### Adaptive Motivation Theory Annual Report, March, 1983

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**Abstract:**
This annual report summarizes the development of Adaptive Motivation Theory over the past year. Specific accomplishments are outlined. Support for the theory is discussed in terms of the data gathered to date. Measurement issues that have been addressed over the past year are described. Activities planned for the next year are presented: specifically, technical reports which are forthcoming are listed. In addition, data analyses of cross sectional data will be completed, and longitudinal data collection will continue.
Adaptive Motivation Theory
Annual Report: March, 1983

Frank J. Landy & Wendy S. Becker
The Pennsylvania State University

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ANNUAL REPORT - 1983

Summary

Adaptive motivation theory has been developed along classic deductive lines. In earlier reports, the conceptual foundations of the theory were presented. These included theories of cognitive development (e.g., Piaget), theories of efficacy (e.g., White, Bandura) and theories of psychoepistemology as linked to motivation (e.g., Kelly). In the Annual Report for 1982, the theory, its major propositions and its corollaries were specified. In the past year, the major cross-sectional (or parametric) relationships have been examined. These relationships represent the necessary but not sufficient conditions for support of the theory. In the course of the current contract year (1982), the first wave of longitudinal data was also gathered. These data represent part of the sufficient conditions for support of the theory. In the Fiscal year 1983, analyses of cross sectional data will be completed and the second and third wave of longitudinal data gathered.

Specific Accomplishments

Theoretical

Adaptive Motivation Theory assumes unique interactions between individual difference variables and environmental exposure. As a result, one of the necessary conditions for theoretical support would be the demonstration that people do vary on motivational style measures. The best way to demonstrate this is to gather data on motivational style from diverse groups of people.

The data we have gathered to this point suggest that people do vary in terms of motivational style responses. For example, Tables 1 through 4 demonstrate the various measures that have been used thus far as dependent
measures. The four different measures are listed, along with the number of respondents, mean response for each style, and the standard deviation of each response style. Table 1 provides the means and standard deviations for the 5 paragraph measure. Table 2 provides the means and standard deviations of the 9 motivation factors in the 110 item questionnaire. Table 3 provides the means and standard deviations of the seven paragraph measure. Finally, Table 4 presents the 9 factors in the 42 item questionnaire. These four tables indicate the variability of responses to the dependent measures. The standard deviations indicate that respondents are using all points on each response style scale. That is, the measures that were constructed for adaptive motivational theory are exhibiting the required variability between respondents. In addition, Tables 1 through 4 indicate that there are individual differences with respect to motivational style.

In addition to the individual differences suggested by analyses above, it should be possible to demonstrate subgroup differences based on various demographic and experiential variables. These variables include such things as Gender, Age, Years on the job and other similar variables. Since subgroups of people are likely to have similar environmental interactions, there is good reason to look for mean differences among subgroups on motivational style measures. We have conducted such analyses and found subgroup differences which suggest this regularity of environmental interaction. Once again, these analyses add to the necessary conditions for support of the theory.

**Measurement Issues**

The issue of measurement has been of foremost importance during the past year. A major change has been the expansion of one of the original
measures of adaptive motivation. The original measure (See Appendix A) consists of five paragraph descriptions of motivational style. These five paragraphs are representative of different styles of motivated behavior which direct action. The labels used to represent these styles are: Stimulus-Response, Need, Equity, Rational and a Random, or Nondirective Style. As detailed in Technical Report #1, the original five paragraph measures lacked the desired sensitivity to the motivational construct. As an additional check on the representativeness of the paragraph descriptions, we asked 40 motivational experts (people who have done research in this area) to contribute suggestions about the paragraph measure. As a result, the paragraphs were expanded to seven descriptions, to reflect our feeling that there are more than five styles present in motivated behavior. The two additional concepts represented are a Trial and Error style and a Modeling style. Appendix B provides the expanded measure that resulted. Technical Report #2 more fully describes the development of this measure.

Another measurement issue has been addressed in the use of Likert-Type questions to examine adaptive motivation theory. A questionnaire was constructed using items that reflect the major tenets of adaptive motivation theory: Stimulus-Response Style, Need Style, Equity Style, Rational Style and a Random Style. Each style is represented by items which reflect the content of that style of motivation. The items that make up this questionnaire can be seen in Appendix C. Using a factor analysis technique, the items were reduced to 42. The 42 items are described by nine distinct factors. These factors are: Stimulus Response, Modeling, Need, Independent, Equity, Trial and Error, Eight, Nine and Random. Technical Report #3 more fully describes the development of the questionnaire measure.
Plans for Fiscal Year 1983

Data analysis will play a major role in 1983 activities. The following Technical Reports are currently being completed:

Tech Report 83-1 - Analysis of Likert-Type measure of motivational style.
Tech Report 83-3 - Relationship of intellectual ability, social awareness and self-esteem to motivational style.
Tech Report 83-4 - Social desirability of motivational style measures.

The following Technical Reports, which are not yet begun, will be completed in Fiscal Year 1983:

- The Reliability of Motivational Style: Temporal and Conceptual
- Changes in Motivational Style: Demographic Influences
- Changes in Motivational Style: Cognitive Influences
- Longitudinal Analysis of Motivational Style
- The Relationship of Motivational Style to Job Satisfaction and Organizational Climate
- Variations of the Measurement of Motivation: Ipsative Measures
- Implications of Motivational Style for Supervisor/Subordinate Relations
- Motivational Style Changes in Adolescence
- The Relationship of Motivational Style to Career Choices of High School Seniors: A Job, More Education or the Military?

With the exception of the data on high school seniors after graduation and the second wave of longitudinal data on an adult population, all data necessary for these analyses and reports are on hand.
Additional Data Collection

Data Collection will continue on several dimensions. Longitudinal data will be completed in the Upper Perkiomen High School with the teachers and administrators. Data collection will continue with the Upper Perkiomen Junior and Senior High School students. This particular longitudinal study is very important for the Adaptive Motivation Theory development, because we will continue to track students as they move out of the high school environment and into the work force. It will be essential to examine the same students over time, as they make important career and life decisions.

Additional groups will be added as needed. One interesting group that was included in the pilot studies last year was a 4-H conference. This group included high school students participating in various contests at Penn State, and also their parents and sponsors. Their participation was so favorable, that they have asked to participate again this year. Other conference groups have been contacting us also, to continue their participation in the data collection phase.

Presentations

Now that the data are in hand to support some of the necessary conditions for support of Adaptive Motivation Theory, those data will be presented to colleagues for consideration, refinement and reformulation. These presentations will take the form of papers at seminar series, regional and national professional meetings and scholarly papers in professional journals.

Progress to Date

In examining the original research plan, we find that we are exactly on time with respect to proposed work products and time schedules. In addition, the general interest in the project by subjects has encouraged
us to continue gathering additional data which might allow for the development of various normative parameters of motivational style. Finally, the size and quality of adolescent data which we have gathered suggests that substantial progress can be made toward an understanding of the early development of motivational patterns. Even though this had not been a stated objective in the initial proposal, we expect to pursue this line of research in the current year.
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*Low mean response indicates agreement with style.
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*High mean response indicates agreement with item.
APPENDIX A
Each of the next five (5) pages contains a paragraph that describes a type of person. For each page, read the paragraph, then decide whether the description is characteristic of YOU. Choose the response below the paragraph that best fits your way of doing things.
When I have to do something, I stop to think about what happened the last time I was in a similar situation. I remember good and bad things which came about because of past actions. I try to figure out exactly what it will take to get a reward or avoid a punishment in every situation.

(CIRCLE ONE)

LIKE ME
SLIGHTLY LIKE ME
NOT MUCH LIKE ME
NOT AT ALL LIKE ME
When I have to do something, I try not to worry too much about how to get it done. I make decisions on the spur of the moment. Sometimes I may act one way in a situation and the next time in another way. I don't really have a set way of choosing what to do. I just let things happen.

(CIRCLE ONE)

LIKE ME  SLIGHTLY LIKE ME  NOT MUCH LIKE ME  NOT AT ALL LIKE ME
When I have something to do, I try to think of all the possible situations which might arise and what will happen in each situation. I make my choice about what to do based on the odds of various situations occurring. I try to keep in mind both the value of the reward (or punishment) in each situation and the odds that I will actually receive the reward (or punishment).

(CIRCLE ONE)

LIKE Slightly NOT MUCH NOT AT ALL
ME LIKE ME LIKE ME LIKE ME
When I have to do something, I try to choose an action which will satisfy one of my needs, such as a need for friendship, or a need for success. In every situation, I try to consider my overall or general needs and desires so that I will be satisfied in the long run.

(CIRCLE ONE)

LIKE ME
SLIGHTLY LIKE ME
NOT MUCH LIKE ME
NOT AT ALL LIKE ME
When I have to do something, I think about others like me, in the same situation. I tend to compare myself to other people to determine what I should do. Based on how others have made out in a situation, I make my decision. I am concerned with being fairly treated compared to how others are treated and I do things on that basis.

(CIRCLE ONE)

| LIKE ME | SLIGHTLY LIKE ME | NOT MUCH LIKE ME | NOT AT ALL LIKE ME |
EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS DESCRIBES A TYPE OF PERSON. READ EACH PARAGRAPH. THEN DECIDE TO WHAT EXTENT THE DESCRIPTION FITS YOU. USE THE RESPONSE SCALE BELOW EACH PARAGRAPH TO TELL US HOW CLOSERLY YOU MATCH THE DESCRIPTION.

**REWARD**

When I am considering a course of action, I stop and think about what happened the last time I was in that type of situation. I try to remember the good and bad things which resulted from my actions in that situation and I choose a course of action accordingly.

(Circle One)

LIKE ME  
SLIGHTLY  
NOT MUCH  
NOT AT ALL

**NEED**

When I am considering a course of action, I try to choose a course which will satisfy one of my needs, such as a need for feelings of accomplishment, or a need for positive social relations. In this way, I concentrate on satisfying long term needs rather than current desires.

(Circle One)

LIKE ME  
SLIGHTLY  
NOT MUCH  
NOT AT ALL

**MODELING**

When I am considering a course of action, I observe the behavior of other people who might give me some clue as to what is the best course to choose. I use them as models in deciding how to behave. I feel that the behavior and expectations of others should play a role in choosing courses of action.

(Circle One)

LIKE ME  
SLIGHTLY  
NOT MUCH  
NOT AT ALL
TRIAL & ERROR

When I am considering a course of action, I am likely to decide on a course through trial and error. I will try out alternative courses of action first and then decide on what final strategy to adopt. I depend on my own experiences and plans to guide me.

(Circle One)

LIKE ME SLIGHTLY NOT MUCH NOT AT ALL
LIKE ME LIKE ME LIKE ME

EQUITY

When I am considering a course of action, I try to choose a strategy which will result in fair treatment for me. I choose strategies which keep my rewards in line with the rewards which others like me receive for particular courses of action.

(Circle One)

LIKE ME SLIGHTLY NOT MUCH NOT AT ALL
LIKE ME LIKE ME LIKE ME

RANDOM

When I am considering a course of action, I try not to worry too much about what to do. I make decisions on the spur of the moment. Sometimes I may act one way in a situation and the next time another way. I don't really choose courses of action, I just let things happen.

(Circle One)

LIKE ME SLIGHTLY NOT MUCH NOT AT ALL
LIKE ME LIKE ME LIKE ME

RATIONAL

When I am considering a course of action, I try to think of all of the possible situations which might arise and what will happen in each situation. I make my choice about what to do based on the odds of various situations occurring. I try to keep in mind both the value of the reward (or punishment) in each situation, and the odds that I will actually receive the reward (or punishment).

(Circle One)

LIKE ME SLIGHTLY NOT MUCH NOT AT ALL
LIKE ME LIKE ME LIKE ME
APPENDIX C
THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS DESCRIBE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR.

FOR EACH STATEMENT, DECIDE IF YOU ARE IN AGREEMENT OR NOT WITH THE SENTENCE. PLACE THE NUMBER THAT REPRESENTS YOUR REACTION TO THE STATEMENT TO THE LEFT OF THE STATEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU STRONGLY AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT, PLACE A "5" NEXT TO IT. RATE EACH STATEMENT ACCORDING TO THE NUMBERS PROVIDED AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE.

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1. I like to act on the spur of the moment.
2. I like to use good judgment when making a decision about something that I have to do.
3. In deciding on a course of action, I keep in mind past rewards and punishments.
4. I like to see how other people get things done.
5. You can never know what's going to happen, so it's useless to try to predict the outcome.
6. People who try to figure out the schemes for getting rewards and avoiding punishments are wasting their time.
7. I let things happen rather than try to plan them.
8. Life is rewarding when you take the time to satisfy your basic needs.
9. There are lots of ways to get what you want, as long as you take the time to concentrate on the important things.
10. I'm usually happiest when I just let things happen.
11. Things never happen the way you plan them, so it's easier to just act for the moment.
12. When I don't have something I want, nothing can stop me from working toward getting it.
13. The best way to plan your life is to figure out the odds of getting what you want.
14. I compare myself to others often.
15. It's useful to try to plan your life in terms of the possibilities of obtaining your goals.
16. Most of my actions take place because I am working toward a need that I have.
17. When something good happens to me, I'm likely to try to make it happen that way again.
18. Nothing in my life happens the same way twice.
19. It's not fair when somebody gets rewarded more than me for the same amount of work.
20. I like to do things my way rather than the way everyone else is doing something.
21. Once I decide that something is important to me, I stick to it until I'm able to get it.

22. I just can't understand why some people spend so much time on one particular long term goal.

23. I consciously try to control my actions whenever I'm with others.

24. It's easiest to learn a new role by watching other people.

25. People say I'm unpredictable; I'd rather say I live from day to day.

26. In most cases, I proceed on a "trial and error" basis.

27. Every action that I take has a consequence.

28. I like to balance out what people get in terms of what they've done to get it and determine whether it's worth it for me.

29. If someone gets something that I want I figure the best way to get it is to do the same thing.

30. There is something exciting about acting on the spur of the moment.

31. I usually remember past experiences in my life and act accordingly.

32. Life is too short to waste time on long range goals.

33. When I really need something in my life, I concentrate all of my energy on obtaining it.

34. When I finally get something that I've needed for a long time, I feel satisfied that all of my effort toward obtaining that goal has been worth it.

35. I think people learn best by trial and error.

36. I guess I do most things because they are habits.

37. It's essential for me to have a plan for the things that I do.

38. I am more concerned with satisfying general needs than obtaining specific rewards.

39. I never get things done when I try to plan ahead.

40. Most people worry too much about how they'll get something done; I just let things happen.

41. I learn from other people's failures as well as their successes.

42. Something that happened to me recently has more of an effect on me than something that happened long ago.
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___ 43. I would rather watch others try to have an effect in a given situation and see how successful they are rather than act myself.

___ 44. People would describe me as unpredictable.

___ 45. It's foolish to try to imitate other people.

___ 46. I automatically follow other people's lead whenever I'm in an unfamiliar situation.

___ 47. Planning ahead is a waste of time.

___ 48. I like to imitate other people.

___ 49. Nothing that I do has an effect on my later actions.

___ 50. Every time I make a decision without planning ahead I usually mess things up.

___ 51. Most of my energy for meeting my goals seems to come from my basic needs.

___ 52. Whenever I'm in a strange situation I like to watch what others are doing so I know what is expected of me.

___ 53. I'd rather be spontaneous about things than try to plan everything ahead of time.

___ 54. Life is more orderly when you have a plan in mind for what you're going to do.

___ 55. I don't think of my life as being directed toward satisfying my basic needs.

___ 56. Everything that I do has a consequence.

___ 57. I am basically motivated by short-term effects.

___ 58. I just can't understand why some people worry so much about every decision.

___ 59. After something bad happens to me, I usually don't try that again.

___ 60. Overall, I concentrate on my general needs rather than simply act on the spur of the moment.

___ 61. If I receive a punishment when I expected a reward, I tend to go back over the situation in my mind and figure out where I miscalculated.

___ 62. I learn more about a given situation when I analyze it and take action rather than simply watch others take action.

___ 63. Life is too complicated to plan particular actions or behaviors.
64. People who have a "master plan" for meeting their basic psychological needs miss a lot of fun.

65. Life is like a stage and you learn best by acting as others do.

66. Why bother to spend time figuring out how to do something when you can ask someone to show you how to do it?

67. It's foolish to spend a lot of time directed at one's own personal needs.

68. Life consists of a series of judgments, all with various outcomes and possibilities.

69. Lots of times my particular need at the moment seems to direct my energy.

70. When I consider a particular action, I don't just think about the short range effect of that action - I also think about what will happen in the longer range.

71. Long term needs don't play much of a role in my choice of action.

72. Everybody does things differently, therefore, it's best to do things your own way.

73. When I make a mistake, I try to figure out how I miscalculated.

74. Every situation has various alternatives, people should try to determine the best one for them to take.

75. I spend more time than most people working toward my own general needs.

76. I like to figure out things by myself.

77. Most of what I do depends on my past experiences.

78. I seem to have a lot of habits that I can't shake.

79. In the long run, people shouldn't waste their time and effort on their basic needs.

80. It's impossible to anticipate what's going to happen.

81. I always weigh the possibilities of things happening when I have to make a decision.

82. My behavior is governed by basic, long term needs.

83. While there are lots of things which can make me happy, these things tend to fall into a small number of categories such as friends, success, or accomplishment.
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<td>I find myself concentrating on satisfying some basic needs when I expend energy.</td>
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<td>It's better to direct your energy to what's happening at the moment, rather than waste it on satisfying a long term need.</td>
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<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>I try to carefully plan my actions by looking at the &quot;odds&quot; of success before starting something.</td>
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<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>In choosing a course of action, I consider both the amount of any rewards which I may receive and the chances of getting those rewards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Other people seem to know the best way to get things done, so I like to learn from the actions of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>It's useless to plan your life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>The best way to get through life is to figure out what it takes to get a particular reward or avoid a particular punishment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Life should not be random events, rather, people should strive to determine the best course of action in each situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>I get confused when I try to figure out all the possible outcomes in a given situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>I usually try to figure out exactly what I have to do to get a particular reward or avoid a particular unpleasant situation by trying to remember what happened the last time I was in a similar situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>The best way to learn something is by watching someone else do it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>People who try to plan everything don't realize that most things happen by fate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>I tend to worry about myself and don't get too concerned with the success or failure of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>I find myself doing things that are &quot;expected&quot; of me rather than things I would like to do.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
102. I always like to know what others are doing around me.

103. It doesn't make much sense to try to learn from past errors since things never happen the same way twice.

104. There's nothing that one can do about the future.

105. I concentrate on remembering what good and bad things happen in given situations.

106. In most situations, I could be characterized as a "trial and error" type person.

107. The success or failure of others around me has an influence on how I will act in a given situation.

108. I would be annoyed if someone got more of a reward than me for the same amount of work.

109. I watch others closely to see how they behave in particular situations.

110. If I can't satisfy a basic need one way, I find another way to do it.