

Overjustification Effect

for Psychology Entrance Exam



Let's have a quick look at the type of questions that might appear in your exams from this topic!

Ques. 1

When a person's intrinsic interest in an activity decreases after receiving external rewards, the phenomenon is called:

Incentive
contrast

a

Overjustification
effect

b

Learned
helplessness

c

Self-
efficacy

d

Ques. 2

The Overjustification Effect is best explained by which theoretical perspective?

Drive reduction
theory

a

Cognitive
evaluation theory

c

Expectancy
theory

b

Need hierarchy
theory

d

**Read carefully, challenge yourself to guess first;
If you can't, the last slide has the answer.**

What is the Overjustification Effect?

The Overjustification Effect refers to a reduction in intrinsic motivation when an activity that was initially enjoyable is later associated with external rewards.

In simple terms:

*“I liked doing it on my own,
but now I’m doing it only for
the reward.”*

For instance:

A child who **loves** to draw,
if paid for it, will
lose interest in drawing.



Why does this happen?

To understand this effect clearly,
remember three elements:



Intrinsic motivation
doing an activity for
enjoyment or interest



Extrinsic rewards
money, grades,
praise, prizes



Shift in perceived cause
from internal to external control

When rewards become the main reason for action,
intrinsic interest declines.



Classic Research Evidence

The concept was strongly supported by **Deci (1971)** and later by **Lepper, Greene & Nisbett (1973)**.

Famous study:

Children who enjoyed drawing were divided into groups:

- Expected reward
- Unexpected reward
- No reward

Children who **expected rewards** later showed **less interest in drawing**.

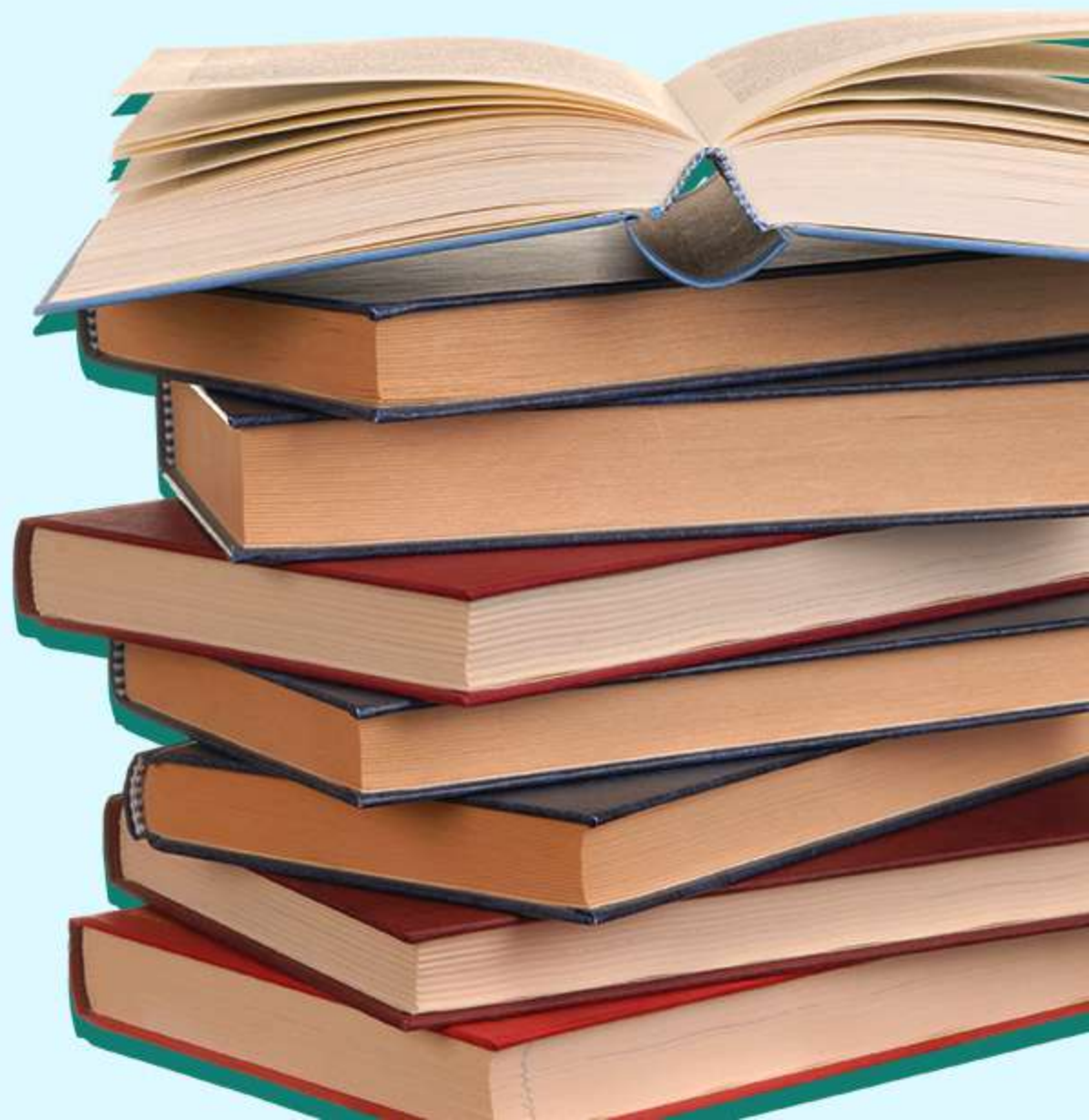
Theoretical Explanation

The Overjustification Effect is best explained by **Cognitive Evaluation Theory**, a sub-theory of **Self-Determination Theory** (Deci & Ryan).

According to this theory:

- Rewards reduce autonomy
- Behavior feels controlled rather than self-chosen
- Motivation shifts from internal to external

Loss of autonomy = loss of intrinsic motivation.



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Q.1 B. Overjustification Effect

Q.2 C. Cognitive Evaluation Theory