Autotelic Personality: Role in Organizations

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Abstract: *Success of many organizations is directly linked with the kind of employees it has. Autotelic personality therefore, plays an important role in the workplace. There has always been a need of the employees who are intrinsically motivated which facilitates organizational climate and goals. Here comes the role of personality, which are called autotelic personalities. Autotelism refers to an activity that is a goal in itself. Cash prizes are not a motivator. The autotelic writer writes to write, just like the autotelic teacher teaches to teach. Autotelism is the belief that satisfying work is a justification in and of itself. The autotelic personality traits include curiosity, persistence, low self-centeredness, and a desire of performing activities for intrinsic reasons only. While recruiting individuals, it's usually a crucial point which is being ignored, i.e., to hire autotelic personalities. Csikszentmihalyi (1988) suggested that the higher the autotelic nature of an individual, the more likely for him/her to achieve success in his field, and it leads to increase in productivity when talking about organizations. Several underlying dimensions of autotelic personality have been identified, including personal innovativeness, self-efficacy and control. Research too, emphasizes that recruitment of autotelic personalities leads to increase in productivity. People with an autotelic personality tend to have a greater preference for challenging opportunities and learning skills, which stimulate them and encourage growth. It is in such high-challenge and through creative learning skills that people are most likely to enter the "flow state". Autotelic personality is known to have a positive effect on quality of life. No one is fully autotelic. There is a gradation, ranging from individuals who almost never feel that what they do is worth doing for its own sake, to others who feel that most of anything they do is fun and valuable in its own right. It is to these latter individuals the term autotelic personality applies. The present paper reflects on the importance of autotelic personalities in organizations. It highlights the dimensions of autotelic personalities in organizations, and how it benefits the organization.*
Keywords: *Autotelic, Personality, Flow.*
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I.   Introduction
"Choose A Job You Love, And You Will Never Have To Work A Day In Your Life." ~ Confucius.

Human being is a unique creature who has his own interests and his own skills to perform certain tasks in his own ways. When an individual gets the job of his interest, he always just enjoys it, and he has no pressures of any authority because he performs and gives his best in his job with his own will, and be is determined and positive enough to take up the challenges and execute them well. Human potential approaches to work emphasize the contributions of self-actualization, challenge, and growth opportunities to job satisfaction and motivation (Alderfer, 1969; Herzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1965).

Hackman and Oldham (1976) specified task characteristics of jobs that might enhance motivation, including the opportunities to use a variety of skills and produce a complete piece of work, knowledge that one's activities have an impact on the lives of others, choice in determining how to carry out one's work, and performance feedback. Numerous studies have found positive relationship of task characteristics with beneficial outcomes such as job satisfaction, good health, and performance (e.g., Campion & McClelland, 1991; Fried & Ferris, 1987; Gerhart, 1987; Loher, Noe, Moeller, & Fitzgerald, 1985; Schaubroeck, Jones, & Xie, 2001; Steel & Rentsch, 1997; Tiegs, Tetrick, & Fried, 1992). In a longitudinal design, Griffin (1991) found significant increases in bank tellers' performance 24 and 48 months following a job redesign intervention aimed at improving employees' perceptions of Hackman and Oldham's (1976) task characteristics.

When work becomes its own reward

Pay, status and prestige are big, juicy motivators. As illustrated in the picture, there are people who are motivated by something entirely different - they are motivated by the nature of their work, itself. People see pay, status and prestige as future goals, fairly uninteresting to them, because they would rather derive satisfaction from their work right now, in the moment, doing what they do best. Whether it be gardening, writing, teaching or even serving coffee at a local diner, certain activities are immensely rewarding for certain people.

When an individual is ready to take high challenges and have high skills, they are free from distractions, and most primarily, they know what to do and when to do makes them ready to go into that flow condition, before that these individuals are characterized with these qualities become autotelic personalities. Although flow research has so far been primarily concerned with flow as a motivational state, Csikszentmihalyi and colleagues have suggested the idea of an autotelic personality. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), Autotelic is a word composed of two Greek roots: auto (self), and telos (goal). Autotelism refers to an activity that is a goal in itself. Cash prizes are not a motivator. The writer with autotelic personality writes to write, just like the teacher with autotelic characteristics teaches to teach. Autotelism is the belief that satisfying work is a justification in and of itself. An autotelic activity is one we do for its own sake because to experience it is the main goal. Applied to personality, autotelic leads to do things in its own rather to do it to achieve some goal. "The mark of the autotelic personality is the ability to manage a rewarding balance between the ′play′ of challenge finding and the ′work′ of skill building" (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1993, p. 80).

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) coined the term "flow". Flow can be defined as a state of intrinsic motivation that leads a person to be fully immersed and dedicated to what he or she is doing for the sake of activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 2000, 1990). The state of flow is characterized by a merging of action and awareness, sense of control, high concentration, loss of self-consciousness, and transformation of time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975/2000, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987; Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). The autotelic personality got introduced when Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and his fellow researchers began researching flow when they noticed nature of artists while working on their art. Csikszentmihalyi got fascinated by some passionate artists who would essentially get so dedicated towards their work. He noticed that artists, especially painters, used to be into their art that they usually forgot the need for food, water and even sleep. So, eventually Csikszentmihalyi tried to understand this phenomenon experienced by these artists, to which he later on conceptualized as Flow. The theory of flow was greatly used in the theories of Maslow and Rogers in their development of the humanistic tradition of psychology.

Bruce Lee either spoke of a psychological state similar to flow or spoke about the importance of adaptability and shedding pre-conceptions in his book the **Tao of Jeet Kune Do**, In his book, he compares the state of flow to water where he so famously says, "Be like water ...Empty your mind, be formless. Shapeless, like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend." For the most part in human's life, they decide on what they will focus. However, when one is in the flow state, he is completely engrossed with the one task at hand and, without any conscious decision, one gets into his task, loses awareness of all other things: time, people, distractions, and even basic bodily needs. This occurs because all of the attention of the person in the flow state is on the task at hand; there is no more attention to be allocated

Mihály Csíkszentmihályi's model of flow as related to challenge and ability.
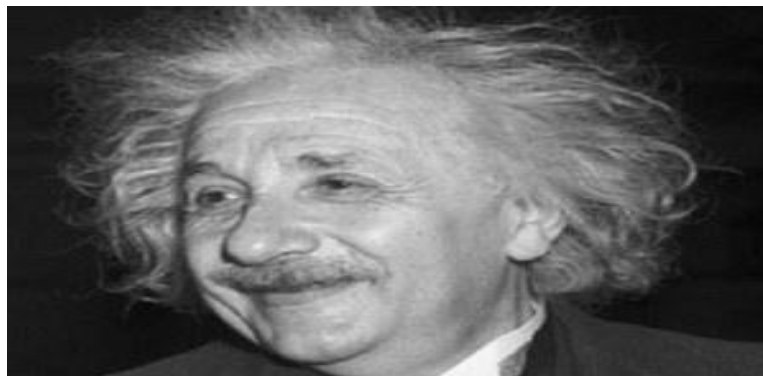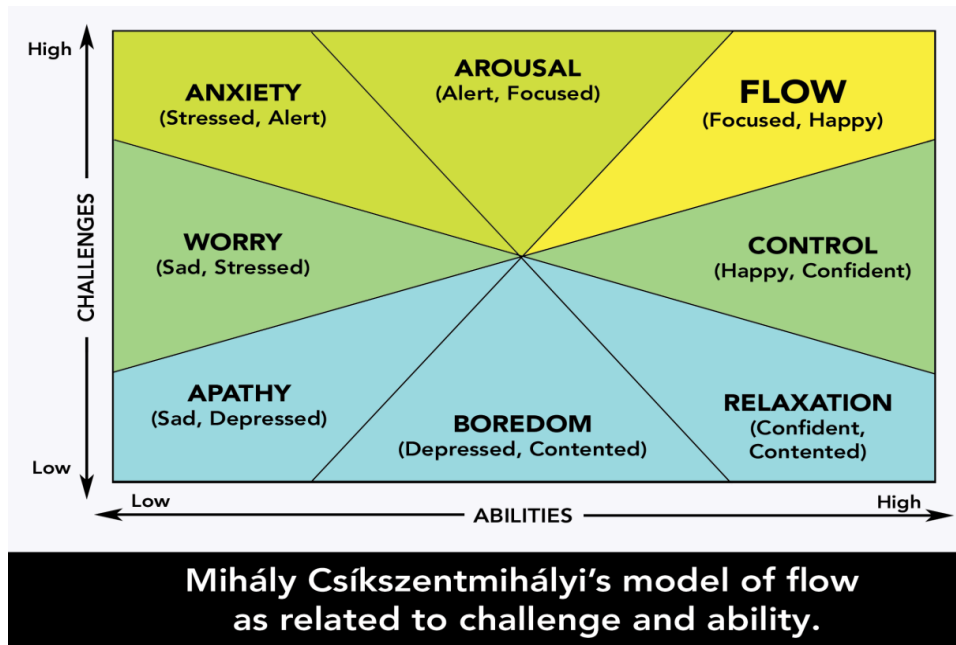
"A happy man is too satisfied with the present to dwell too much on the future."
Albert Einstein

Autotelic personalities position themselves in situations which enable frequent experiences of flow states (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). The autotelic personality, has high perceived skills and challenges. Autotelic personalities are not distraction bounded. They are in charge of initiating, sustaining, and enjoying such optimal experiences. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996) describes autotelic personalities as those who are internally driven, and may exhibit a sense of purpose and curiosity. This determination is an exclusive difference from being externally driven, where things such as comfort, money, power, or fame are the motivating force. An autotelic person already gets rewarded by what he does, and he needs few material possessions and little entertainment, comfort, power, or fame. These persons experience flow in work, in family life, when interacting with people, when eating, even when alone with nothing to do, they are less dependent on the external rewards. They are more autonomous and independent because they cannot be as easily manipulated with threats or rewards from the outside. At the same time, they are more involved with everything around them because they are fully immersed in the current of life. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996)

Why to recruit autotelics?

When recruiting individuals for any organization it is important to recognize those individuals, who are autotelic in nature. Autotelic individuals increases productivity, and are beneficial to the organizations. Autotelics are those individuals who are highly skilled; they have the capability to take up the tasks that are challenging. They are the ones for whom other's wishes or other's expectations don't matter, but what matters to him is his interest, his will and determination for the task and his satisfaction. Autotelics are Self-Motivated. They are always ready to work beyond the call of duty in order to meet goals or to solve problems; even if the job in discussion is not one of the regular works he/she is usually assigned. Autotelics tend to be Action-

oriented. When hiring autotelics it's obvious that they are the ones who take action and take chances. While chances may lead to failure, they will more often lead to success and mold confidence while generating new ideas. Stagnant employees won't create difference to the company. Generally, there are two types of workers—those who wait to be told what to do, and those who think things through and keep busy by constantly finding tasks that need performing. In an age when most workers—both teens and adults—do as little as possible, and then only when told an autotelic automatically sets himself apart from the crowd.

"Give a busy man more work, as it is likely to be done efficiently."

Those who show initiative—who hunt for ways to solve problems, to improve things, and to be more efficient—are most likely to be the ones who share the traits of an autotelic.

Characteristics of autotelic personality:

Autotelic personalities are intrinsically motivated; they are the ones who don't expect external motivation and rewards, etc. They are not people-oriented but task-oriented. They are all time purposive and curious, aware of their surroundings, and always open to experience new things and situations, and ready to take challenges.

Flow:

A person becomes autotelic by achieving flow experiences regularly in their work. 'Flow tends to occur when a person faces a clear set of goals that require appropriate responses. Flow occurs more often at work than in a leisurely setting. It tends to have clear rules and performance measures. Flow occurs when an individual makes the task simple by his own efforts, they tend to make the task enjoyable especially when it is challenging and when the individual has high intrinsic motivation. Schaffer (2013) proposed 7 flow conditions:

1. Knowing what to do, 2. Knowing how to do it, 3. Knowing how well you are doing, 4. Knowing where to go (if navigation is involved), 5. High perceived challenges, 6.High perceived skills, and 7.Freedom from distractions.

Creativity:

Autotelic individuals experience flow regularly, and are more creative and innovative. "Without flow, there is no creativity", says Csikszentmihalyi, and in today's innovation-centric world, creativity is a requirement, not a frill. Autotelics tend to be creative in their tasks. For autotelics to be creative three components play an important role: expertise, challenge and autonomy (Amabile, 1998). Intrinsic motivation plays an essential role for autotelics to be creative. In a research, several successful Japanese companies saw creativity and knowledge creation as being important to the success of organizations. Employees who find different ways to be creative, whether it is by demonstrating originality their work, trying out new ideas and approaches to solving problems, identifying opportunities for new processes, or generating novel, but feasible work-related ideas, they are much more likely to stay engaged creatively regardless of the challenges they face.

Frustration-tolerance:

As autotelics don't work under any pressure, this results into their flexibility and keen interest in their tasks. Due to the keen interest, state of flow occurs which results in low frustration and high tolerance, frustration comes up in the form of challenging tasks for an autotelic, and they tend to tolerate in a way that they don't take their task as any pressure and complete it as an another challenge to them and as a novel opportunity to work.

Achievement motivation:

The achievement motive is a strong trait of autotelics. A consistent finding in motivation research is that achievement motive predicts whether people perceive a challenge-skill balance (i.e., medium task difficulty) as positive or negative. According to Atkinsons's (1957) risk-taking model, individuals who are high in hope for success prefer medium task difficulty (balance) whereas individuals high in fear of failure even try to avoid such balanced situations. Studies by Eisenberger et al. (2005), Engeser and Rheinberg (2008) as well as Schüler (2007) support the findings that achievement motive is a strong predictor of autotelic personalities. The researches imply that individuals who are high in hope for success and low in fear of failure do not only experience more flow, but they experience more flow when they perceive a challenge-skill balance, that is medium task difficulty. Autotelics focus on achievement rather than just performing some task. Findings support that there is high correlation between need for achievement and autotelic experiences.

Intrinsic motivation:

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan) concerns itself with two aspects of human motivation 1) **Regulation of human behavior:** intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, 2) **Content of human behavior:** intrinsic/extrinsic goal content. Intrinsic motivation and goals are conceptually related and correlated, but each has independent influence on psychological well-being**.** Intrinsic motivation refers to behavior that is driven by internal rewards. In other words, the motivation to engage in a behavior arises from within the individual because it is intrinsically rewarding. Experts also suggest that people are more creative when they are intrinsically motivated. In work settings, productivity can be increased by using extrinsic rewards such as bonuses, but the actual quality of the work performed is influenced by intrinsic factors. You are more likely to come up with novel ideas and creative solutions, if you are doing something that you find rewarding, interesting, and challenging.

The factors that they identify as increasing intrinsic motivation are: **Challenge**, **Curiosity, Control, Cooperation, Competition, and Recognition**. People with autotelic traits are open to challenges, they are curious enough to get a new opportunity to learn novel things, they are cooperative and competitive and they are recognized by their skills, their attitudes towards their work, but autotelics are never concerned about their accomplishments and their recognition in front of others.

Task orientation:

Task orientation is their characteristic that differentiates them from non-autotelics. Task-oriented people have several characteristics that help make sure that things get done in a manner that is both proficient and on time every time. Task oriented people in nature create clear, easy-to-follow work schedules with specific requirements and deadlines. Autotelics have task oriented style of management; they maintain high standards with optimal efficiency. Autotelics are concerned with tasks that they take as a challenge, and go with the flow, putting their best efforts in it. "An autotelic person needs few material possessions and little entertainment, comfort, power or fame, because so much of what he or she does is already rewarding," says Csikszentmihalyi (1990).

Autonomy:

There are certain contexts which increase perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness increase intrinsic motivation and well-being such as, choice among interesting alternatives, which in turn, acknowledging people's feelings, positive feedback. Similarly, contexts which decrease perceived autonomy and competence undermine intrinsic motivation and well-being. Autotelics are less dependent on the external rewards that keep others motivated to go on with a life composed of dull and meaningless routines. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990) autotelics are autonomous and independent because they cannot be as easily manipulated with threats or rewards. At the same time, they are more involved with everything around them because they are fully immersed in the current of life. **Autonomy** can be defined as people's need to perceive

- that they have choices
- that what they are doing is of their own volition, and
- that they are the source of their own actions.

The way autotelics frame information and situations either promote the likelihood that a person will perceive autonomy or undermine it. Autotelics frame goals to assure a person's success rather than as dictates or ways to hold people accountable which increase the likelihood of autonomy. They generally don't feel any pressure to perform. Sustained peak performance is a result of people acting because they choose to — not because they feel they have to.

Competence:

Competence is people's need to feel effective at meeting everyday challenges and opportunities, demonstrating skill over time, and feeling a sense of growth and flourishing. Leaders can rekindle people's desire to grow and learn. Autotelics make resources available for learning. They set their learning goals not just the traditional results-oriented and outcome goals. Autotelics always are in a direction to have specific goal. They tend to be oriented towards their goals that are challenging and are of their interest.

Goal orientation:

GOAL ORIENTATION

MASTERY ORIENTED GOALS

PERFORMANCE-ORIENTED GOALS

LEARNING ORIENTED GOALS
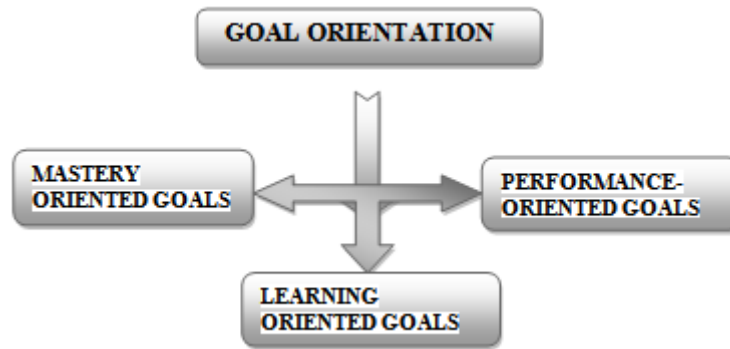
The orientation of our goal-setting mentality can completely change the way we approach life. Three of the main goal-orientations discussed in psychology are learning, performance, mastery. **Performance oriented goals** seek to demonstrate ability to others. People who set performance goals are often focused on winning, looking good (looking smart), and being evaluated well (getting good grades). **Mastery oriented goals**, on the other hand, seek to improve and learn and to have mastery over the tasks. People who set mastery goals usually seek out challenges and persist in the face of difficulties. **Learning oriented goals,** basic purpose is to learn the novel task. People tend to do certain tasks for the sake of learning. Autotelics tend to adopt these three kind of orientations, not for getting any reward but to perform because they want to, gain mastery because they get into the activity and become keen interested in performing the tasks with mastery, and they also tend to involve in tasks that they want to learn and get knowledge about them.

Difference between autotelics and non-autotelics:

According to Csikszentmihalyi, challenge finding and skill building are supported by different, sometimes even opposing traits or processes which are simultaneously present in autotelic personalities: pure curiosity and the need to achieve; enjoyment and persistence; openness to novelty and narrow concentration; integration and differentiation; independence and cooperation (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1993; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). For example, the pleasure and fun associated with flow may be highly desirable. Nevertheless, flow activities also require concentration and a willingness to learn about the limits of one's skills. Where non-autotelic individuals may see only difficulty, the deep sense of interest aids autotelic individuals to recognize opportunities to build their skills. They open their attention to new information (the play of challenge finding) and focus it on those units of information just far enough ahead of current skills to be manageable (the work of skill building). The non autotelic personalities are people oriented. They always need external rewards, extrinsic motivation to get into something. They are dependent on others to get motivated. Autotelic personalities are willing to go through a phase of activation energy—perhaps half an hour—that leads into the experience of flow. Some can use this ability to lead a fulfilling life, despite low social status or financial rewards. The common element is that whatever activity produces a flow state becomes its own reward. It elicits a sense of timelessness and security. It catalyses growth beyond the boundaries of ego-self.

The study was done by Asakawa K. (2010) on autotelic and non autotelic Japanese college students on quality of experience. The autotelic and non-autotelic groups of students were compared on their overall experience, as well as experiences in various types of activities they engaged in during the week period. These activities included productive activities, TV viewing, socializing activities, and maintenance activities. The quality of subjective experience was examined with seven experiential dimensions – concentration, enjoyment, happiness, activation, satisfaction, perceived control of the situation, and perceived importance for the future. The autotelic students rated most of the experiential dimensions significantly higher than the non-autotelic students for overall quality of experience, except for happiness. That is, on average the autotelic students were more concentrated, felt more enjoyment, were more active, felt more satisfaction, felt more control, and felt more importance for the future, than the non-autotelic students during the week period. These differences between the two groups were in a sense expected because the autotelic students were, by definition, those who spent more time than the non-autotelic students in the flow condition where people usually enjoy high quality of experience. However, when we closely looked at differences between the two groups in their experience while doing specific activities, some characteristics of the autotelic individuals became more apparent. When engaged in all of the activities listed in the table, the autotelic group's levels of concentration and perceived control of the situation were significantly higher than those of the non-autotelic groups. However, what is worth-mentioning here is that the autotelic students were more concentrated, felt more in control of the situation, and felt more importance for the future than the non-autotelic students even when watching TV or doing maintenance activities, which are typically considered unimportant and unworthy of significant attention. Thus, it appears that the autotelic students were those who tended to use their psychic energy more fully on activities at hand, and

who were more actively and constructively engaged with their everyday lives, as compared to their non-autotelic counterparts.

Recognizing autotelics:

Csikszentmihlay and his colleagues developed a flow questionnaire that assesses frequency (0-1, ranging from not at all to few times a day) of three flow characteristics (Asakawa, 2010; Csikszentmihlay et al. 1993). Csikzentmihalyi (1997) assessed the frequency of high demand, high skill situations for longer period of time with Experience Sampling Method. ESM is a technique that is used for obtaining self reports of thoughts and feelings at random intervals during continuing activities. Individuals whose frequency of high-demand, high-skill experiences in the upper quartile of distribution (autotelic) are compared to those in the lower quartile (non-autotelic) in other outcomes of experience and behavior. It is not that autotelics are some happier personalities than other individuals, but they get so much involved in the complex activities that make them feel better, satisfied about themselves and increases their self esteem. This measure of recognizing autotelic personality is problematic because high-demand, high-skill situations do not necessarily elicit flow. More recently, Jackson and colleagues (Jackson, Martin, & Eklund, 2008) developed a dispositional flow scale, this flow scale assesses the frequency with which individuals experience the full range of flow characteristics (loss of self-consciousness, transformation of time, sense of control, concentration on a task, etc.) within specified activities in general. The scale is not only validated in physical activity settings but also in other performance-related domains as well (Jackson & Eklund, 2004; Wang, Liu, & Khoo, 2009).

Another approach to assess and recognize autotelics is that they also determined through their expected outcome of full talent development. Csikszentmihalyi et al. (1993), derived autotelic personality patterns from traits that distinguish talented from average individuals: Autotelic personalities have traits conducive to concentration as well as openness to experience. The traits were assessed with the Personality Research Form. However, little is known about the role of such personality factors with respect to flow experience. More importantly, the measure is confounded with the outcome which it was originally designed to explain (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1993). Another measure of Autotelic personality is a NEOPI by Mccrea and Costa that gives the view to recognize the autotelic personalities. As autotelic personalities are always open to experience novel things and novel situation.

To measure nAchFlow Operant Motive Test is widely used. It is one of the refined versions (OMT; Kuhl & Scheffer, 1999; Kuhl, Scheffer, & Eichstaedt, 2003) of projective techniques like Thematic Apperception Test (TAT; Murray, 1943; cf. Schultheiss & Brunstein, 2010) and other picture story exercises. Participants are asked to write stories in response to ambiguous pictures which are coded for need- and implementation-related information. The OMT differentiates four hope components (approach behaviors) for each motive on the basis of crossing two affective sources of motivation (positive vs. negative) with self-determined versus incentive-focused forms of motivation .

Participants are asked to write stories in response to ambiguous pictures which are coded for need- and implementation-related information. The OMT differentiates four hope components (approach behaviors) for each motive on the basis of crossing two affective sources of motivation (positive vs. negative) with self-determined versus incentive-focused forms of motivation . For the achievement motive, the two components driven by positive affect/approach motivation can be described as self-determined (1) flow (nAchFlow) and incentive-focused, (2) standards of excellence. The two components driven by negative affect/avoidance motivation are self-determined (3) coping with failure and incentive-focused, (4) pressure to achieve
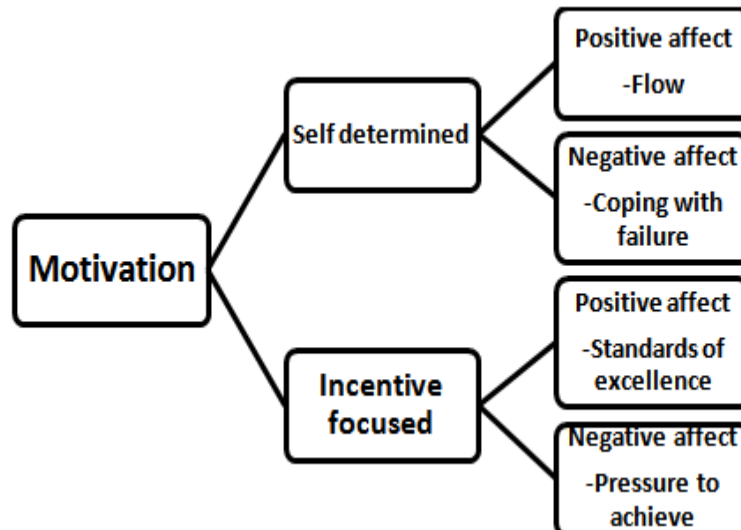
Self determination of autotelics:

Psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (1985, 1992) developed a theory of motivation which suggests that people tend to be driven by a need to grow and gain fulfillment. The first assumption of self-determination theory is that people are activity directed toward growth. While people are often motivated to act by external rewards, that is called extrinsic motivation, self-determination theory focuses primarily on internal sources of motivation. According to Deci (2002), giving people extrinsic rewards for already intrinsically motivated behavior can undermine autonomy. As the behavior becomes increasingly controlled by the external rewards, people begin to feel less in control of their own behavior and intrinsic motivation is diminished. Deci (1995) also suggests that offering unexpected positive encouragement and feedback on a person's performance on a task can increase intrinsic motivation. Because such feedback helps people to feel more competent, one of the key needs for personal growth. They have internal attribution style that is they internally attribute their success and failure, when it is actually there i.e. when they succeed they give credit to themselves and when they encounter failure, due to some their mistakes or lack of perfection, they attribute that also internally. Autotelics are high on realistic goal setting. They set their goals that are realistic in nature. They are high on commitment and challenge taking also.

Conclusions

Thus, discussed above about the autotelic personalities are always into challenging tasks, they have high motivation level, which is intrinsic in nature; don't need external rewards as they are independent. So, when recruiting individuals for any organization it is important to recognize those individuals, who are autotelic in nature as it increases productivity, and are beneficial to the organizations.

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