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## Modern aspects of achievement motivation analysis

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**Abstract.** The article describes the modern ideas of achievement motivation, as well as the related with this construct researches. The problems that arise in studies of achievement motivation are identified. The results of studies that have not found wide reflection in domestic psychological literature are analyzed.

**Keywords:** *achievement motivation, motivation of avoiding failure, learned helplessness, implicit theories of intelligence, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation*

### Introduction

Thematic justification: Among current problems of modern psychology one of important places belongs to the problem of achievement motivation. Achievement motivation joins a complex of motivational factors, direct “motors” of human behavior. This problem emerges full blown in case of insufficiency of achievement motivation or distortion of motivation elements because of psychological difficulties and mental pathology.

Achievement motivation analyses hold a high position in the works of psychologists. First of all, these are works of T.O. Gordeyeva, M.Sh. Magomed-Eminova, A. Mekhrabian, G. Murrey, M. Seligman, K.A. Heller, H. Heckhausen, J.T. Spence, W.E. Beane, G.W. Lucker, R.L. Helmreich, K.A. Matthewset et al.

The purpose of this article is to review modern concepts of achievement motivation as well as researches and problems relate to this construct.

Achievement motivation is one of main types of motivation in order of importance for human activity. Thereat, motivation as a whole should be understood as a construct used for understanding and explanation of reasons, orientation and human behavior enabling mechanisms. Many authors understand achievement motivation as motivation directed at better performance of activity focused on achievement of some result to which a success criterion may be applied [1]. Generally, this refers to achievement of maximally good results in the field important for humans.

### Review of publications on the topic

Traditional theories of achievement motivation focused their attention on two main aspects of the problem: the achievement motivation aspect as such and competitive aspect associated with unsuccessful avoidance motivation [1, 3]. Specific elements, stages etc. are distinguished within the motivation structure. Without entering into the known approaches to understanding of achievement motivation phenomenon we put an increased focus on less known theories.

Among modern motivation theories the attributive theory of B. Weiner is worth noticing[10]. In this theory the attention is focused on methods of apprehension and explanation by a human being of what is happening to him. The point at issue is that motivation of people is by definitive manner influenced by their perceptions and views.

Starting out from the results obtained by behaviourists providing evidence of difference in actions of animals and humans in response to termination of motivation action B. Weiner has found that the fact that humans explain termi-

nation of reinforcement in different ways as against animals is of great importance. People considering that the reason of impulsion termination is of temporary nature, e.g., equipment failure, continue carrying out actions required for remuneration. At the same time people considering the reason of termination to be permanent, e.g. believing that the researcher has decided to terminate remuneration, stop performance efforts.

In experimental studies Weiner and Coocla have found out that people with high achievement motivation perceive success as bound to capabilities and efforts, and failure – as caused by lack of efforts. Individuals with low achievement motivation believe that the reason of their success is a degree of task difficulty (simplicity) or good luck, and the reason of failure is lacking in aptitude. That is, Weiner showed the role of operating result causal attributions, in particular, the role of internal predictors of success expectation.

Seligman's works, which are not less important for motivation comprehension, show that experience of the long-lasting failure is an external predictor of decrease in expectation of a subject with respect to his future success of [9]. M. Seligman explains the absence of success-seeking behavior through the concept of learned helplessness. This concept means a psychological state, bound to disturbance of motivation and resulting from the subject's experience of uncontrollability of important biotic circumstances and events. The scientist described this phenomenon as result of experienced lack of dependence between efforts of an animal and subsequent success or failure.

Later on the researches, which confirmed existence of learned helplessness phenomenon in people, were conducted [6]. In experiments where people acted as test subjects, the results practically reproduced the results of Seligman's classical experiments.

The results of Hiroto's research [6] showed cognitive nature of helplessness in people and confirmed Seligman's conclusions that helplessness reflects the subject's belief in degree of effectiveness of his responses. People in whom learned helplessness is formed do not believe that their responses can influence unpleasant events while people, without learned helplessness believe that their responses influence on termination of these events. Seligman has come to a conclusion that learned helplessness is characterized by manifestation of three types of deficiency: 1) inability to act (to initiate responses), 2) inability to be trained and 3) emotional disturbances.

Seligman turned attention to the fact that interpretation by the individual of his successes and failures could be different. To a greater extent it refers to people with high achievement motivation. Interpretation based upon fixed factors, such as capabilities, in case of success are well combined in them with the attribution based upon temporary factors, for example, lack of efforts in case of failure. Besides, Seligman has revealed that use of internal reasons for own success explanation (for example, "I am clever") can be combined with use of external reasons in case of failure ("you are stupid").

Seligman has introduced a concept of explanatory style, which is described with the use of three parameters: *constancy, amplitude and personalization*. Constancy is related to explanation of reasons of the events happening to the individual by constant or temporary factors. Amplitude refers to the degree of universality of assessment by the individual of the events happening to him: whether he is prone to excessive generalization or, on the contrary, to specific, concise consideration of particular situations. Personalization refers to the explanation of reasons of the occurring unpleasant events through blaming himself or other people and circumstances.

Thus, two main styles of explanation are distinguished: pessimistic and optimistic. Pessimistic style of explanation is characterized by explanation of adverse events by personal characteristics, permanent and common factors, and optimistic style is characterized by explanation of adverse events by external, temporary and specific factors. Thereat positive events in pessimistic style of explanation are perceived as temporary, specific (local) and caused by external reasons ("it was pure luck") in pessimistic style of explanation and as constant, universal and caused by personal reasons (for example, existence of capabilities) in optimistic style of explanation. It has been revealed that people, when in depression, generally explain failures by permanent and common reasons.

K. Dvek and A. Bandura [5] have found that not all people perceive capabilities in a similar way, understanding this attribution of activity results as something stable and permanent as it followed from B. Weiner's scheme. They distinguished two types of intellect implicit theories – the theories of entity (entity theories) and the theory of increment (incremental theories).

These theories set opposed hypothetical poles, while in reality people think of intellect as of the result of action of both factors, efforts and capabilities.

It turned out to be that intuitive theories of intellect influence on identification of living and training targets. Those who think that their capabilities are stable and permanent are prone to setting effective goals and seek to receive positive assessment of their capabilities from the wider public and to avoid negative assessment of the competence by all manner or means. Within this target orientation high efforts shown by the subject are negatively bound to the satisfaction level as the effort itself is considered as low capabilities factor. As a result of such setting aimed to maintain own self-assessment they show concern about the level of their capabilities as far as they believe that their capabilities are reality, which cannot be changed, and, therefore, it is only possible to try to put them in a possibly more favourable light.

On the contrary, those who believe that their capabilities are variable, can be improved and trained, are prone to set educational and cognitive targets, i.e. they strive to improve their competence and experience. They prefer new, difficult and various tasks. Typical position of students of this sort is "it is important for me to learn something instead of being the first in the class".

V. Glasser created own theory explaining motivation of behaviour – the theory of control - and offered own type of a psychotherapy - therapy by reality. In any behaviour of a person he recognizes an attempt to control the world around and himself as parts of this world [7]. In his approach V. Glasser offers to train a person by means of such type of control, which would correspond to the existing realities of his life and extend the ways of needs satisfaction. V. Glasser identified five basic needs: one of them is based on biological striving to survival (including, need for food, sexual need, etc.); four other are proper psychological requirements, in particular, need for strength (potency), need for freedom, need for belonging (love), need for pleasure.

In the therapy-by-reality approach a person is taught to satisfy these needs using a wider range of strategies than that he used being limited by a certain psychological problem.

Another variant of control theory is A. Bandura's concept of self-efficacy [4], integrated researches, which were carried out within the framework of locus control concept and learned helplessness. The result attractiveness and belief in positive result are not enough for actualization of the subject's motivation. Confidence in own capabilities is also required. Self-efficacy consists in the level of competence of a person when performing one or another task. According to the data obtained by Bandura and his colleagues, people with high self-efficacy are more persevering, they learn better and obtain higher self-respect, and they are less anxious and less prone to depressions.

Bandura describes sources, mechanisms of self-efficacy, its influence on motivational, cognitive and emotional processes as well as on activity successfulness. Own experience of successes and failures in the attempt to achieve desired results has the greatest influence on self-efficacy. This success is the best means of therapy of insufficient self-efficacy. Self-efficacy also increases when people watch other people dealing successfully with different problems. At the same time if a person watches other equally competent people fail repeatedly, this may result in worse prognosis of own capability.

The third method by means of which a feeling of efficacy may be achieved consists in convincing the person that he possesses capabilities necessary for achievement of an objective. Bandura assumes that the power of verbal belief is limited and bound to the realized status and authority of the convincing person.

The opinion of the individual on own emotional and physiological states can also influence self-efficacy. As far as people estimate their efficacy also based on the level of the emotional pressure experienced by them in the face of stressful or threatening situations, any method lowering this tension raises the efficacy prognosis.

Bandura considers that self-efficacy is a belief of an individual in capability to cope with the activity leading to achievement of some result. Formation of self-efficacy

concepts are also influenced by self-assessment by the subject of his knowledge, capabilities and strategy of stress overcoming. There are level, generality and force of self-efficacy. The level of self-efficacy reflects variations of problems of various degrees of difficulty. Generality is understood as transfer of concepts of own effectiveness to other types of tasks. The force of efficacy perceived by the subject is measured through the degree of his confidence in his ability to carry out these tasks.

In literature the emphasis is generally placed on destructive consequences of low self-efficacy, however at present its too high values have been recognized equally negative. For example, people with alcohol and drug addiction erroneously believe that they can control their abuses [2].

Bandura assumed that concepts of self-efficacy influence on such motivational indicators as the level of efforts, persistence and a choice of tasks. Students with high sense of own efficacy concerning achievement of educational results work more, participate in educational activity more actively and show larger persistence in overcoming of difficulties, than those who are sceptical about their capabilities. These assumptions were proved in the works of Bandura and his colleagues and followers.

The theory of internal motivation developed by E. Dessie and his colleague R. Ryan [8] raises a question of what internal sources of achievement motivation are. This theory consists of three sub-theories [1], first of which bears the name of self-determination theory. Relying upon the ideas of humanistic psychologists and works devoted to importance of such need as drive for monitoring and control, Dessie postulated existence of three basic needs: in self-determination, competence and relations with other people. According to Dessie, these psychological needs are congenital, basic. The need for self-determination (for autonomy) includes desire to control own actions and behaviour independently, to be their initiator. The need for competence includes comprehension of the way of achievement of various external and internal results and how to be efficient. At last, the need for connectedness (relatedness) includes establishment of reliable and satisfying the individual connection with other people.

The second sub-theory bears the name of cognitive assessment theory. The first provision of this theory touches upon the experience of autonomy, which is the most important, defining factor for internal motivation.

The second provision touches upon influence of external factors on internal motivation and satisfaction of need for competence. Which of needs will come to the fore depends, first of all, on the individual, and secondly, on the situation.

The third provision touches upon dynamic influences on motivation, competition of two above-mentioned needs. The event of environment can differ in to what extent it is or perceived as controlling, informing or amotivating. It is the sense that is attributed by the subject to an event influences internal motivation. Events, which are perceived by the subject as coercion to think, feel or behave in a strictly definite way, are controlling. Events which are perceived by the subject as providing a freedom of choice and supplying with the information concerning the degree of performance are informing. At last, events which are perceived as not containing the information on

the degree of success in activity performance so neither the need for competence, nor the need for control or personal causality can be satisfied are amotivating.

Dessie and Ryan have shown that internal motivation is influenced negatively by external factors which do not promote satisfaction of needs of the subject for autonomy, competence, as well as relatedness to other people and urged to control it, such as awards, monetary payments, prizes, awards, any estimates of activity (for example in the form of marks). A competitive situation, dates of activity completion, imposed purposes, controlling style of tutoring and education, negative feedback, as well as total absence of feedback can also act as the factors undermining internal motivation. The factors promoting satisfaction of needs of the subject for autonomy, competence and relatedness, destined to inform him on the course of activity realization and degree of its success are referred by Dessie and Ryan to the factors stimulating internal motivation. In particular, they include the possibility of a choice (for example, type of a task, level of its difficulty, time for decision), the positive feedback based on the result of activity, as well as characteristics of the activity itself (optimum level of its complexity) and a situation of its realization (informing style of tutoring).

The third sub-theory – the theory of intrinsic motivation – is devoted to the process of internalization of external (extrinsic in the terms of Dessie, i.e. “extrinsic” towards the subject of action) motivation, its spontaneity and styles of self-regulation. It is known that internal motivation takes place when the person is doing something simply because this activity gives him pleasure. However in reality there are seldom situations when the person does something, being operated only by internal motivation. Dessie does not oppose internal and external motivations: there are mutual transitions between them, which are carried out by means of internalization mechanism.

Not only feeling of own choice, but satisfaction and pleasure from the carried-out activity is intrinsic to internal motivation. Only internal motivation shows connection with achievements (and negative correlation with uneasiness).

E. Dessie and his colleagues identified the special type of external motivation – coming from the subject himself. This motivation is external because the activity performed does not contain a target for a subject and the value itself is unstimulating for him but is performed for the sake of other targets, i.e. in the point of fact it is a means for other targets achievement. Different subtypes of external motivation differ in how they influence success in productive activity and how they are connected with emotional and cognitive components of motivation.

### **Conclusions:**

Summing up of what has been said, currently there is a variety of experimental findings highlighting conception of achievement motivation phenomenon. Each of considered theories makes its own contribution to the development of ideas of this most important construct, covering these or those aspects and problems thereof. The following provisions can be the most productive for the development of further researches:

– Achievement motivation is a construct describing a complex of factors, which ensure orientation of a subject

to better performance of the activity focused on achievement of some result, to which a success criterion may be applied.

– Casual attribution of performance results play the role of internal predictors of success expectation.

– The experience of long-term failure is an external predictor of decrease in the subject's expectation with regard to his future success and influences negatively on resulting achievement motivation.

– The factor supporting the level peculiar to the subject and the content of achievement motivation is the style of explanation (optimistic or pessimistic)

– The result attractiveness and belief in positive result are not enough for actualization of the subject's motivation. Confidence in own capabilities – self-efficacy – is also required.

– External and internal sources differently influence achievement motivation, which is conditional upon the human needs for self-determination and control. External sources can be effective only in case of their interiorization by the subject. That is to say, internal sources, such as feeling of own choice, satisfaction by the process of activity performance, interest, etc. are clearly influencing achievement motivation.

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#### Тапалова О.Б. Современные аспекты исследования мотивации достижения

**Аннотация.** Данная статья описывает современные представления о мотивации достижения, а также связывает с ними построение исследований. Определены проблемы, которые возникают при изучении мотивации достижения. В статье представлен анализ результатов исследований, которые не нашли широкого отражения в отечественной психологической литературе.

**Ключевые слова:** мотивации достижения, мотивация избегания неудачи, выученная беспомощность, имплицитные теории интеллекта, самодостаточность, внутренняя мотивация, внешняя мотивация