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Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

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Basically, motivation can be categorized into two types: intrinsic or internal motivation, and extrinsic or external motivation. These two kinds of motivation differ in the sources of pressure and pleasure that give rise to each of them.

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Intrinsic Motivation

A type of motivation that depends on inner pressure, intrinsic motivation emerges from an individual's enjoyment or interest in the task at hand. Intrinsic motivation does not involve working on activities for the sake of an external reward; rather, it involves the feeling of inner pleasure in the activity itself. Furthermore, Malone and Lepper provided a definition of intrinsic motivation in 1987. They view this type of motivation as a force that involves doing activities without external inducement. Without any reward, a person is willing to act as long as he is interested or personally enjoys the task.

During the studies conducted in the early 1970s, researchers found out that intrinsically motivated students willingly engage to activities for the sake of skills improvement and/or knowledge enhancement. Intrinsic motivation in these students was caused by their interest in mastering a topic rather than learning the subject to get good grades. It also emerged from their belief of having the skill that makes them capable to be effective in achieving their goals as well as their sense of autonomy towards their educational results and factors influencing them.

There are many factors that promote intrinsic motivation. Some of these include challenge, curiosity, control, fantasy, competition, cooperation and recognition.

- Challenge is a factor that means a person is more likely to be motivated if the task involves activities that include continuously intermediate or escalating levels of difficulty towards personally meaningful goals.
- Curiosity is a force in a person's environment that either gets his attention for new knowledge/skills or presents incongruity between his present knowledge/skills and the possible knowledge/skills that the activity may offer.
- Control is a factor that means it is human nature for a person to want to have some degree of control over his situation. Intrinsic motivation may emerge from a person's autonomy in his actions.
- Fantasy is a factor that is in the form of mental images that stimulate a person to behave to achieve the fantasy. For instance, a student sees himself as a successful engineer after college.
- Competition is a factor that involves comparison of a person's performance with other's performance.
- Cooperation is a factor that involves achieving a sense of satisfaction when a person helps other people towards the fulfilment of their goals.
- Recognition is a factor that also includes the sense of satisfaction when others appreciate their achievements.

Extrinsic Motivation

As opposed to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation ^[1] involves executing an action to achieve an external rewards or reinforcements. Simply put, the source of extrinsic motivation is from an individual's physical environment. For instance, bigger salary, more job benefits and high grades are rewards that lead to extrinsic motivation. Crowd cheering a person and competition are abstract sources of extrinsic motivation. This type of motivation also involves negative reinforcement, as in the threat of punishment, potential job loss or risk of failing grades.

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Links

[1] <http://www.psychologyandsociety.com/motivation>