

AN INTEGRATING CONCEPTION OF HUMAN MOTIVATION

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ABSTRACT. The theories of motivation developed in the twentieth century are opposite. A theory that harmoniously integrates the contributions based on the facts is needed. The learning of needs is highlighted, based on organic and acquired determinants, through the affective reinforcement of the objects of the external world and the words in which they are channeled. The organic requirements are specified in the objects and words. The higher needs come from the assimilation of the language and they are independent determinants of the organic requirements and between them and the assumed duties usually predominate in the conflicts with the psychic development. The subject in his initially reactive and adaptive behavior develops creative projects aimed at the future that lead to self-realization. Thus, there is the reciprocal unity and determination of adaptation and self-realization, as an explanation of human behavior. In the contradictions of life, two dynamisms are imposed: the specific motivation, aimed at obtaining the goal of necessity, and the non-specific motivation for the frustration and conflict, aimed at reducing the unsatisfactory tension in other ways. Both dynamics are in unity, but the specific one is typical of the normal motivation in which the projects and goals predominated, in a relatively harmonic and integrating way, while the nonspecific one is predominant in the abnormal motivation, in which the determinants and external unconscious assume a leading role. Only the fullest truth will be the most useful for the human being.

Keywords: Epistemology; theory; motivation.

UNA CONCEPCIÓN INTEGRADORA DE LA MOTIVACIÓN HUMANA

RESUMEN. Las teorías de la motivación desarrolladas en el siglo XX son opuestas. Se requiere una que, sobre la base de los hechos, integre armónicamente los aportes logrados. Destacamos el aprendizaje de las necesidades, basado en determinantes orgánicos y adquiridos, mediante el reforzamiento afectivo de los objetos del mundo exterior y de las palabras en que se canalizan. Los requerimientos orgánicos se concretan en los objetos y en las palabras. Las necesidades superiores surgen por la asimilación del lenguaje y se constituyen en determinantes independientes de los requerimientos orgánicos y entre ellos y con el desarrollo psíquico, los deberes asumidos predominan por lo general en los conflictos. En su conducta, inicialmente reactiva y adaptativa, el sujeto va elaborando proyectos creativos dirigidos al futuro que conducen a su auto realización. Así existe la unidad y determinación recíprocas de la adaptación y la auto realización, como explicación de la conducta humana. En las contradicciones de la vida se imponen dos dinamismos: la motivación específica, dirigida a obtener el objeto meta de la necesidad, y la motivación inespecífica ante la frustración y el conflicto, dirigida a reducir por otras vías la tensión insatisfactoria. Ambos dinamismos se encuentran en unidad, pero la específica es típica de la motivación normal en la cual predominan, en forma relativamente armónica e integradora,

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los proyectos y fines asumidos, mientras que la inespecífica es predominante en la motivación anormal, en la cual los determinantes inconscientes y externos asumen un rol principal. Solo la verdad más plena será lo más útil para el ser humano.

Palabras clave: Epistemología; teoría; motivación.

UMA CONCEPÇÃO INTEGRADORA DA MOTIVAÇÃO HUMANA

RESUMO. As teorias da motivação desenvolvidas no século XX são opostas. Requer-se uma que, sobre a base dos fatos, integre harmonicamente os resultados alcançados. Destacamos a aprendizagem das necessidades, baseado em determinantes orgânicos e adquiridos, mediante o reforço afetivo dos objetos do mundo exterior e das palavras em que se canalizam. Os requerimentos orgânicos se concretizam nos objetos e nas palavras. As necessidades superiores surgem pela assimilação da linguagem e se constituem em determinantes independentes dos requerimentos orgânicos e entre eles e com o desenvolvimento psíquico, os deveres assumidos predominam pelo geral nos conflitos. Em sua conduta, inicialmente reativa e adaptativa, o sujeito vai elaborando projetos criativos dirigidos ao futuro que conduzem à auto realização. Assim, existe a unidade e determinação recíprocas da adaptação e da auto realização, como explicação da conduta humana. Nas contradições da vida se impõem dois dinamismos: a motivação específica, dirigida a obter o objeto meta da necessidade, e a motivação inespecífica ante a frustração e o conflito, dirigida a reduzir por outras vias a tensão insatisfatória. Ambos dinamismos se encontram em unidade, mas a específica é típica da motivação normal na qual predominam, em forma relativamente harmônica e integradora, os projetos e fins assumidos, enquanto que a inespecífica é predominante na motivação anormal, na qual os determinantes inconscientes e externos assumem um rol principal. Só a verdade mais plena será o mais útil para o ser humano.

Palavras-chave: Epistemologia; teoria; motivação.

Introduction

The theories of motivation developed in the twentieth century were characterized by their contrast. They are the Psychoanalysis, which highlighted unconscious motivation; the Behaviorism, which emphasized stimulus-response learning; the field theory of K. Lewin and others, to Humanism that underlined the importance of consciousness and the tendency to self-realization; and Cognitive psychology, which highlighted the role of knowledge in its determination. There is the need for a theory that, with a historical-cultural approach, harmoniously integrates all the contributions achieved or at least the most important ones based on the facts. This work addressed his difficult and complex effort.

The motivation, the biological organism, the personality, and the external activity

This necessary theory must conceive human motivation as a complex psychic, ideal and subjective functioning, which determines the direction of the behavior towards an object-goal, the sense of approach or avoidance of this object-goal, and the intensity of the activity. But this complex motivational functioning exists in the identity with the brain functioning that

generates it and in interaction with the determinants that arise from the higher nervous activity and the organism, where the organic requirements is highlighted.

Although the motivation is an internal and psychic process that expresses and generates the characterological properties of the complex human personality, the human beings surrounds in close interaction with the external activity and the physical and social world. The motivation reflects the external world through the internal conditions of the personality and the active and creative role of this personality and in turn, regulates the direction and intensity of the external activity of interaction with the external world.

The need and the reason

In the theory of motivation, the internal (the need) is emphasize by some people and the external stimulus is emphasized by others, as drivers of the activity.

An integrative theory must consider both factors in the motivational process.

The need is a force, an internal requirement of the psyche that can passively express, in suffering or satisfaction, how it depends on its object-goal. Or it can be actively manifested when it becomes a reason and drives the activity towards the achievement of its object-goal.

But the emergence of the motivated activity requires an objective situation, external to the need that indicates the possibility of its satisfaction.

The reason is the fusion or mediation between these two determinants: the need and the objective circumstances external to it.

The reason is the cognitive reflection of the real possibility of satisfaction, which channels and incorporates the active tension of the need or needs that drive the behavior.

This is how the need and the reality external to it come together and the importance of cognition in human motivation is appreciated.

The organic and acquired character of all needs

Radical behaviorism (Watson, 1924; Skinner, 1969) emphasized the importance of learning in psychic life but reducing it to external stimuli, to the stimulus-response relationship. Overcoming this limitation, it is necessary to recognize the importance of affective reinforcement, conceived as a subjective experience and of the psychic, internal and external determinants (the social conscience) and of the objects that reinforce or inhibit the formation of connections and generate the human psyche.

A. N. Leontiev (1966) showed two ways this learning of needs occurs: 1) concretion or reification in its object; and 2) the conversion of the act into activity, where the end of the act becomes the reason of a new need and a new activity.

The requirements and potentialities that the subject brings at birth participate in the determination of all the needs, concretized and developed with life, and in the external activity, in which the objects and the language are found, influencing the subject during his life.

But in the needs of its biological organism (hunger, sleep, thirst, sex and others) and its brain (sensory and affective stimulation, activity and others) the fundamental determinant of its goal-object is organic, although these needs are learned and channel in the objects and the language that the social environment brings them. However, when determining the higher needs, generated by the assimilation of language, its goal-object is not determined by the organism. However, the innate potentialities or possibilities of his brain also participate, which allow the assimilation and development of language.

Thus, language generates superior, purely individual and other altruistic and ideological needs of the human being, depending on the reinforcement, that is, the intense or repeated affective experiences of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which accompany language.

Although these higher needs arise, change and disappear under the influence of organic needs and the external environment, they acquire a relative autonomy, they are self-sustaining, they are rooted in the internalized language and irreducible to organic needs.

The organic needs (of the human body and brain) are the basis and upon them a superstructure of needs usually dominant arises, generated by the language, which the subject assimilates. Between them, the physical objects of the external world participate as channeling and stimulation of both.

In this way, the activation sources of the human psyche can be classified as organic (psychobiological needs: hunger, thirst, sex, etc., and the brain needs: sensory stimulation, affective contact, activity, and others); 'external' (external stimuli, associated with needs, stimulate the behavior) and 'verbal': (goals, projects and the conscious reflection of the world, which act by the word, able to activate reticular formation, mobilize activity, and may become autonomous needs, independent of the innate and the external (Luria, 1978).

Organic needs have their starting point in the organism, based on the biological functioning and in the brain, but channeled and arise by their concretion in the objects, circumstances, and words offered by the external environment. Thus, they are organic and acquired.

The higher needs, whether purely individual or altruistic and ideological, have their starting point, based on the internalized language, which acquires independence for the external stimuli and organic requirements, but they have arisen by pleasant affective experiences or unpleasant things that evoke the external objects and the organic and superior needs already arisen, and therefore, they are associated with these external determinants. Thus, in the genesis of the higher needs, the potentiality of the language that the subject brings at birth, with the external objects and the language offered by the society are learned.

From this conception, a classification of human needs is derived (Rubinstein, 1967) into socially significant (altruistic, given by the assimilation of morality and law) and purely individual, directed only to satisfy the individual. The latter divides them into three groups: 1) the biological organism; 2) those based on the requirements of the brain; and 3) sociogenic, generated by social life, which can be of material objects, activity, and spiritual needs, for example, knowledge, aesthetic experiences, etc.

The psychological field and its external determination

K. Lewin (1946) highlights the importance of the subjective reflection of reality in human motivation with the concept of psychological field, which is indisputable, but limiting it only to an internal subjective plane, without appreciating that the real world determines this psychological field in its interaction with the subject, which changes under this influence, which always acts through and depending on his personality. The role of consciousness and cognition is emphasized here, but forgetting the influence of the real world. However, there is no doubt that motivation exists in the context of the psychological field, which answers in constant interaction with the external and real world.

Motivation and cognition

Continuing this emphasis on cognition and awareness initiated by Lewin, the contemporary Cognitive Psychology has highlighted the role of cognitive processes in motivation, but, generally, by eluding the conscious affective factor and its determination by the interaction with the social environment.

Expressing the importance of cognition in motivation, we propose (González, 1977) that the internal contradiction of the motivation for the behavior is established between the needs of the personality and the reflection that the cognitive processes offer from the real world. In this interaction, the reflection of the world is positively charged and needs are elaborated cognitively, in desires, goals, projects and in the self-image.

With this theoretical understanding, we emphasize the indissoluble unity of needs (that is, affectivity) with the cognitive processes and at the same time, the reflexive and determined character of both in the interaction with the external physical and social world. The psyche always constitutes the unity of the cognitive and the affective.

When defining the concept of reason, we have emphasized its cognitive character and at the same time its intimate unity with needs. Thus, we conceive the reason as the cognitive expectation and appreciate its importance.

By highlighting the word as a motivational factor that mobilizes behavior, we point out the importance of plans, goals, and self-concept.

Needs and reasons can act as tendencies and emotions or feelings, but also, as concrete cognitive experiences, as knowledge and beliefs (about the world and about oneself), in a volitional way in goals, objectives, and projects and in its external behavioral manifestation.

Self-realization and adaptation

As the Humanist Psychology has pointed out (Maslow, 1954), the individual and creative development of personal potentialities in projects and goals aimed at their future realization is a fundamental characteristic of human motivation and indicates the great importance of conscious motivation in the human being. But these most important and future projects have arisen in the interaction of the individual with his social environment in which the individual is guided first in a reactive and adaptive way. Society shows a series of tasks, moral, legal norms and possibilities of enjoyment that first act in a reactive way on the subject and then in an adaptive way, when the individual assumes certain activities and duties and meets them, first, as a way or how to meet their needs, and then these ends or duties can become, by virtue of the creative work of the subject, in autonomous, self-sustaining and future-guided needs.

The normal person is characterized by this tendency to fulfill his goals and projects and his self-realization, but in relative harmony with his adaptation to the external circumstances and with the unconscious tendencies that can act in it. The initial adaptation becomes self-realization and for this self-realization, they have to be adapted.

In this reciprocal interaction and transformation of the reactive, the adaptive and autonomous self-realization, there is the transformation and development and involution of human motivation. Thus, we conceive the reciprocal unity and determination of adaptation and self-realization as an explanation of human behavior.

Psychic contradiction and specific and nonspecific motivation

Psychoanalysis, in the person of its initiator (Freud, 1948) has highlighted the concept of tension reduction and defense mechanisms.

Human life develops during its psychic contradictions: conflicts, frustrations, dissatisfactions, threats, and pressures. These contradictions can be solved today or can be potentially and currently solved and with the achievement of the object-goal of the need, the satisfaction is achieved. This is called specific motivation, that is, the one directed to the attainment of the object-goal of needs and which is often achieved by increasing the stress of effort. It is only satisfying when the subject achieves the target object. But when these contradictions are insoluble and satisfaction is not obtained, then the nonspecific motivation aimed at reducing tension appeared, that is, reducing suffering in the face of dissatisfaction, but not obtaining the specific object-goal but by other means.

The human motivation is the contradictory unity and the reciprocal transformation of specific and nonspecific motivation. Both are always united but the specific motivation predominates in health and the nonspecific motivation predominates in the mental illness (see González, 1977).

The conscious and unconscious regulation of the activity

Psychoanalysis has emphasized the unconscious regulation of the activity.

But the motivational regulation of the activity is always conscious and not conscious, (which may be automatic, preconscious or unconscious). However, we emphasize the fundamental idea that the conscious regulation predominates in health and the unconscious regulation predominates in the psychogenic disease and the external determinants disrupt the human being in his subjective expression.

Faced with insoluble and important and serious contradictions for the subject, which arise in their activity and are internalized in their psyche, the nonspecific motivation and the reduction of tension arise, which acts, among other ways, making and keeping unconscious what is unbearable for him. These unconscious contents act on both the normal human being and the mentally ill, but in the normal human being these unconscious determinants are subjected to the integrating and harmonizing function of consciousness leading to their predominance over these unconscious determinants. In the psychogenic mental patient, this conscious control is lost and the external and unconscious determinants become the main ones in the regulation of the activity.

The unconscious comes from the remote or more recent past. In the paternal-infant conflict, in the preschool age, contradictions with his parents can be insurmountable and serious for the child. The first experiences, favorable or unfavorable, constitute the basic subjectivity emerged in childhood. But in the later course of life, the assimilation of knowledge and social ideology creates the superstructure of personality that is the main regulator of behavior in later ages. The integrative development of personality allows the basic subjectivity of children to be harmonized with their adult superstructure. This integrative development has been limited and anomalous psychic conditions are created favorable to the mental disorder.

Therefore, the conscious regulation predominates in the normal person, characterized by the relative integration and harmony between its determinants, and the predominance of the goals and projects and the duties assumed on unconscious tendencies

from the most recent or distant past, and on the external determinants and their subjective expression.

The unconscious regulation predominates in the sick person characterized by antagonistic contradictions in his personality and the predominance over goals and projects and duties assumed from unconscious and external determinants (frustration, pressure, conflict) and subjective expression.

Between the normal motivational structure and the pathological one there is a qualitative difference, but at the same time, there is a quantitative continuity and reciprocal penetration. The normal has unconscious and pathogenic tendencies and the patient guidance towards his psychic recovery. There are people and moments of mediation between the two states in which the normal and conscious are as important as the abnormal, unconscious and pathological.

Social consciousness and psychic determinism: levels of motivation

L. S. Vygotski (1996) showed that self-consciousness is the social consciousness transferred to the interior. His conception of the importance of language (Vygotski, 1993, 2000), in the formation and development of higher psychic functions, also emphasize on the role of social consciousness as the form and determinant of the human psyche.

The social conscience is an objective and spiritual reality today, a collective product of the historical development of society, which is shared by human groups and exists outside the individual subject who knows and assumes it. The individual psyche is unique, only for an individual, generated by him during his life, depending on his organism, his external, physical and social situations, and his previous experience. The social consciousness is assimilated by the individual in the past and current course of his life and in turn, the individual transforms it, acting through social interaction, as a collective.

In the individual psyche, three components must be distinguished: 1) the 'superficial social', in which the current social consciousness is reflected by the subject only as knowledge or information or, if it is assumed as a motivation, he does it in a reactive way. For example, when crossing a street, the driver avoids trampling the passers-by; to be able to appropriate something improperly, the responsible person does not do it. Thus, in a reactive way, the norms of law and morality are fulfilled; 2) the 'individual' component, structured by the individual, which is not a psychic reflection of the norms of law and morality that currently govern in society, and which results from his previous life and contains his individual organic and psychological needs and trends conscious and unconscious; 3) the 'social-individual' component, that is a mediation between the two previous ones and it consists of the current social consciousness (morality and law) assumed by the subject in an active form, that is, as stable needs and goals consciously experienced by the subject as a purpose (altruistic work duties, political, family, etc. that the individual undertakes to fulfill) to meet their personal requirements and therefore, including the individual component.

Here, we have established the correlation between the social altruistic and the purely individual in the person, in the individual, but it must be borne in mind that the social consciousness in itself contains the relation between both components: the altruistic and the purely individual. Thus, we must consider the intrinsic altruism, where moral value prevails; and the extrinsic altruism, where duty is primarily a means for individual satisfaction. The latter form predominates in a society based on inequality. The individual assimilates these two forms of social consciousness predominating in him either the one or the other.

The current social conscience assumed in a reactive or active way is the passport to live, is the normal way that the individual assumes to behave in his social environment. Human life is at the level of social consciousness. The whole development of the child to the adult goes in the direction that the individual psyche is capable of adequately reflecting the current and external social consciousness and can submit to it to live materially and spiritually. In the mentally ill person, this ability abnormally diminishes or is lost. In the small child, it does not exist.

As in the development, language assumes a role in motivational self-regulation, in the normal subject, the individual needs and the duties assumed are involved in relative harmony, but in the face of a conflict between them, the social duties assumed must predominate in the activity on those individual needs or external incentives that go against these assumed social duties. For example, the student child must attend classes, the adult worker must fulfill his work. Only in this way society can exist, that is, if each individual fulfills his role in social life. This is called the 'social balance of human motivation', which is accompanied by imbalances, depending on the personality of the subject and achieving what he needs individually, through compliance with the duty assumed. Nevertheless, the contradictions, acute or repeated, between the duty assumed, the individual needs, the external environment, and its own organism, ultimately lead to a transformation, either of the social duties assumed or the individual needs, in the search of relative harmony or, if not achieved, generating a pathogenic state.

When the predominance of the duties assumed before a conflict are highlighted, we do not mean that they constitute the hierarchically dominant motivations in the personality. These dominant motivations may be social or individual, and in this historical period, the most frequent is that they are individual, but precisely to meet them requires that the duties assumed predominate in the face of conflict. In the antisocial, their social-altruistic orientation is reduced to a minimum, but they still have to adapt to their environment and to protect themselves, they must deceive their social duties, even in a reactive or adaptive way.

In this theoretical context, the concept of the level of motivation (see Gonzalez, 2017) or stages of the development or involution of motivation is understood, which is determined by 1) the greater or lesser diversity and intensity of the social duties assumed and made by the individual or group (his degree of altruistic social integration), but also, to a lesser extent, by the greater or lesser diversity and intensity of individual needs; and 2) by the greater or lesser degree of harmony in the satisfaction of all their individual and social needs, achieved by that subject.

That is, the high level of motivation is the one showing the greatest complexity and diversity of their needs (especially social) and at the same time the greater harmony between them. The lowest level is in the opposite direction.

In the evolution of the ages, the level of motivation of the subject depends on its degree of social integration and its development and biological and individual involution and the degree of relative harmony or contradiction that characterizes them.

Adults (from 30 to 65) have the highest motivational level, adolescents and the older adults, from 76 to 95 years old, have a low motivation level and neurotics have the lowest motivational level.

These motivation levels have been empirically evidenced and evaluated through the RAMDI closed questionnaire.

From all of the above, we emphasize that in the direction of the normal development of the human psyche and even in later stages of the third age, the subject is motivated at all

times and mainly, for the purposes and individual projects and the social duties assumed that govern their behavior. But ultimately, cumulatively or suddenly, the severity of its contradictions with the external social environment and its biological organism, determines that these individual ends and social duties are transformed into the quest for the relative harmony of the personality. In psychic illness, this level of functioning of human motivation is lost.

Final considerations

Only the most complete truth, based on facts, in the unity of theory and practice and guided in a dialectical and multilateral way, harmoniously assuming all positive created by the historical course of psychology, will be the most useful for our science and the human being.

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