

Leadership and Organisational Psychology

Preliminary Master Thesis Report

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Summary

This preliminary thesis report reviews the most important literature on motivation, divided into three areas; content-, context- and process- theories. Some empirical and theoretical gaps are outlined and discussed which is the foundation of the further investigation we want to perform. The preliminary thesis report also include research question and hypothesis, a section about methodology and lastly a tentative plan for our further work is presented. It will be applied a quantitative research using a questionnaire with a five likert response scale. The research aims to investigate individuals intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in twelve different extreme work contexts: robbers, prostitution, bouncers, cleaning-staff, doctors, street-magazine sellers, artists, volunteers, doctors, soldiers of fortune, CEO's, stockbrokers and lastly celebrities/bloggers. The main purpose is to investigate if the five likert scale is able to capture the actual differences of the various work contexts.

1. Introduction

Motivation is a topic that has been thoroughly investigated over the years (Kanfer & Chen, 2015), and during the last years, technology, uncertainty and globalization has rapidly been changing making it difficult to anticipate the future (Yukl, 2013). Because of several new challenges, hiring the best people available is critical for obtaining a competitive advantage (Mondy & Mondy, 2014). It has therefore become increasingly important for leaders to know how to motivate the employees when goals are unclear (Yukl, 2013). Work motivation affects both *what* you do (the development of individuals skills, the jobs and careers that individuals pursue, and the manner in which individuals allocate their resources) and *how* the individual's do it (direction, intensity and persistence of activities) during work (Kanfer, Frese & Johnson, 2017).

The importance of motivation is reflected in both the number and nature of motivation-related publications over the last century (Kanfer et al., 2017) and some of the literature has focused on process-oriented theories which view motivation as consisting of two systems; one of goal selection and one of goal enactment. Further, theory has focused on goal choice and goal striving, although interestingly little research is conducted on how individuals realize their goal (Kanfer, et al., 2017). Moreover, some researchers therefore argue that theory and research on motivation has mainly focused on consciously mediated processes (e.g., goal choice, self-regulation) even though deliberative and consciously mediated motivational processing is rare in daily life (Kanfer & Chen, 2015). Future research therefore requires taking into consideration the individual's experiences related to work (Kanfer & Chen, 2015).

In addition to this gap in motivation literature, according to Hein, the literature still lack a nuanced theoretical insight into what motivates employees (Hein, 2013). One way of providing a more nuanced insight might be to look at the broader contextual factors of significance for employee motivation. This because, earlier research has mainly been attentive to more narrow contextual factors (Kanfer & Chen, 2015; Kanfer et al., 2017).

To find out how employees are motivated, organizations usually conduct job-satisfaction questionnaires. These questionnaires are used to find out how the organization can improve employees job satisfaction, affect turnover intention and whether the employees are intrinsic or extrinsic motivated. When using questionnaires it is common to apply a five-likert response scale in survey research (Cummins & Gullone, 2000). However, in line with the research on implicit motives, the premise is that individuals lack introspective insight into their needs. We therefore question whether there might be a general inherent complexity, which may not be accounted for in the five-likert scale. Research shows that a likert scale works well, but might have shortcomings in situations that consists of underlying processes (Drasgow, Chernyshenko & Stark, 2010). Thus, if we provide psychometric questionnaires to different occupations in extreme contexts, how well will these questionnaires work?

2. A thorough review of relevant literature

In this assignment we have decided to focus on work motivation and operationalize motivation as “ a psychological construct that is used to explain behaviours that are energized and directed towards a goal” (Hyland, 2011, p.1828). The research on motivation has through time developed into three different areas; content theories, context- and process theories. These three motivational areas will now be presented, followed by a more thorough presentation of the theory we have chosen to focus on.

2.1 Content theories

Content motivation is concerned with a “what” question regarding motivation, more specifically the motives, psychological traits and motivation orientation (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2013).

Motives can be argued to emphasize with psychological and social needs (Kanfer et al., 2017). There are several researchers who have developed theories over the years, Maslow´s theory; hierarchy of needs, is one of the most known theories (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2013). He stated that all individuals are motivated by nine different personal needs, which are arranged in a hierarchical pyramid. Furthermore, he believed that a “need is not an effective motivator until those

lower in the hierarchy are more or less satisfied” (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2013, p.294).

Later motivation theories have focused on dividing motivation into two types; intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Cerasoli, Nicklin & Ford, 2014). Herzberg claimed that intrinsic motivation results in job satisfaction while extrinsic motivation results in dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, over the years this topic have further been investigated and it has shown to be more nuanced (Kanfer et al., 2017).

One of the main aspects of motivational theory, has focused on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is individuals desire to perform an activity for its own sake while extrinsic motivation is typically the desire to perform an activity with the intention to attain an incentive and to avoid losses (Kuvaas, Buch, Weibel, Dysvik & Nerstad, 2017). One of the main context theories, is the self-determination theory, which consists of three factors; autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Deci and Ryan argue that if work environment supports the three factors, favorable outcomes such as creativity, fulfillment, commitment and maintenance may occur (Kanfer et al., 2017). However, in more recent research there is a lack of knowledge on whether intrinsic and extrinsic has a positive effects or if these two types of motivation have differential effects (Kuvaas et al., 2017).

2.1.2 Motivation orientation

Content theories have also focused on motivation orientation. One of these theories is the regulatory focus theory by Higgins (1997) which state that individual goals can be achieved through maximizing gains to ensure accomplishment. One way to achieve this is to focus on promotion (Kanfer et al., 2017). Higgins argues that focusing on maximizing gains may result in strong positive feelings which will result in increased motivation (Kanfer et al., 2017).

Furthermore, goal pursuit is also a topic that is concerned with motivation orientation. It is divided into two parts: learning goal orientation and performance goal orientation. Learning goal orientation is when individuals desire to develop

personal competence, while performance goal orientation is when individuals perform because of favorable appraisals from others. It is argued that learning goal orientation increases performance while performance goal orientation has generally lower effects (Kanfer et al., 2017).

2.1.3 Trait-based motives

Over the years researchers have slowly shifted their focus from biological to psychological and social needs. McClelland's human motivation theory underlies the already discussed theory by Maslow (Kanfer et al., 2017). The theory consists of three different needs; achievement, affiliation and motives. McClelland argues that when an individual has a strong need for something, they will try to fulfill that need. He also believe that our needs are learned through the environment we exists in (Kanfer et al., 2017).

2.2 Context theories

The second area of motivation theories is the context based theories, which involve the features of the job, work role and the broader environment (Kanfer et al., 2017). The broad contextual variables are for example an individual's occupation and such variables affect the nature of the work and the work environment. However, the narrow contextual variables are for example supervisor support or co-worker relations (Kanfer et al., 2017).

The majority of the work in context theories is largely driven by the aspiration to increase efficiency and productivity in the industrial labour market (Kanfer et al., 2017). Some of the theories have focused on the use of extrinsic motivation (e.g. pay) to increase performance. However, later researchers have focused less on this narrow approach and other theories have emphasized other job-features that may enhance motivation and performance. One such theory is the Herzberg's two factor model consisting of hygiene (e.g., money) and motivators (e.g., responsibility) (Kanfer et al., 2017).

Another theory that have impacted the contextual theory area of research is Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model, which entail five job-features (e.g., skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) and

how these features impact how individuals perceive e.g., meaningfulness of work or experienced responsibility (Kanfer et al., 2017). These psychological states are suggested to create a positive work motivation (Kanfer et al., 2017), where task meaningfulness is found to be the most important mediator on work motivation (Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007).

However, many of the theories have only concentrated on a limited number of contextual factors, later theories have seen the importance in including group influences or organizational-level factors (e.g., climate). Such findings have shown to be valuable, because of the recent changes in organizing of the work and globalization. Despite the theories focusing on variables such as cohesion and trust, there is acknowledged a lack of literature focusing on sociocultural differences and the impact occupational characteristics have on psychological states that may affect work motivation (Kanfer et al., 2017). The context-based theories therefore complement content-based approaches by showing that work motivation is not only about what desires, wants and needs that produce action (e.g., autonomy and mastery). Motivation is also affected by performing meaningful work, experiencing responsibility and supportive supervision (Kanfer et al., 2017).

2.3 Process theories

The third research area in motivation theory is called process theories, which concentrate on the “how” question of motivation. Process theories therefore encompass the cognitive and affective mechanisms and processes (Kanfer et al., 2017) and entail the decision-making role and how individuals choose goals and how the goals are pursued (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2013). The process theories have therefore contained two interdependent subsystems: goal selection and goal enactment. The goal selection theories have focused on how beliefs and cognitions like expectancies and instrumentalities generate motivation (Kanfer et al., 2017). However critics of such rational decision making processes therefore developed new theories highlighting planning and cognitive-affective processes involved in goal striving. Such theories were of self-regulation (Bandura, 1986), action control (Kuhl, 1984), and goal implementation (Gollwitzer, 1990).

Theories of goal choice also encompass expectancy theories like Vroom's Valence-Instrumentality-Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). This type of theory entail the selecting of a goal or desired outcome resulting in maximum pleasure and such theories have mainly been supported. However, it has also been criticized which have resulted in new theories highlighting the association between goal choice and goal striving. As an extension of the expectancy theory, the theory of planned behaviour suggests that the goal pursuit is determined by perceived control, attitudes and subjective norms (Kanfer et al., 2017). Theories of goal striving focus on the relation between goals and performance and several theories have been proposed trying to bridge the gap. Theories proposed were social-cognitive theory and self-regulation theory (Kanfer, et al., 2017).

Besides the theories developed by Gollwitzer (1990), Kanfer and Ackerman (1989) and Vancouver (2008), Locke and Lathams theory of goal setting have concentrated on the relation of goal choice and goal striving (1990). The theory explains the link between goal attributes and actions and results from different studies indicating when performance is highest (Locke & Latham, 1990).

Some theories have also focused on the integration of goal setting theory and social-cognitive theory, which have included the impact of self-efficacy on goal choice. One such theory is the action regulation theory which entail an integration of goal choice and goal striving. The theory proposes that plans are an important mediator in the goal setting-performance relation. Further, resource allocation theories build on self-regulation and human information processing, which integrates the cognitive abilities and motivational processes involved in goal selection and attentional resource allocation through skill attainment. These theories have only focused on achievement of a single goal, and therefore recent literature have focused also on that individuals need to focus on multiple goals at the time (Kanfer et al., 2017).

2.4 Selected theories

The field of work motivation have declined in the recent years and the daily work has changed (Steers, Mowday & Shapiro, 2004). Traditional motivation theories have been developed in the industrial society and since the current labour market

is consisting of more knowledge-intensive organizations, this might be a problem since traditional motivation theories are widely used also today (Hein, 2013). It may therefore be interesting to see whether a five point likert scale will be able to capture the differences in extreme contexts today. The selected theory for our master thesis will be presented later.

3. Development of research question and our hypotheses

The very known and popular five likert scale have been proven to be reliable and valid over the years, nevertheless, this method has also be questioned (Drasgow, Chernyshenko & Stark, 2010). We question whether this response scale is able to capture the differences the various contexts consists of. Accordingly our research question will be;

To what extent will a five likert-scale capture the actual differences in the contexts?

Our hypothesis and research model will be presented later when we have decided upon the theory for the thesis.

4. Methods

4.1 Quantitative cross sectional research

In order to answer the research question, our research strategy will have an quantitative approach. This methodology involves the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and writing the results of a study (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Since our research question is dependent on various contexts, we need to collect data from a broad set of participants. We will provide more information about this later in the methods. The quantitative strategy will have a deductive approach, since the research is based on what is known about the motivational domain and the theoretical considerations (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The research design that will be applied is cross sectional design. This is because the research will consist of several cases, will collect data more or less simultaneously and have an emphasis on the sample of the cases (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

4.2. Sample and data collection

All informants is provided with a cover letter explaining that the participation is voluntary with the opportunity to withdraw at any given time. They will also be given general information about the study, such as the aim of the study.

Nevertheless, the participants will not be given any leads to what the study is measuring, this is to prevent biased responses. Furthermore, in order to collect data, we will apply for authorization from Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

Our sample will be chosen due to their profession and the characteristics of their work context. Participants will be recruited through various ways, depending on their work context.

Since the respondents are located in different geographical locations, they will be contacted through different methods. As the differing contexts will require making contact with the potential participants in various ways, the sampling design that will be used is non-probability sampling and convenience sampling. When possible, we will use non probability sampling, and send an email to potential participants, which will provided with the questionnaire electronically. However, we expect some of our participants will not be able to be contacted in this manner. In these situations we will use convenience sampling, accordingly reach them face-to-face at their workplace (Bryman & Bell, 2013). We will therefore provide them with a hard copy when we meet them. Below we have listed the various work contexts for this thesis.

Profession
Robbers
Prostitutes
Bouncers
Cleaning staff
Street magazine sellers (= OSLO)
Artists
Volunteers
Doctors
Soldiers of fortune
CEO's in the private sector
Stock brokers
Celebrities/ bloggers

Tabel 1 - Contexts

4.2.1 Questionnaire

One of the most acknowledged methods of collecting data is surveys. This is done through input of responses to a research instrument, hence questionnaires (Bryman & Bell, 2015). We have chosen to use questionnaires as a mean to collect quantitative data, because this fits the purpose of the study.

The survey will be provided by BI Norwegian Business School, and will consist of the following variables; turnover intention, job satisfaction and intrinsic- and extrinsic motivation. Since the psychometric measurement is provided from BI, it can be considered to be reliable and valid. The survey will be provided to the participants in Norwegian and we therefore need to make sure that the translation afterwards will have the same meaning. However, we will provide the questionnaire in English if it is necessary for some participants.

4.3 Measures

As mentioned above the questionnaire will be provided from BI Norwegian Business School, and in this way the questionnaire will already have been piloted (Bryman & Bell, 2015). All measures will be assessed using a 5-point likert response scale. A five point likert scale is a multiple-item measures, which usually range from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Accordingly, a high score for item 5 indicates a high job satisfaction (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In order to ensure reliable and valuable measures the questionnaire will contain various items that covers all included variables that will be measured on a five point likert scale.

A five point likert scale is a well known and popular response scale, because it has been proven to be reliable in several different settings (Cummins & Gullone, 2000). Nevertheless, research has shown that individuals have various ways of interpreting the numerical value on the scale. Due to this participants may answer differently, which can again result in “incorrect” findings (Cummins & Gullone, 2000). Further, research have shown that individuals usually tend to answer only with the middle points on the likert scale and we assume this may be an disadvantage in addition to other response biases that may occur (Cooper, 2015). Furthermore, some findings have shown that authoritarian attitudes tend to answer on more on each end of the continuum (Cooper, 2015). These findings can impact how some of our participants may use the scale differently when answering the questionnaire. Another concern would be the reliance on the self-reported questionnaire data, when it comes to possible mono-method bias and percept-percept inflation measures (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008).

4.4 Contexts

The participants in this research will have different types of occupations, hence work in different contexts. This is chosen because we want to examine and compare individual’s motivation in different contexts with different values such as levels of power, salary and workload. We have chosen six different occupations that we believe will be placed on each side of the scale for each value presented in the figure below.

Profession	Work-life balance	Pay	Power	Safety/danger	Prestige	Task significance	Task variety	Relatedness
Robbers	High	High	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Neutral
Prostitute	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	High
Bouncer	Low	Low	Low	Neutral	Low	Low	Low	Low
Clearing-staff	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Neutral
Street magazine sellers	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
Artists	Low	Low	Low	Low	Neutral	Neutral	High	Low
Volunteers	Neutral	Low	Low	Low	Neutral	High	Neutral	High
Doctor	High	High	High	Neutral	High	High	High	Neutral
Soldiers of fortune	Low	High	Neutral	High	High	High	High	High
CEO in the private sector	Low	High	High	Low	High	High	High	Neutral
Stockbroker	Low	High	High	Low	High	High	High	High
Celebrities/bloggers	Low	Low	High	Neutral	High	Low	High	Low

Table 2 - Overview of contexts and values.

4.4.1 Work-life balance (workload)

Work-life balance can be considered to be the degree individuals are able to balance their work and their private life (Rigby & O'Brien -Smith, 2010).

4.4.2 Pay

We define pay as a fixed regular payment an employee receives as a compensation for the employment. According to SSB the average monthly salary in Norway is 43 300 NOK and due to this we define a low salary as below this level. Regarding what we define as a high salary is based on the average monthly salary in Norway for a CEO which is 74 500 NOK (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2017).

4.4.3 Power

Power may be described as the “opportunity” to influence other individuals behaviour (McClelland & Burnham, 1976).

4.4.4 Safety/ Danger

We define this value as the level of safety at work depends on the risk of being harmed or injured during work tasks.

4.4.5 Prestige

Prestige can be associated with a social position and is when someone admire or honour someone else based on their abilities, intelligence, social roles or achievement (Domanski, 2015).

4.4.6 Task significance

Task significance is defined as “ the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people, whether in the immediate organization or in the external environment” (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p. 161). In Hackman and Oldhams JCM this is one of the dimensions that results in an individual's experienced meaningfulness of the work (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

4.4.7 Task variety

Task variety can be defined as to what degree a work position requires numerous tasks to be performed, accordingly it can also require several skills and competences (Ali et al., 2013).

4.4.8 Relatedness

Relatedness may be defined as the desire to be “valued, respected, and desired by important others” (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Hence, the value captures the importance of having meaningful relationships to other individuals and provide the affective foundation of growth tendencies.

Under SDT, relatedness needs capture the desire to have meaningful relationships with others and therefore include the desire to connect with others and to give and receive affection (Baumeister & Leary 1995; Deci & Ryan 2000).

5. Tentative plan for completion of thesis

Intended activities	Deadline
Deadline: Preliminary thesis project - 20% of grade	15.01.2018
Application to NSD	01.02.2018
Write Theory	01.02.2018
Moderate questionnaire	01.02.2018
Collect data	12.01.2018
Analysis of data	01.03.2018
Write results and discussion	23.03.2018
1st draft handed in to supervisor	09.04.2018
Modifications	01.07.2018
Summer holiday	01.07.2018 - 01.08.2018
Review of the master thesis	01.08.2018 - 30.08.2018
Deadline: Submitting the final thesis	30.08.2018

Table 3 - Proposed plan for thesis progress

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