

Chapter 11

Motives and Personality

Introduction

- Motivational psychologists ask, “What drives people to do the things they do?”
- They search for motives that propel people to do what they do

Basic Concepts

- Motive: Internal state that arouses and directs behavior toward a specific object or goal.
- Motive is caused by a deficit, a lack of something.
- Motives differ from each other in type and amount.

Basic Concepts

- Motives are based on needs: States of tension within a person, and as need is satisfied, tension is reduced.
- Motives propel people to perceive, think, and act in ways that serve to satisfy a need.

Henry Murray's Theory of Needs

- Need refers to a readiness to respond in a certain way under certain circumstances...It is a noun, which stands for the fact that a certain trend is apt to recur
- Needs organize perception, guiding us to "see" what we want (need) to see

Henry Murray's Theory of Needs

- Needs organize action by compelling a person to do what is necessary to satisfy a need
- Needs refer to states of tension, and satisfying a need reduces tension
- Process of reducing tension that is satisfying and not a tensionless state *per se*

Henry Murray's Theory of Needs

- Murray proposed a list of fundamental human needs
- Each need is associated with a specific desire or intention, particular set of emotions, specific action tendencies, and can be described with trait names

Henry Murray's Theory of Needs

- Each person has a unique hierarchy of needs—individual's needs can be thought of as existing at a different level of strength

Henry Murray's Theory of Needs

- High levels of some needs interacted with the amounts of various other needs within each person—interaction makes the motive concept dynamic
- Elements in the environment affect a person's needs

Henry Murray's Theory of Needs

- Press: Need-relevant aspects of the environment
 - Alpha press: Objective reality
 - Beta press: Perceived reality

Apperception: Act of interpreting and perceiving meaning in the environment

- Thematic Apperception Technique (TAT): Ambiguous pictures presented to a participant for interpretation
- Presumption that a person projects current needs into the interpretation of a picture

TAT and Questionnaire Measures of Motives: Do They Measure Different Aspects of Motives?

- McClelland argues that responses to TAT and questionnaire measures are not correlated because they measure two different types of motivation
- TAT measures implicit motivation—unconscious desires, aspirations, and needs

TAT and Questionnaire Measures of Motives: Do They Measure Different Aspects of Motives?

- Questionnaires measure explicit or self-attributed motivation—reflect a person's self-awareness of conscious motives
- Implicit motives better predict long-term behavioral trends over time

TAT and Questionnaire Measures of Motives: Do They Measure Different Aspects of Motives?

- Explicit motives better predict responses to immediate, specific situations and to choice behaviors and attitudes

The Big Three Motives

- Need for Achievement
- Need for Power
- Need for Intimacy

Need for Achievement

- People who have a high need for achievement:
 - Prefer activities that offer some, but not too much, challenge
 - Enjoy tasks where they are personally responsible for the outcome
 - Prefer tasks where feedback on their performance is available

Need for Achievement

- Sex differences: Life outcomes and childhood experiences
- Promoting achievement motivation: Independence training and setting challenging standards for children

Need for Power

- Readiness or preference for having an impact on people
- People with a high need for power are interested in controlling situations and controlling others

Need for Power

- Sex differences: Largest is that men but not women with high need for power perform a variety of impulsive and aggressive behaviors
- Profligate impulsive behaviors (drinking, aggression, sexual exploitation) is less likely to occur if a person has responsibility training

Need for Power

- People with a high need for power do not deal well with frustration and conflict—show strong stress responses, including high blood pressure

Need for Intimacy

- Recurrent preference for or readiness for warm, close, communicative interactions with others
- People with a high (compared to those with low) need for intimacy:
 - Spend more time during day thinking about relationships
 - Report more pleasant emotions when around other people

Need for Intimacy

- People with a high (compared to those with low) need for intimacy:
 - Smile, laugh, make more eye contact
 - Start up conversations more frequently and write more letters

Need for Intimacy

- Consistent sex difference: Women, on average, have a higher need for intimacy

Humanistic Tradition: The Motive to Self-Actualize

- Emphasis is on the conscious awareness of needs and choice and personal responsibility
- Approach is a counter-response to psychoanalytic and behavioral traditions, both of which are held that people have little free will in determining their actions

Humanistic Tradition: The Motive to Self-Actualize

- Emphasis is on the human need for growth and realizing one's full potential
- Human nature is positive and life-affirming
- Focus on growth instead of deficiency

Maslow's Contributions

- Hierarchy of needs
 - Lower needs must be satisfied before we can proceed to higher needs
 - Need hierarchy emerges during development, with lower needs emerging earlier in life than higher needs

Maslow's Contributions

- Hierarchy of needs:
 - Physiological
 - Safety
 - Belongingness
 - Esteem
 - Self-actualization

Maslow's Contributions

- Characteristics of self-actualizing persons: 15 characteristics, including spontaneous, problem centered, affinity for solitude, democratic values, and creativity

Rogers' Contributions

- Focused on ways to foster and attain self-actualization
- Fully functioning person: Person who is en route toward self-actualization
- All children are born with a need for positive regard

Rogers' Contributions

- Many parents and significant others place conditions of worth on when one will receive positive regard-conditional positive regard
- Key to development of unconditional positive self-regard and moving toward self-actualization is the receipt of unconditional positive regard from parents and significant others

Rogers' Contributions

- Anxiety results when people get off track in pursuit of self-actualization
- Rogers' approach to therapy (Client-Centered Therapy) is designed to get a person back on path toward self-actualization

Rogers' Contributions

- Three conditions for therapeutic progress:
 - Must be an atmosphere of genuine acceptance of the client by the therapist
 - Therapist must express unconditional positive regard for the client
 - Empathic understanding—client must feel that the therapist understands him or her