# Review - MOTIVATIONAL SYNERGY: TOWARD NEW CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Amabile, Teresa M., Karl G. Hill, Beth A. Hennessey, Elizabeth M. Tighe, and Teresa M. Amabile. “The Work Preference Inventory: Assessing Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivational Orientations. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.” Journal of Applied Psychology, 1994, 10–1037.

## Abstract:

The foundation for a model of motivational synergy is presented. Building upon but going beyond previous conceptualizations, the model outlines the ways in which intrinsic motivation (which arises from the intrinsic value of the work for the individual) might interact with extrinsic motivation (which arises from the desire to obtain outcomes that are apart from the work itself 1.In a modification of the prevailing psychological view that extrinsic motivation undermines intrinsic motivation, this conceptualization proposes that certain types of extrinsic motivation can combine synergistically with intrinsic motivation, particularly when initial levels of intrinsic motivation are high. Such synergistic motivational combinations should lead to high levels of employee satisfaction and performance. Two mechanisms are proposed for these combinations: extrinsics in service of intrinsics, and the motivation-work cycle match. Personality and work-environment influences on motivation are discussed, and implications are outlined for management practice and management development.

## Takeaways:

The predominant psychological view maintains that extrinsic motivation works against intrinsic motivation. Some theories differ in their conceptualizations of whether and how the two types of motivation combine. Herzberg, like Maslow in his needs-hierarchy theory, appears to view intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as combining additively.

This paper argues that certain types of extrinsic motivation can combine synergistically with intrinsic motivation. The author’s Work Preference Inventory (WPI) measure and related research suggest that motivation orientation operates like a relatively stable personal trait, with individual differences and preferences. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are essentially uncorrelated. The intrinsic items clustered onto two scales, labeled Challenge and Enjoyment. The extrinsic items also clustered onto two scales, labeled Recognition and Compensation. i.e. some people could be motivated by both money and personal challenge in their work; evidence suggested that the creativity of the artist’s body of work could be positively correlated with both a challenge orientation (intrinsic) and a recognition orientation (extrinsic).

it does not seem that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation operate in a simple additive fashion or in simple opposition. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as both a temporary state and a stable personality trait can interact with work environment in both directions. The effects could vary dramatically depend on individual personalities.

Some types of extrinsic motivators serve to undermine intrinsic motivation and certain aspects of performance (such as creativity), but others that serve to support it.

When the initial level of intrinsic motivation is high, it is relatively impervious to the undermining effects of extrinsic motivators.

(**Synergistic** )**Extrinsic in Service of Intrinsic:**

Any extrinsic factors that support one’s sense of competence without undermining one’s sense of self-determination should positively contribute to intrinsic motivation. Monetary reward itself does not necessarily undermine intrinsic motivation and creativity. But reward that signifies or is accompanied by constraint can have serious detrimental effects.

**The Motivation-Work Cycle Match:**

Intrinsic motivation may be most important at the problem presentation and idea generation stages, and less important at the other stages. Intrinsic motivation may be essential for novelty in the work, but some degree of some types extrinsic motivation can help to ensure that the output will be timely, complete, and useful.

**Summary:**

* Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can combine positively, but not according to the simple scaffolding proposed by the need theories of Maslow (1943) and Herzberg (1966). It is not that intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are completely separate systems where one (the extrinsic) must be taken care of before the other (the intrinsic) can become operative. Rather, extrinsic motivation can, under some circumstances, complement intrinsic motivation.
* Extrinsic motivation is most likely to combine synergistically with intrinsic motivation when the initial level of intrinsic motivation is high.
* Only certain types of extrinsic motivators can combine synergistically with intrinsic motivation. These synergistic extrinsic motivators provide information about the individual’s competence and the value of the product without undermining feelings of self-determination, or directly allow increased autonomy or involvement in intrinsically interesting tasks. Note the contrast between this view and that of Hackman and Oldham (1980). They propose that extrinsic motivators combine positively with only one particular form of intrinsic motivation, which they call “internal motivation”-the rewarding feeling of having done well on a challenging task. By contrast, the present proposition holds that particular forms of extrinsic motivation combine positively with all forms of intrinsic motivation.
* Certain types of extrinsic motivators will not add positively to intrinsic motivation, and will often detract from it. These non-synergistic extrinsic motivators are those that lead individuals to feel controlled or constrained by external forces.
* Job satisfaction will depend on the extent to which the motivators available in the work environment (both intrinsic and extrinsic) match the individual’s basic motivational orientation toward work.
* Work performance depends (in addition to skill and contextual factors) on the individual’s level and type of motivation. A high level of technical quality (appropriateness) in the output requires a high degree of either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation (or both). A high level of novelty in the output requires a high degree of intrinsic motivation.
* Even a high initial degree of intrinsic motivation toward one’s work can, over time, be undermined by a work environment that is unsupportive of intrinsic involvement in the work and that places a heavy emphasis on extrinsic motivators.
* For individuals whose work involves complex, ongoing projects, a combination of intrinsic motivation and appropriately-timed synergistic extrinsic motivation may lead to the highest levels of creative, productive work.