

McClelland's Theory of Needs

David McClelland and his associates proposed McClelland's theory of Needs / Achievement Motivation Theory. This theory states that human behaviour is affected by three needs - Need for Power, Achievement and Affiliation. Need for **achievement** is the urge to excel, to accomplish in relation to a set of standards, to struggle to achieve success. Need for **power** is the desire to influence other individual's behaviour as per your wish. In other words, it is the desire to have control over others and to be influential. Need for **affiliation** is a need for open and sociable interpersonal relationships. In other words, it is a desire for relationship based on co-operation and mutual understanding.

The individuals with high achievement needs are highly motivated by competing and challenging work. They look for promotional opportunities in job. They have a strong urge for feedback on their achievement. Such individuals try to get satisfaction in performing things better. High achievement is directly related to high performance. Individuals who are better and above average performers are highly motivated. They assume responsibility for solving the problems at work. McClelland called such individuals as gamblers as they set challenging targets for themselves and they take deliberate risk to achieve those set targets. Such individuals look for innovative ways of performing job. They perceive achievement of goals as a reward, and value it more than a financial reward.

The individuals who are motivated by power have a strong urge to be influential and controlling. They want that their views and ideas should dominate and thus, they want to lead. Such individuals are motivated by the need for reputation and self-esteem. Individuals with greater power and authority will perform better than those possessing less power. Generally, managers with high need for power turn out to be more efficient and successful managers. They are more determined and loyal to the organization they work for. Need for power should not always be taken negatively. It can be viewed as the need to have a positive effect on the organization and to support the organization in achieving its goals.

The individuals who are motivated by affiliation have an urge for a friendly and supportive environment. Such individuals are effective performers in a team. These people want to be liked by others. The manager's ability to make decisions is hampered if they have a high affiliation need as they prefer to be accepted and liked by others, and this weakens their objectivity. Individuals having high affiliation needs prefer working in an environment providing greater personal interaction. Such people have a need to be on the good books of all. They generally cannot be good leaders.