

Studies on Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic motivation

1. Deci Puzzle Study (1971)

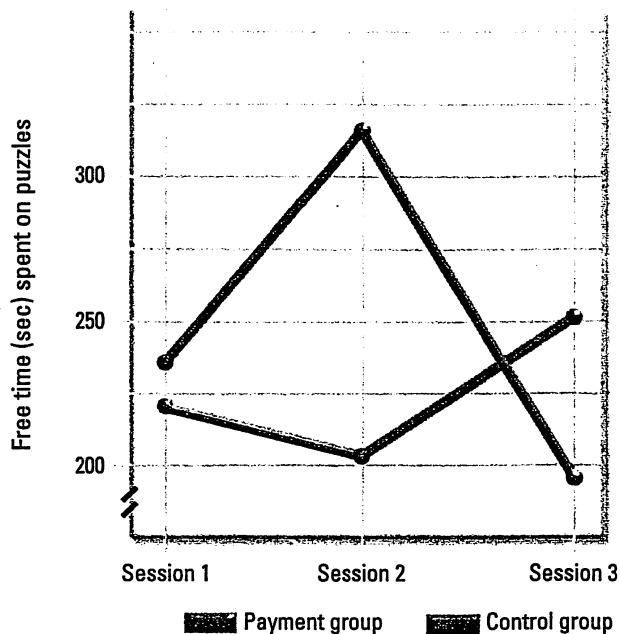


FIGURE 11.12 Effects of payment on intrinsic motivation

In this study, participants worked three times on fun puzzles. Half were paid for completing puzzles during session 2, half were not. As measured by the amount of free time spent on the puzzles after each session, those who had been paid later had less interest in the puzzles when the money was no longer available (Deci, 1971).

2. Amabile Creativity Study (1996): people who are offered payment for drawing pictures, writing poems, making paper collages, and coming up with solutions to business problems also tend to produce less creative work.

3. West Point Study - AMY WRZESNIEWSKI and BARRY SCHWARTZ

From the New York Times – July 4, 2014

NOTE: internal = intrinsic and instrumental = extrinsic

We analyzed data drawn from 11,320 cadets in nine entering classes at the United States Military Academy at West Point, all of whom rated how much each of a set of motives influenced their decision to attend the academy. The motives included things like a desire to get a good job later in life (an instrumental motive) and a desire to be trained as a leader in the United States Army (an internal motive).

How did the cadets fare, years later? And how did their progress relate to their original motives for attending West Point?

We found, unsurprisingly, that the stronger their internal reasons were to attend West Point, the more likely cadets were to graduate and become commissioned officers. Also unsurprisingly, cadets with internal motives did better in the military (as evidenced by early promotion recommendations) than did those without internal motives and were also more likely to stay in the military after their five years of mandatory service — *unless* (and this is the surprising part) *they also had strong instrumental motives*.

Remarkably, cadets with strong internal and strong instrumental motives for attending West Point performed worse on every measure than did those with strong internal motives but weak instrumental ones. They were less likely to graduate, less outstanding as military officers and less committed to staying in the military.

The implications of this finding are significant. Whenever a person performs a task well, there are typically both internal and instrumental consequences. A conscientious student learns (internal) and gets good grades (instrumental). A skilled doctor cures patients (internal) and makes a good living (instrumental). But just because activities can have both internal and instrumental *consequences* does not mean that the people who thrive in these activities have both internal and instrumental *motives*.