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MOTIVATIONAL PROFILE OF ASTRONAUTS AT THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

**Abstract**

Motives drive, orient, and select behaviour (McClelland, 1987). Research has demonstrated that needs for achievement, power, and affiliation can predict behaviours such as occupational success and satisfaction, innovation, aggressiveness, susceptibility to illness, cooperation, conformity, and many others. The present study aims to empirically understand and document the motivational profile of astronauts at three stages of their expedition. We employed thematic content analysis for references to Winter's well-established motive markers in narratives (media interviews, journals, and oral histories) of 46 astronauts from the ISS expeditions. Significant pre-flight differences were found in relation to home agency and job status. NASA astronauts, compared with those from the Russian Space Agency, are motivated by higher need for power, as are commanders in comparison to flight engineers. All three motives showed significant changes from pre-flight to in-flight stages. The need for achievement and the need for affiliation both increased while the need for power decreased. Implications will be discussed between the motivation profile of astronauts and the established behavioural correlates with such profiles.