Motivation Analysis on Gandhi

Motivation changes and transforms in a person from one stage to another through multi-faceted learning and experiences. These factors craft one’s personality and characteristics just to name a few: self-perception, self-concept, self worth, and self-efficacy. The constant interactions between intrinsic assessment and extrinsic learning construct one’s progression, maturity, and skillfulness to accomplish tasks easily. A man who liberated hundreds of millions of people from the world once largest Empire, is the subject of this analysis.

This man is known for his simple acts, courage, and passion to free India from the British as a colony, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He is also known as the Father of India, who led a nationwide campaign to the alleviation of the poor, the liberation of Indian women, unite the brotherhood amongst communities of differing religions and ethnicity, put an end to untouchability and caste discrimination, form economic self-sufficiency nation, and the independence of India from foreign domination. (DTO, n.d.) He was one of very few people in modern human history who dedicated his life for millions of people’s freedom despite persecution, torture, and even death.

His Drives and Needs

Gandhi’s desires to liberate India from the British could be explained by his psychological drive of needs (Maslow, 1987) for the nation: need of survival, need of security and safety, need of freedom, need of having the control development, need of being independent, need of an identity, need of equality, (Maslow, 1943) need of affiliation, need of power, and need of achievement (McClelland, 1961). Gandhi was very proud of his life accomplishments; he graduated from the University College London in law studies and trained as a barrister. He also took pride in being a good son who obediently followed his mother’s requests, which were
not to forsake Hinduism, its practices, and cultures. After many years upholding his vows, his need of an identity was challenged for first time when he arrived in South Africa. He bought a first class train ticket and was later thrown out because he refused to sit in third class due to his skin color. He felt that all men should be equal and able to associate one with another despite color, race, social status, and education. He saw the separation of skin color created imbalance, intolerance, distortions, and discontent among the South Africa communities. This was the first time he realized that his tertiary education did not served him any good standing among British citizens. His esteems drove him to act and react to the British rulers with strength and confidence for India’s independence and freedom. His drives were between life and death. (Freud, 1920) Furthermore, his reputation and status as an Indian was threaten. His self esteem was based on his self-perception, that he had the ability to change the British ruling and bring equality to all men and women. However, he was a man who was never satisfied with anything less than expected. He refused to accept disrespect from the British rule. In his minds-eye, London represented the British sovereignty, however, when he saw apartheid practices in South Africa, his self-actualization was unearthed. His desires to liberate India grew stronger and stronger. Gandhi, being a barrister could have lived a lush lifestyle, instead he chose to do otherwise. He was determined that he had the ability to overturn this great majestic ruler. According to Abraham Maslow, once a person’s basic needs are in place, he or she will develop a desire and sense of importance for the higher needs. Gandhi fulfilled his parents’ dreams to be a barrister and kept his promise that he would maintain the practice Hinduism, and it did not stop him from exploring the new, the unknown and the impossible. Instead, they stimulated his drives to achieve the highest of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, the self-transcendence characteristics (Conway, 2008) such as: holding high moral standard and self control, creatively and
spontaneously solving problems, emotionally unconflicted, and metamotivationally freed from any repressed. He indirectly and subconsciously conditioned himself in most aspects of his life and actions based on his education, care for his people, and his understanding of the needs of equality. His needed to liberate India was driven by fulfilling each level of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

**Striving His Life’s Goals**

Gandhi’s commitment to his goals in life can be explained by Locke and Latham’s task-goal theory, a definition regarding the relationships between performance goals and task performance level. A person would set a larger or higher goal depending on his ability to solve a task according the level of difficulty. The higher the ability in solving a task, the higher a person would set his goal. (Locke & Latham, 2002) Gandhi showed tremendously high performance in relation to the goals he set. He was able to cognitively self-control even during his weakest physical moments. While fulfilling his responsibilities and needs, Gandhi discovered his goals one by one over his life time. Precept upon precepts he accomplished his visions. His two daily goals were to strive for personal perfection, and continuous lifelong learning. Personal strivings are defined as one possessing constant and conscious thoughts and characteristics acting upon focal issues and events. Gandhi’s cultural belief was that one should take responsibility for one’s life despite opposition, difficulty, and challenges. His mother asked him to be a vegetarian and he kept his word for the rest of his life. Although he experimented by eating meat while in his youth, he completely practiced a vegan lifestyle after he left to study in London. Besides being vegan, he also abstained from sex after the age of 36. This marked his self-striving characteristic not only to the vow he took with his mother, but also to practice his beliefs as a Hindu. Hinduism played an important role in Gandhi’s life. It provided him with a moral view of long suffering in
striving to achieve and accomplish his visions and goals. His personal life-striving was to achieve the highest Hinduism nirvana. With this concept behind him, Gandhi made daily decisions to commit to his goals. According the Klinger’s current-concern theory (Emmons, p. 1058), Gandhi’s possession of non-conscious process state which initiated him to commit in pursuing set goals until the goal was either attained or redundant. (Harvey, Mansell, Shafran, & Watkins, p. 14) He also portrayed the four Goal Mechanisms mentioned by Locke and Latham (p. 706-707): 1) Goals function as directives. Gandhi always set his goals as his main focal points in life. He was always ascertained about his course of actions. He was rarely distracted by other matters, including his personal interest. 2) Goals function as an energizer. His had a high expectation of himself, and the people of India led him to do the impossible. At the age of 60, he campaigned for the Salt March, walking 241 miles in 26 days to make his own salt. During the march he was energized and determined to accomplish this task. In a documentary about his life, the director, Attenborough portrayed Gandhi as excited and having a good time meeting people along his way to the shore. 3) Goals function as drives for persistency. He is a man who never gave up his principles for non-violent protest and negotiation to gain Indian independence. Many of his counterparts encouraged him to use violence as retaliation towards the British’s aggressive suppressions, but Gandhi had an upmost determination to be non-violent. 4) Goals function to stimulate actions indirectly with creative strategies and task relevant knowledge. Gandhi never seized to lead the people to do the unthinkable. He was able to turn small, simple, and unimportant acts into ones of the great force that shook the British Empire. Just to name a few: Salt March, non-corporation method, swadeshi movement by boycotting British products, revive of domestic-made products, increase learning traditional production techniques, and even fasting to stop violence in India. His goal-striving behavior changed India as a whole. He performed
intrinsically in every step he took. For example the Salt March, there were neither monetary nor extrinsic rewards that he received. Instead, he was arrested for disturbing the peace in India. However, the support and oppositions he received increased his intrinsic motivation to confront the next task. His mastery goals were to do one larger matter at a time until the British would give up their largest ever colony in history.

Believing His Abilities

Self-believe and self-worth of Gandhi determined his self-efficacy to perform one of the toughest tasks in India. Not only did he want to free India from the British, Gandhi had to reunite 350 million multi lingual, cultural, religious, and social hierarchical Indian society. On top of these challenges, there was over 60% of the population that lived in poverty. (World Bank, 2009) Gandhi was faced with the most challenging task of his time. Yet, he never expected failure. For 55 years, he did not give up to free India from the British. This took his entire life time. He believed and was determined he had the ability and capability to designate himself the one to free India. His self-efficacy beliefs determined how he felt, thought, motivated, and behaved, producing diverse effects through his affection, motivation, and cognition. This self-efficacy generated a level of performance over years of his advocacy. One of the incidents was when Hindus and Muslims across the country were fighting each other and millions were killed. Gandhi decided to “fast to death” until everyone in India would stop fighting, or else he would die of starvation. After the 6th day of his fasting process, India finally stopped all fights for the sake of this one man’s life. Gandhi knew he had the capability to influence, and he went to the extreme to obtain peace. Another day of fasting for Gandhi would have been suicide. This self-efficacy was generated by integration of 3 major efficacy contributions: cognition, motivation and emotion. Gandhi’s intellect functioned as the key driver for this fasting event. It could have
physically and emotionally worn him out after the first couple of days of fasting. While in the process, in his conscious mind he knew his influence for the past few decades and the people were ready to listen to his one voice. His self-efficacy actions were initially organized by thoughts, but then motivated him to carry out this risky stance. He was able to visualize success by his high sense of efficacy, which provided him with positive supports to perform the task. If he would have self-doubted his ability to stop the nationwide fight, which was next to impossible to accomplish within the period of “fasting to death”, he would not have been able to fast for six days straight without giving up. Although the actual consequences were unknown, he was prepared to die of starvation. His thoughts enabled to predict and develop ways to control events around him. The second important element in self-efficacy was motivation generated by Gandhi’s thoughts. His actions and consequences were anticipated by his forethoughts that he could bring peace and harmony to India. He set peace or death as his goal. He knew if he would die by fasting, this would also change the attitude of the people of India; a designated value in the future. His strong perseverance also contributed to his high self-efficacy performance. There is no end to Gandhi’s continuous striving his efficacy until the day India was liberated from the British, and peace was spread throughout all India.

Valuing His Expectations

Gandhi’s upbringing taught him a simple principle, “reap what one sows”. He knew, in order to predict his behavior and attitude, it was important to assess the inputs which will determine the output. He believed that the level of difficulty of a task would determine his expectation in solving problems successfully. He knew there was nothing to stop him from pursuing his vision other than death. Therefore, he courageously led his followers to use non-violent method to face the British securities at a factory. His beliefs in non-violence against the
British changed the fate of India. He instilled a self-concept to the people of India that non-violence confrontation could overthrow the British rule to gain freedom for the Indians. By aligning his beliefs with the Hindus and Muslims, the Indians voluntarily supported him in campaigns. Many of the campaigns involved physical beating, torture, and even death. During each campaign, the news of these brave citizens was covered across the world. Little did the British know the simple acts of Gandhi was shaking the empire. Campaign after campaign, the British retreated themselves and allowed the Indians more and more freedom to govern themselves. With the values he instilled in each Indian to fight non-violently with the British, they saw results and effects of non-violence campaign. The Indians were united. Gandhi used a bipartisan values to unite Muslims and Hindus while insist for independence of India. In the study of Wigfield, human will be motivated when an action proves its value, because the particular action’s values will increased. These values will be able to predict one’s future act, performance and choices. (2000) This affected each non-violent protester. They were assigned positive -values from their non-violent demonstrations. They separated themselves to be ruled by the British. This encouraged many more Indians to follow Gandhi’s teaching and practice of non-violence campaigns. As the campaign grew larger throughout all India, the Indians created the sense of need of affiliation, power and achievement. These needs bonded both Hindus and Muslims. Unknowingly, Gandhi successfully used expectancy-value theory united the people of India.

Subject to Simplicity

Bramacharya is a Hindu religious education for teenagers. It teaches meditation practices, vegan dietary, conservative lifestyle, and proper behavior. Gandhi partially followed these strict practices in his youth and more fully later in his adulthood till he was assassinated at old age.
These strict practices developed Gandhi a strong sense of self-regulation. He attained, aligned and integrated his lifestyle, family, politics, and humanity together throughout his life with these highly self-regulation principles. This integration was influenced by a triadic process of himself, his behavior, and his environment. (Boekaerts, Pintrich, & Zeidner, 2000) He assimilated his thoughts, emotions, and actions in attaining nirvana. He embedded both his beliefs and intentions in process of self-perfection. Hindus believe when a person strictly follow the philosophy of Bramacharya, one will be closer attaining enlightenment in life cycle of incarnation. Gandhi found these practices hard to follow. For example, he did not get proper vegan diet when he first arrived in London, however he did not change to fit into the environment. Instead, he found other vegans to help him maintaining this practice. His searches and findings ways to maintain the vegan lifestyle required constant reexamination and refine-tuning his motivation level cognitively and emotionally. Reexaminations and refine-tunings allowed him to reflect the values of his practices which generated thoughts which fed his volunteered behavior despite hardship in order to continuously practice Bramacharya philosophy.

Recycling Behavior and Thoughts

Gandhi’s motivation was iteratively affected by his primary and secondary controls. His first primary control which triggered his struggle for independency of the Indians was facing his first discrimination experience in South Africa. This triggered his attempts to change his external environment from discriminatory society to his ideal social equality. Keckhausen and Schulz’s defines that secondary control targets at internal processes and serves to minimize losses in expanding primary control (Keckhausen & Schulz, 1995) and Rothbaum refers it as attempts for one to fit into the environment by changing oneself. (Keckhausen & Schulz, p. 285) Instead of these definitions on secondary control, Gandhi did exactly the opposite. He increased his internal
processes by maximizing losses to improve the primary control. This was unusual reaction for most people. As Gandhi did not conform to the authorities or the rules set, yet, he insisted in transforming the environment to his wishes. However, these unusual reactions prompted emotional protections in Gandhi and other around him. Again, more emotional bonding created in contributions the Indians’ sense of belonging and unity. Cyclically, this secondary control responds continuously nourished the primary control. Later, this unusually behavior iteration rippled throughout India that united everyone into a whole.

One Thought, One Mind, One Passion

Gandhi suffered persecution, starvation, helplessness and humiliation throughout the process in liberating the Indians. The sum of his successes was due to his self-determination. A common self-determined person’s goals are to achieve McClellan’s 3 needs. Ryan and Deci identified other 3 needs in the process to fulfill McClellan’s 3 needs: competency (for achievement), relatedness (for affiliation), and autonomy (for power). Gandhi may have experienced extrinsic factors which motivated and regulated his self-determinations in his early stages. However, in the later stages of his life, his self-determination was much intrinsic only. External factors did not matter to him. He overcame his fear of authorities, which was his most well known attributes. In one incident, he was judged guilty for disturbing the peace of a town during his visit. With the commotions created by in the town because of his injustice arrest, he pleaded not guilty and he also refused to pay those fines. Finally, the British judge released him without any punishment. He was determined to take up stances because he cognitively reflected and evaluated his self-beliefs, concept, worth, efficacy, values, expectations, and attributions. Weighing all his options, he was in good hands of the people. The Indians supported him for some 55 years in liberating India from the British.
Resources


