findings are those concerning frequency and intensity of behaviors, as well as life-span personality development. More specifically, people high on the affiliation motive perform affiliative acts frequently and energetically, they readily perceive affiliative cues in the environment and quickly detect affiliative networks. Also, predictions concerning the professional success of managers are strikingly accurate, particularly if one considers the motive dispositions in achievement (high), power (high), and affiliation (low) in concert. Finally, attempts to predict behaviors from motives commonly fail when engaging in these behaviors is based on conscious reflections. When it comes to choosing between different courses of action, tasks of different difficulty levels, persisting on a given task or leaving the field, people deliberate on the feasibility and desirability of the alternative courses of action. As it turns out, people do not determine the feasibility and desirability of an action solely on the basis of their motive dispositions, but also by thinking about their skills, the intricacies of the situation at hand, and the expected value of the respective course of action.

EXPECTATIONS, CONTROL BELIEFS, AND GOALS

One of the first attempts to integrate these aspects was made by Atkinson (1957) in his risk-taking model that laid the foundation for expectancy-value theories. He proposed that the subjective probability of success and the task's incentive value conjointly affect task choice, both variables being influenced by the perceived difficulty of the task. Whereas easy tasks lead to a high subjective probability of success (direct function), they also possess low incentive value (inverse function), because the anticipated affect associated with success (pride) is lowest for easy tasks. The reverse is assumed for difficult tasks. Atkinson suggested that multiplying probability of success and incentive value will give a good estimate of whether a person will choose to work on a task, especially when the obtained

score is weighted by the person's approach and avoidance component of his/her achievement motive (hope for success and fear of failure, respectively). The prediction is that primarily success-motivated individuals will choose tasks of medium difficulty, whereas failure-motivated people prefer easy or very difficult tasks. Research testing the model is supportive for predictions on task choice, but fails to account for the quantity and quality of task performance once people start working on the chosen tasks.

Elaborations of the model (Heckhausen, 1977) added further expectation-related concepts and differentiated various aspects of the incentive value of task performance. It is suggested that the incentive value of task performance is not simply determined by anticipated pride and shame. Positive self-evaluations, being praised by significant others (e.g., teachers, parents), the instrumentality of task performance to attain superordinate long-term goals, and extrinsic side-effects (e.g., when an achievement task has affiliative benefits) also have to be considered.

In addition, Heckhausen points out that even if there are many potential positive incentives to look forward to, one will only be motivated to strive for them if:

- (1) one expects that the behaviors one is capable of performing will lead to successful task performance; and
- (2) that successful task performance will lead to these positive incentives (i.e., high instrumentality).

Atkinson's model has also been elaborated by attribution theorists (see Weiner, 1992) who attempted to understand changes in expectations and incentive value in terms of the causal attributions made for past performances. Success and failure may be interpreted as caused by internal (e.g., ability, effort) or external factors (e.g., task difficulty, luck), whereby ability and task difficulty are more stable causal factors than effort and luck. Weiner shows that the stability of success or failure attributions affects people's expectations relating to successful task performance (stable attributions lead to high or low expectations, respectively), whereas the internality

of performance outcome attributions relates to affect (internal attributions produce more pride or shame, respectively).

Weiner discovered that the approach component of the achievement motive (hope for success) is associated with attributing failure to luck or lack of effort and success to ability, whereas the avoidance component is linked to attributing failure to lack of ability and success to luck. Research on aggression also points to the importance of attributions for people's readiness to retaliate. Our experienced ANGER and the intended retaliation in response to hostile aggression are less related to the damage that was done to us, but rather depend on the interpretation of the aggressive act as intentional. Similarly, attributions also affect whether we help people in need. Interpreting the plight of victims as caused by their own irresponsible behaviors leads to less helping as compared to causal interpretations of their plight in terms of uncontrollable, external factors.

This recognition of the motivational importance of expectations and attributions provided the starting point of the cognitive revolution in the psychology of motivation. But this revolution has progressed and introduced further important cognitive concepts, such as control beliefs and goals. The most prominent theoretical explication of control beliefs is Bandura's self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacious individuals are characterized by holding the firm belief that they possess the potential to execute the kinds of behaviors that performing a given task demands. People acquire this belief by reflecting on their own relevant past behaviors, observing the behaviors of similar others, and being evaluated by significant others (e.g., teachers). As it turns out, high self-efficacy beliefs are associated with choosing aspiring goals, exerting strong efforts to attain these goals, and high persistence in the face of obstacles and hindrances.

The other cognitive concept that has received much recent attention is that of goals (see Pervin, 1989). Goals define a standard or point of reference for assessing progress to the goal. Because falling short of a goal is associated with negative affect, goal discrepancies stimulate efforts that are geared to-

wards goal attainment. Such efforts can be expected to be more pronounced when the goal state is defined in specific rather than vague terms (such as "I'll attempt to do my best"), is highly rather than mildly challenging, and is to be achieved in the proximal rather than the distal future. Also, efforts to reduce goal discrepancies are observed more frequently when the individual entertains high self-efficacy beliefs with respect to the implied behaviors, people receive frequent feedback on their actual standing, and there is high commitment to the goal at hand.

However, it is not only setting oneself concrete and proximal goals that has motivational benefits; so, too, does committing oneself to abstract, distal goals. Abstract, distal self-defining goals (such as being a good parent, achieving or retaining self-worth) give the individual direction and they keep the individual on track in the face of setbacks or obstacles. After all, there are many different, alternative ways of attaining such goals. If one has failed in one way or discovered that a certain route to goal achievement is out of reach, one can always compensate by taking an alternative route. As it turns out, people who have set themselves such self-defining goals and still feel committed to attaining them are likely to respond to experiences of falling short by engaging in compensatory efforts.

Finally, one should not ignore the content of goals. For instance, people may approach an achievement test with the goal of demonstrating their intelligence or with the goal of developing their cognitive skills. It is the latter goal that allows people to respond to failure experiences with persistence and greater effort, whereas the former goal makes people respond to failure by feeling helplessness and wanting to give up.

WILLFUL REGULATION OF GOAL-DIRECTED ACTION

Research on motivation in the 1980s has witnessed a shift in interest from issues of choosing tasks or goals to the willful and skillful implementation of chosen goals (Heckhausen, 1991). The pivotal work on the latter issue was done by Mischel (1974), who

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studied how children manage to delay gratification (e.g., not eating a pretzel placed in front of them) in exchange for some bigger reward. Most importantly, the children's way of thinking about the pretzel (e.g., in abstract instead of concrete terms) turned out to strongly affect whether they achieved the goal of not eating the pretzel.

Kuhl (1984), who regards the major challenge to successful goal pursuit as arising from competing action tendencies, postulates various control strategies that offer effective protection from such competing tendencies (e.g., attention control or emotion control). People are expected to employ these strategies actively and passively when they are in an action-oriented mode of action control, but fail to do so in a state-oriented mode. This latter control mode is characterized by ruminative thoughts about past, present, or future events (action outcomes, emotional states, etc.). It can be triggered by the experience of repeated failures, but also by a big surprise. Moreover, the two control modes are also conceptualized as PERSONALITY attributes, such that people can be classified into state- versus action-oriented individuals. Indeed, action-oriented individuals are found to use the various control strategies more effectively than state-oriented individuals and as a result are comparatively more successful in their goal pursuits.

Another problem with implementing one's goals is getting started. Part of the reason for this is that people often hesitate to specify when, where and how they intend to implement their goals. If such implementation intentions are formed, however, the chances of goal achievement increase drastically (Gollwitzer, 1993). This is due to psychological processes that operate outside of the person's awareness (see AUTOMATICITY): First, the cognitive representation of the intended opportunity to act becomes highly activated. As a result, the specified opportunity is easily detected, attended to, and retrieved from memory. Second, the initiation of the intended action becomes automated. In the presence of the intended opportunity, action initiation is rather swift and effortless, and it does not need a further conscious intent.

CONCLUSION

The recent advances in research on self-regulatory strategies of goal achievement have delivered many new insights. However, there should be further effective strategies that have yet to be discovered. In any case, future research in this realm should also attempt to relate these strategies to the classic motivational variables of motives and expectations.

See also: ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION; AGGRESSION; ATTRIBUTION THEORIES; AUTOMATICITY; HELPING BEHAVIOR; INTERGROUP RELATIONS; INTIMACY; PERSONALITY; POWER; RELATIONSHIPS; SEXUAL BEHAVIOR; SOCIAL COGNITION; SOCIAL INFLUENCE; SOCIALIZATION.

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VERONIKA BRANDSTÄTTER

multidimensional scaling A set of procedures that derive a spatial representation of a pairwise similarity matrix among a set of psychological objects. Typically, subjects are asked to judge the similarity between all pairs of objects in some domain. A spatial representation of the resulting similarity matrix is then obtained in some small number of dimensions, such that the distance between two

objects in the representation (typically a euclidean distance) is a monotonic function of the judged similarity. Goodness of fit statistics provide a measure of the success with which the spatial representation captures the similarity data in varying numbers of dimensions. The representation is assumed to inform the researcher about the perceptual distinctions that underlie subjects' similarity judgments. The most readily available program for multidimensional scaling is ALSCAL (Young, 1984).

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