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The interplay between motivation and cognition: New ideas

This special issue[1] is devoted to finding common and novel threads in the areas of human motivation and cognition. The existing literature contains various approaches to the complex relationships between motivational and cognitive processes. Extensive reviews of the literature on goals highlight important cognitive aspects, such as the structural and allocational properties of goals (Kruglanski, Shah, Fishbach, Friedman, Chun, & Sleeth-Keppler, 2002), the cognitive dynamics of goal setting and goal striving (Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007; Gollwitzer & Oettingen, 2012), the role of consciousness in goal pursuit (Bargh, Gollwitzer, & Oettingen, 2010; Custers & Aarts, 2010), and the motivational effects of different cognitive representations of goals (Locke & Latham, 2002; Oettingen, 2012). The articles included in this special issue describe various aspects of the links between motivational and cognitive processes and demonstrate the breadth and theoretical richness of this domain. In this brief introduction, we would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of these publications to the study of human motivation.

One of the basic questions in a study of motivation is how people set the goals they pursue. Various theoretical approaches have recognized the desirability and feasibility of certain outcomes as determinants of the specific content of people's goals (Bandura, 1977; Graham & Weiner, 1996; Locke & Latham, 2002). Other theories have described the dynamics of intention formation and realization (Achtziger & Gollwitzer, 2010). Kruglanski, Chernikova, and Schori-Eyal address the issue of goal setting and propose a new theoretical construct, motivational readiness, to describe a

state preceding goal formation. An important contribution of this article is a novel and very interesting approach to the relationship between want and expectancy. Moreover, the authors describe specific conditions that translate motivational readiness into actual goal striving.

Research on the role of automaticity in motivation has improved our understanding of the cognitive origins of goal setting and goal adoption (Dijksterhuis, Chartrand, & Aarts, 2007; Kruglanski & Köpetz, 2009). It has been shown that goals can be activated not only by consciously held intentions (Ajzen, 1991) but also by unconscious primes (Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, & Troetchel, 2001) or important others (Shah, 2003), to name a few possible sources. In the second paper, Kossowska, Bukowski, and Czarnek show that the same epistemic goal may be activated via different routes with the same cognitive consequences. Specifically, these authors examine the impact of manipulations of the need for cognitive closure via time pressure and explicit closure goal activation on executive control. They demonstrate that induced high (vs. low) need for closure boosts performance in executive control tasks. However, they find no difference in the effect of both manipulations on task performance.

The next article in this issue addresses an important feature of goal striving: equifinality, understood as the choice among multiple means to optimize the achievement of a goal (Kruglanski et al., 2002). In a series of studies, Maliszewski, Kuźmińska, Wieczorkowska-Wierzbińska, and Werner-Maliszewska demonstrate that the same goal, power motivation, can be satisfied by different behavioral

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choices in business major and non-business major students. They find that although there are no differences between these groups in the general level of power motivation, differences exist in the way this motivation is expressed. Specifically, business majors are more likely to express their need for power through leadership, whereas non-business majors express their power motivation through helping.

The way that goals affect cognitive representations and evaluations of goal-relevant stimuli is another important and widely studied topic (i.e., Ferguson & Bargh, 2004). The study by Jochemczyk, Pietrzak, Serbin, and Kuśka focuses on the relationship between active goals and social perception. Specifically, they are interested in whether the need for closure influences subjective evaluations of the negotiation process. They find that negotiators with a low need for closure perceive negotiations as fairer and as having more win-win solutions in comparison with individuals with a high need for closure. Their findings suggest that chronically accessible epistemic goals are associated with a perception of a situation that is consistent with those goals. Interestingly, the need for closure is not related to the objective outcomes of negotiations or to the style of negotiations.

The next paper concentrates on the motivation to restore cognitive balance and its emotional consequences. Pietraszkiewicz and Wojciszke examine whether emotions induced by another person's outcomes may help to achieve this epistemic goal. They assume that emotional reactions toward others' outcomes should depend on the perceiver's attitudes such that the outcomes of a well-liked person provoke congruous responses (sorrow after failure and joy after success), whereas the outcomes of a disliked person provoke incongruous responses (schadenfreude after failure and resentment after success). Consistent with these expectations, they find that balancing principles play a major role in shaping emotional responses to the successes and failures of people who are well liked or disliked.

An important and widely studied aspect of goal pursuit is effective self-regulation (Fishbach, Zhang, & Koo, 2009). Successful goal striving means that people are able to initiate desired actions, persist when confronted with difficulties or distractions, and disengage from inefficient goal striving (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). People differ with regard to the ability to control their goals, and an important factor in this is self-awareness. The problem of individual differences in effective self-regulation is addressed by Brycz, Wyszomirska-Góra, Bar-Tal, and Wiśniewski. These authors investigate whether individual differences in the metacognitive self influence the likelihood of cognitive biases. They find that individuals with a low metacognitive self show a higher tendency toward confirmation bias within the competence domain than the community domain, which is indicative of low control over cognitive biases. However, individuals with a high metacognitive self express the same level of confirmation bias regardless of the domain of the information.

This special issue presents a wide variety of papers in the area of motivation demonstrating the breadth and interconnection of this research. We would like to thank all of the authors for their valuable contributions to this special issue. Special thanks go to the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and important suggestions.

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