

Motivation Notes

Week 1: Introduction to Motivation

What is Motivation?

Defining motivation

- Difficult to define
 - Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981): Gathered 102 defining/criticizing statements regarding motivation
- Motivation = the "Why" of behaviour
 - "Motivation refers to the "why" of behaviour, not the "how." Why do we engage in certain behaviors and have certain feelings and thoughts but not others?" (Deckers, 2010, p.xvii).
 - Understanding motivation is about understanding the 'reason' behind a behaviour – people's motives (desires, wants, needs)
 - Reeve (2009, p8): "The study of motivation concerns those processes that give behavior its energy and direction."

Reeve (2009)

- To understand motivation we firstly need to understand what causes and directs behaviour,
- 1. Direction/Cause
 - **Initiation:** Why does behaviour start?
 - **Persistence:** Once begun, why is behaviour sustained over time?
 - **Goal-directedness:** Why is behaviour directed towards some goals yet away from others?
 - **Change:** Why does behaviour change its direction?
 - **Termination:** Why does behaviour stop?
- 2. Energy
 - "Why is desire strong and resilient at one time yet weak and fragile at another time?" (Reeve, 2009, p6)

What kinds of behaviour?

- Our own behaviour
 - Feeling motivated or unmotivated
 - Striving to achieve our goals
 - Overcoming motivational difficulties
- Unusual behaviours
 - People do weird stuff
 - Behaviours we may class as weird or extreme ie criminal behaviours
- Everyday behaviours
 - Psychology is interested in understanding those things we take for granted
 - We don't think about general motivation very often, the everyday behaviours that are guided by motivations

Motivation theory before the 20th Century

The source of behavioural motivation?

- Three general types of historical theories regarding the source of behavioural motivation

Mechanistic	Appetitive	Rational
Behaviour is hard-wired <ul style="list-style-type: none">FixedThe idea that we do a behaviour because we have evolved to do so	Behaviour is driven by desires and needs	Behaviour is driven by rational/conscious thought
Genetically determined	Rewards and punishment <ul style="list-style-type: none">Energy determined by rewards and punishment	Intellect and rationality
E.g. reflexes and instincts	E.g. hunger, sex, pleasure/pain	E.g. our knowledge of right and wrong

Ancient Greeks: Socrates

- Rational human beings
- We are not mindlessly driven by our passions. As our intellect develops, it learns to control our passions.
- What we desire to do is based upon what our intellect tells us is the right thing to do.
- Rational > appetitive

Ancient Greeks: Plato's tripartite theory

- The 'soul' (or mind, or psyche) is composed of 3 hierarchically arranged parts:
 - Appetitive aspect*: Bodily appetites and desires (hunger, sex, etc.)
 - Competitive aspect*: Socially referenced standards (honour, shame, etc.)
 - Calculating aspect*: Decision-making capacities (reason, choosing)
- Each controls different aspects of behaviour
- Higher aspects can regulate lower aspects or overcome

Ancient Greeks: Aristotle's tripartite theory

- Agreed with Plato, but named the parts differently
 - Nutritive*: Impulsive, irrational, animal-like. "Bodily urges necessary for the maintenance of life."
 - Sensitive*: Still 'bodily', but regulated pleasure and pain
 - Rational*: Unique to humans - intellectual abilities and volitional control (the will)
 - Again rationality trumps desires or emotions
- Core point
 - The 'calculating' or 'rational' aspects can control the lower elements. Rationality trumps desires/emotions.

Ancient Greeks: Hedonism

- Democritus, Epicurus
 - Our desires/emotions drive us - we are motivated to seek pleasure and avoid pain.
 - We behave so as to obtain the greatest amount of pleasure.
 - Appetitive > rationality
 - Our thoughts are subservient to our desires.

Medieval (middle ages): The rise of Dualism

- Thomas-Aquinas (and other theologians)
 - Idea that there are two core aspects to behaviour, bodily (animal like) and soul
 - Wished to firmly differentiate humans and animals
 - Dualist theory

- Body (animal)
 - Irrational, impulsive, biological
 - Motivations arising from drives, desires, pleasure/pain.
- Soul/mind (uniquely human)
 - Rational, intelligent, spiritual.
 - Motivations arising from rational thought

1600's: Descartes' dualism

- Passive and active aspects of motivation
- Body = motivationally passive
 - Physical (follows laws of physics) - motivated by satisfying nutritive needs
 - Responds mechanistically to the environment
 - Through senses, reflexes, physiology
 - Hydraulic mechanism: Cerebrospinal fluid from the ventricles flowing through nerves controls action
- Mind/soul = motivationally active
 - Non-physical (not subject to physical laws) - motivated by the 'will'
- 300 years of impact... investigations separated into:
 - Understanding the reactive, mechanisms of the body physiology
 - Understanding the purposive, intentional thoughts of the mind philosophy

Early/mid 1800's - Physiology

- Explosion of interest in automatic/mechanistic approaches to behaviour
- Nervous system physiology (electrophysiology)
- Rise of science
 - Galvani (1780's): Electrical stimulation causes frog leg to twitch ('electricity' a fluid flowing through nerves)
 - Similar explanation to Descartes
 - DuBois-Reymond (1849): Confirmed electrical nature of nerve impulse using a galvanometer
 - Helmholtz (1852): Measured speed of nerve impulse for first time

Early/mid 1800's - Anatomy

- Nervous system anatomy
 - Bell (1811) and Magendie (1822)
 - Sensory and motor nerves are separate (sensory enter spinal chord on posterior side, motor exit on anterior side)
 - Foundation for sense-response approaches to behaviour
- However: Dualism still ruled, until...

Mid 1800's: Darwinian evolution

- Challenged Dualism
- Evolution applies to:
 - Humans as well as animals
 - Mind as well as body
- Long standing separation of animals (automatons) and humans (rational) questioned
- Instincts as a theoretical bridge between humans and animals