

Motivation

Motivation is an internal state that propels individuals to engage in goal-directed behavior. It is often understood as a force that explains why people or animals initiate, continue, or terminate a certain behavior at a particular time. It is a complex phenomenon and its precise definition is disputed. It contrasts with amotivation, which is a state of apathy or listlessness. Motivation is studied in fields like psychology, motivation science, and philosophy.

Motivation is relevant in many fields and affects educational success, work performance, consumer behavior, and athletic success.

Motivational states are characterized by their direction, intensity, and persistence. The direction of a motivational state is shaped by the goal it aims to achieve. Intensity is the strength of the state and affects whether the state is translated into action and how much effort is employed. Persistence refers to how long an individual is willing to engage in an activity. Motivation is often divided into two phases: in the first phase, the individual establishes a goal, while in the second phase, they attempt to reach this goal.

Many types of motivation are discussed in the academic literature. Intrinsic motivation comes from internal factors like enjoyment and curiosity. It contrasts with extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external factors like obtaining rewards and avoiding punishment. For conscious motivation, the individual is aware of the motive driving the behavior, which is not the case for unconscious motivation. Other types include rational and irrational motivation, biological and cognitive motivation, short-term and long-term motivation, and egoistic and altruistic motivation.