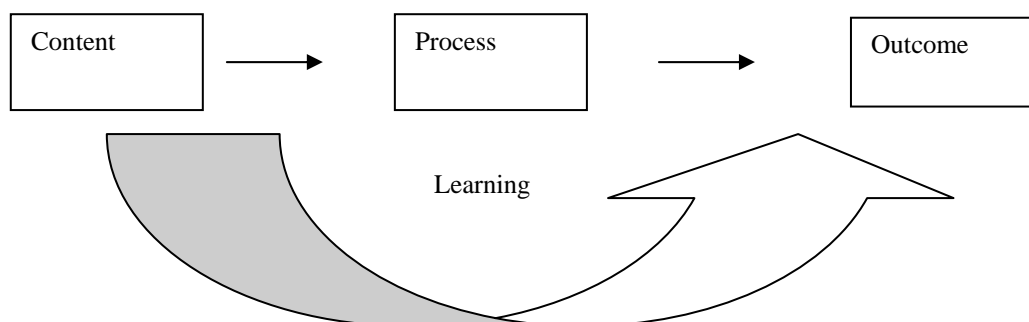


MOTIVATION

Motivating people is not an easy task. What motivates people to work? First we need to define what we mean by motivation. According to Landy and Becker¹, *motivation consists of at least one of the following features of behavior: initiation, direction, persistence, intensity or termination of a particular action.* From this definition it follows that work motivation is a multifocal phenomenon that can not be approached exclusively from a singular perspective. Also, *work motivation is the end result of interaction between individual traits and organizational characteristics.* Theories of motivation center on different aspects of this complex process that result in action. We can group these aspects in three broad categories: the individual's predisposition, the cognitive process, and consequences deriving from the individual's action. From these come three types of theories of motivation: content theories, process theories, and outcome theories.



2.1. Content theories

Content theories focus on factors internal to the individual in order to explain why people are motivated in different ways and by different work settings. The most representative examples of this strand of theory are the needs-based theories. For example, the theories of Maslow, Alderfer, or McClelland² assume that people have a propensity, which may be innate or acquired, to seek or avoid certain stimuli. Other content-based theories that

¹ Landy, F.J. & Becker, W.S. 1987. "Motivation Theory Reconsidered", in Cummings, L. L. & Staw, B. M. (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 9: 1-38. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press Inc.

² Maslow, A. H. 1954. *Motivation and Personality* (3rd ed.). New York: Harper. Alderfer, C. P. 1972. *Existence, relatedness and growth: Human Needs in Organizational Settings*. New York: Free Press. McClelland, D.C. 1965. "Toward a theory of motive acquisition". *American Psychologist*, 20: 321-333.

have been widely accepted and have obtained stronger empirical support are those that consider the content of the work that a person does. For example, Herzberg's theory and that of Hackman and Oldham³ suggest that particular features of a job may motivate or demotivate an employee. Lastly, the concept people's self-concept (who they are, their values) has also been studied as an important factor in content theories. Shamir⁴, for example, argues that even if a task leads to no reward whatsoever, it may still motivate a person if it has a meaning for that person; that is, if it fits in with her values regarding what needs to be done.

2.2. Process theories

Process theories try to explain how people initiate, direct and maintain their motivation. For example, Adam's equity theory⁵ assumes that people expect there to be a balance between their contribution and the outcome they obtain. They compare their situation with that of other people whom they consider to be similar. If there is inequity, when it is to their disadvantage, people adapt their behavior to reduce that inequity. An extension of equity theory is the procedural justice theory proposed by Folger and his colleagues⁶. It also takes into account the justice of the decision process. Various studies have shown that people only react against their organization if they perceive an injustice that is both distributive and procedural. Another theory centered on the motivational process is expectancy theory, originally developed by Vroom⁷. This theory assumes that people act in accord with rational choices among expected outcomes. By a cognitive process, they assign probabilities to three factors: expectancy (individual's confidence that her efforts will produce a certain level of performance), instrumentality (individual's confidence that her performance will produce particular outcomes) and valence (the value the individual assigns to those specific outcomes). Locke⁸ has contributed to the process of work motivation with his goal-setting theory. One of the most recent process-based theories is Bandura's⁹ social learning or social cognitive theory. Because of the interaction with the environment, the person's expectations are subject to a continuous learning process based on direct experience.

³ Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., Snyderman, B. B. 1959. *The Motivation to Work*. New York: Wiley. Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. 1975. "Development of the job diagnostic survey". *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60: 159-170.

⁴ Shamir, B. 1991. "Meaning, self and motivation in organizations". *Organization Studies*, 12(3): 405-424.

⁵ Adams, J. S. 1963. "Toward an understanding of inequity". *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67: 422-436. Adams, J.S. 1965. "Inequity in social exchange", in L. Berkovitz (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 2: 267-299. New York: Academic Press.

⁶ Folger, R. , & Greenberg, J. 1985. "Procedural justice: An interpretive analysis of personnel systems", in Rowland, K. & Ferris, G. (Eds.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, Vol. 3. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press.

⁷ Vroom, V. H. 1964. *Work and Motivation*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

⁸ Locke, E. A. 1968. Toward a theory of task motivation and incentives. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 3: 157-189.

⁹ Bandura, A. 1977. *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Bandura, A. 1986. *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

2.2.1. Hugo Kehr's compensatory model of work motivation and volition

Hugo Kehr's compensatory model of work motivation and volition¹⁰ differentiates implicit and explicit motives and the possibility of resulting intrapersonal conflict. Volitional mechanisms are required to resolve such conflict. Volitional regulation is required to compensate for insufficient motivation due to discrepancies between implicit and explicit motives. But volitional regulation can have deficiencies: it may be ineffective, block cognitive capacities, be associated with rigid self-control, have negative side-effects like emotional distress, etc.

Kehr also explores the relation of these processes to perceived abilities and problem solving. As past performance is a chief determinant of perceived abilities and the scripted behavioral repertoire of a person, low perceived abilities are associated with inadequate behavioral routines. If behavioral routines are unavailable, problem solving is required. Problem solving compensates for low perceived abilities and insufficient scripted behavioral routines. Volitional regulation and problem solving fulfill distinct functions. The requirement for volition is independent of perceived abilities, and the requirement for problem solving is independent of the relationship between implicit and explicit motives. Congruence of implicit motives, explicit motives, and perceived abilities is associated with flow experiences. An interesting task for further research relates to the development of intervention methods: volitional strength may be depleted but can be built up by exercise. That leads us to virtues and leadership competencies, based on behavioral habits.

2.3. Outcome theories

Outcome theories seek to explain what types of consequences motivate different people to work. Traditionally, these theories are associated with operant conditioning or Skinner's reinforcement theory¹¹. One of the most comprehensive practices to use motivational reinforcement is organizational behavior modification (OBMod)¹². To improve performance, OBMod offers practical guidelines. Various studies have confirmed the positive effect that this system can have on employee performance. But these systems omit fundamental aspects of human motivation. In fact, most empirical studies on incentives have been carried out without any theoretical backing¹³, focusing exclusively on extrinsic rewards. Various studies have found that extrinsic rewards are only one of the factors that motivate employees¹⁴. *Learning, the desire to contribute, and the desire to*

¹⁰ Hugo M. Kehr. 2004. "Integrating implicit motives, explicit motives, and perceived abilities: the compensatory model of work motivation and volition", *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 29, No. 3, 479-499.

¹¹ Skinner, B. F. 1953. *Science and Human Behavior*. New York: Free Press.

¹² Luthans, F. & Kreitner, R. 1975. *Organizational Behavior Modification*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

¹³ Welbourne, T. M. & Gómez Mejía, L. R. 1995. "Gainsharing: A critical review and a future research agenda". *Journal of Management*, 21: 559-609.

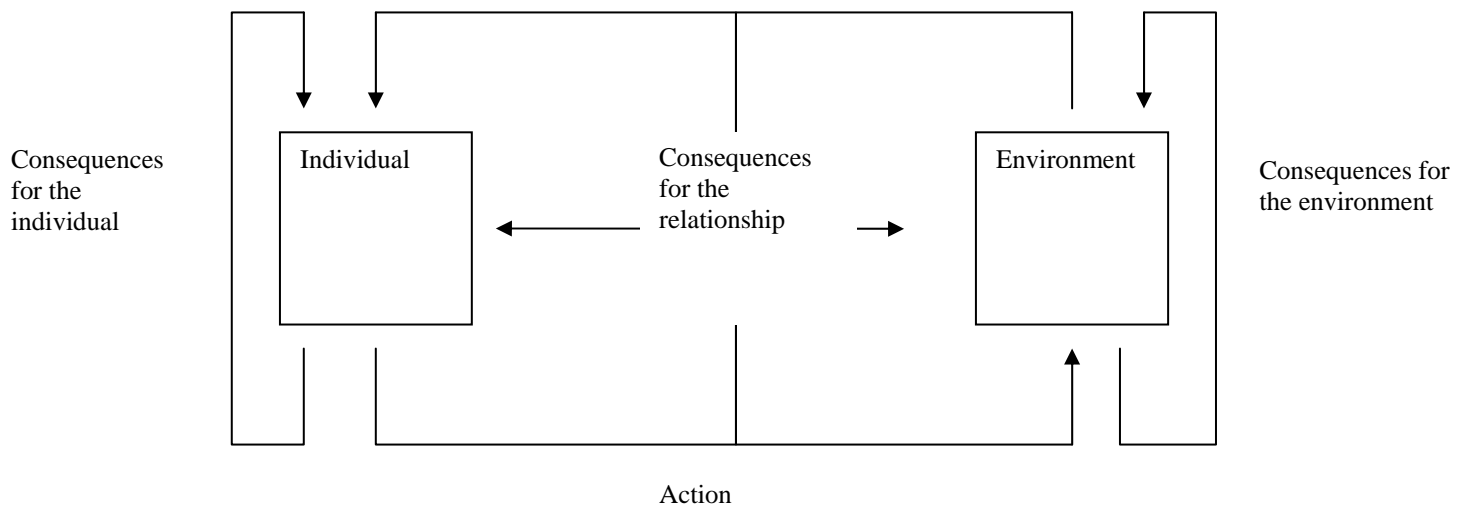
¹⁴ Baumeister, R & Leary, M. R. 1995. "The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation". *Psychological Bulletin*, 117:497-529.

Latham, G. P. 2001. "The importance of understanding and changing employee outcome expectancies for gaining commitment to an organizational goal". *Personnel Psychology*, 54: 707-716.

belong are also strong motivating factors. *That is why we believe that there is a need to develop a richer theory of consequences that takes account of different types of consequences and motivations.* Different types of consequences and motivations are deeply influenced by culture.

2.3.1. Pérez- López theory on work motivation

According to the theory developed by Pérez-López¹⁵, a person's actions in relation to her environment can have four different types of consequences: the reaction of the environment to the individual; the consequences for the individual deriving directly from the action; the consequences for the environment deriving directly from action; and lastly, the consequences for the relationship between the individual and her environment. Given that an action can have different consequences, a person will act out of a combination of motives: extrinsic, contributive, and relational.



A person's extrinsic motivation is her willingness to act because of the rewards she expects to receive from others in exchange for that behavior. A person's intrinsic motivation is her willingness to act because of the satisfaction she expects to experience from doing that behavior. A person's contributive (or transcendent) motivation is her willingness to act because of the benefit she expects others to experience as a consequence of the behavior. A person's relational commitment is her willingness to act because of the expected impact of that behavior in her future relationship with the environment. Generally speaking, a person may want to maintain or strengthen her relationship with the environment in order to satisfy extrinsic, intrinsic or contributive motives in the future. In the world of work, where the environment is the company, relational commitment is known as organizational commitment: continuance

¹⁵ Pérez-López, J. A. 1991. *Teoría de la acción humana en las organizaciones*. Madrid: Ediciones Rialp.

commitment, affective commitment, and normative commitment¹⁶.

People act on the basis of a combination of extrinsic, intrinsic, contributive and relational motives, assigning to each a particular weight¹⁷. The weight that a person assigns to the different types of motives is what we call that person's *motivational profile*. Motivational profiles are dynamic: they can change as a result of a person's experiences. When a person faces a decision between conflicting alternatives (especially between motives of different types), her decision will have an impact on her motivational profile, and so may affect her decision rule. From the point of view of decision making, we define *motivational learning* as *the creation, reinforcement, or refinement, of a person's decision rules*.

2.4. Cross-cultural perspective

Summing up, the different theories on work motivation help us to understand the content, process, and outcomes in work motivation. However, we still have to examine how culture affects content, process and outcomes. Miriam Erez¹⁸ states that culture is often represented by its value system. Values express *motivational goals*. However, the meanings of some specific values vary across cultures. Cultural values determine *what it means to be a person in a particular society*, and they are represented in the self. Of the five core values Hofstede¹⁹ distinguishes in the work context, collectivism versus individualism and high versus low power distance seem to be the most relevant for evaluating the *meaning* of various motivational practices depending on the cultural context. Motivational practices aim at increasing employees' involvement in their work. Four of the most important motivational practices are: reward allocation, participation in decision making and goal setting, job enrichment, and quality management.

The causal path from values to goals and intentions is purposeful and self-regulated. The ultimate purpose of the total belief system is to maintain and enhance the individual's *self-image*. The process of self-evaluation requires the individual to use a set of guidelines: the personal internal standards of the *independent* self and the prevalent values of society of the *interdependent* self. Individuals who live in the same cultural environment use similar criteria for evaluating the contribution of any specific behavior to the development of their sense of *self-worth*²⁰. But these criteria vary across cultures along with differences in cultural values, so they end up shaping different meanings of

¹⁶ Meyer, J. P. & Allan, N. J. 1991. "A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment". *Human Resource Management Review*, 1:61-89.

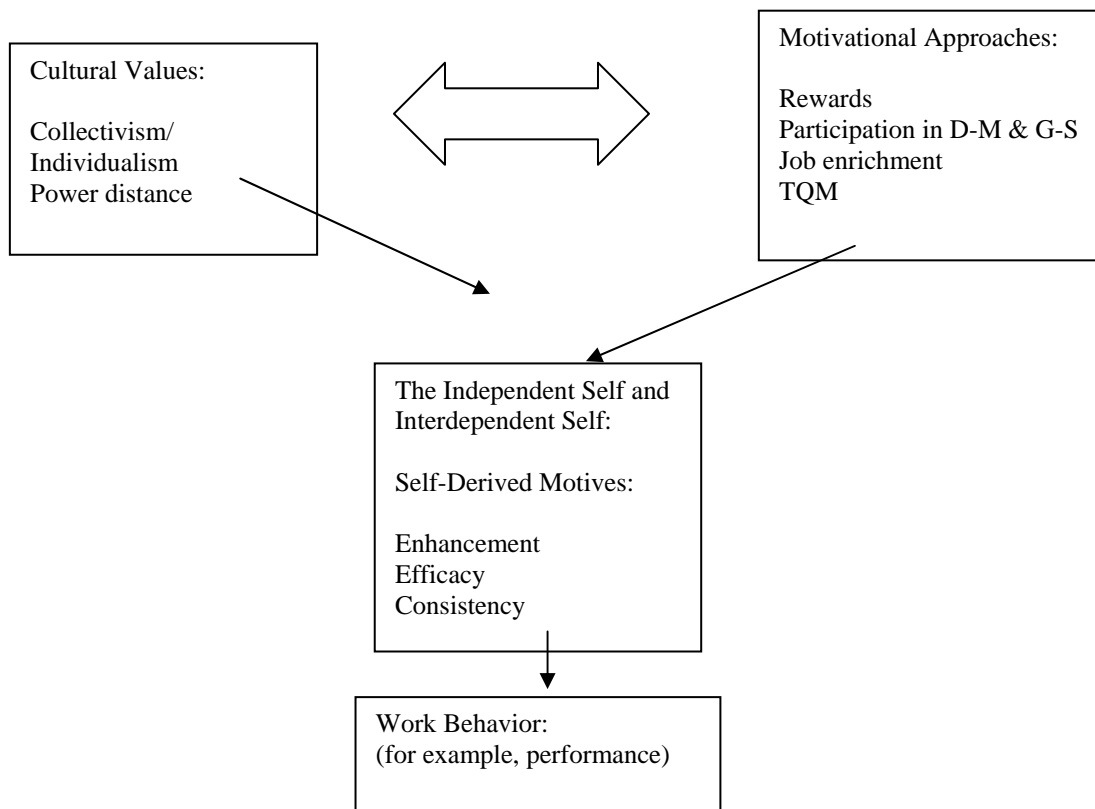
¹⁷ Cardona, P., Lawrence, B. & Bentley, P. M. 2004. "The influence of social and work exchange relationships on organizational citizenship behavior". *Group and Organization Management*, 29: 219-247.

¹⁸ Erez, M. "A Culture-Based Model of Work Motivation", chapter 8, in Earley, P. C., and Erez, M. (Eds) 1997. *New Perspectives on International Industrial/Organizational Psychology*, The New Lexington Press.

¹⁹ Hofstede, G. 1980. *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

²⁰ Triandis, H. C., Bontempo, R., Villareal, M. J., Asai, M. & Lucca, N. 1988. "Individualism and collectivism: Cross-cultural perspectives on self-ingroup relationships". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 323-338.

self-worth. Western cultures are known for their individualist values (independent self), whereas Far East cultures are known for their group orientation values (interdependent self). The different criteria for evaluation driven by the independent and the interdependent facets of the self determine what kind of actions and situations will be perceived as satisfying the self-derived motives: *efficacy*, *enhancement*, and *consistency*. Miriam Erez offers a culture-based model of work motivation which derives out of the general model of cultural self-representation and has a specific focus on motivational techniques.



We think we could contribute to this model by means of adding considerations from the different theories on work motivation, especially the consideration of Perez Lopez's theory and his combination of four types of motives: extrinsic, intrinsic, transcendent and relational. Cultural values are related to the particular emphasis or weight a person gives to each of the four types of motives. And again, the different criteria for evaluation driven by the independent and the interdependent facets of the self determine what kind of actions and situations will be perceived as satisfying the self-derived motives. That is why we believe that the introduction of the concept "motivational learning" is of great importance.

In conclusion, we are interested in continuing the work motivation line of research from a cross-cultural perspective, in order to answer this kind of questions: what kind of influence can culture have in explicit and implicit motives, volitional regulation, perceived abilities and problem solving? What particular needs and goals are enhanced by particular cultures? How may expectations of balance between contributions and outcomes change depending on the culture? How can we design culturally sensitive incentive systems that not only are matched to people's current motivational profiles, but also foster personal

learning? How can we design culturally sensitive motivational practices that help people to identify with their work and company? How do we measure the relationship between motivation and organizational commitment in different cultures?