

Drive-Reduction Theory

CORE CONCEPT

Biological needs create psychological drives that motivate behavior to satisfy those needs and restore homeostasis (internal balance). Drive reduction is inherently rewarding and reinforces the behavior.

THE BASIC MECHANISM

Need → Drive → Behavior → Drive Reduction

1. Biological need arises (deficit or imbalance)
2. Drive creates psychological tension
3. Behavior motivated to satisfy need

HOMEOSTASIS: The Body's Balance

The body's tendency to maintain stable internal conditions (temperature, blood sugar, hydration, etc.). When conditions deviate from optimal set points, drives arise to motivate corrective behavior. The ultimate goal of any drive is to restore homeostatic balance. This creates a continuous regulatory cycle.

PRIMARY vs. SECONDARY DRIVES

Primary Drives

Innate, biological drives

Examples:

- Hunger (need for food/nutrients)
- Thirst (need for water/hydration)
- Sleep (need for rest/restoration)

Secondary Drives

Learned/acquired drives

Examples:

- Money (acquires food, shelter, etc.)
- Status/Approval (social acceptance)
- Achievement (resources, security)

STRENGTHS

- ✓ Explains basic biological motivation well
- ✓ Homeostasis concept remains valuable
- ✓ Integrates physiology and behavior
- ✓ Drive reduction as reinforcement
- ✓ Foundation for motivation research

LIMITATIONS

- x Cannot explain curiosity/exploration
- x Doesn't account for sensation-seeking
- x Ignores incentive motivation
- x Limited to deficit motivation
- x Overlooks cognitive/emotional factors