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De Theatro Motivarum, Motivation: In Search of Essentials. Research on a Theoretical Model of the Process of Motivation and on Critical Determinants of Interference

Mennes, M.A.

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Author: Mennes, M.A.

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Chapter 2

Fundamentals of the Study

2.1. Introduction

The objective of the dissertation is to add to our knowledge on processes conceptualized as 'motivation'. It refers in a condensed version to an extensive research Project, from which it derives its principal objective.

Chapter 2 provides the architecture for this objective, by defining a Problem Definition, a Problem Demarcation and a Problem Approach, resulting in a finalized Problem Statement in Chapter 2.5. The Problem Statement provides the fundamentals of the study, leading to a structured outline of a 'Theatro Motivarum'

2.2. Problem Definition

Motivation covers an extensive field of study with an endless area of related topics. At the onset of the study, and referring to Chapter 1.6., a number of restrictions, or 'Fundamental Assumptions', are formulated to demarcate the study and define its content.

This process of gradually reducing the problem and carefully demarcating its boundaries is to be initiated by a preliminary Problem Definition. Restrictions will serve to gradually redefine this preliminary Problem Definition into a final Problem Statement for the dissertation.

As a primary Fundamental Assumption, it is assumed that a distinction is to be made in the concept of motivation and in processes involved in addressing motivation. Although the study has its primal focus on processes involved in motivation, it also seeks to provide insights into the processes involved in addressing motivation, in order to evaluate and appreciate these effects.

Thus, a following two-fold preliminary Problem Definition is formulated:

- The dissertation aims, as its primary objective, at providing insights into the concept of motivation,*
- to unveil elementary processes involved in addressing motivation.*

As the concept of motivation is to be used as a restricting concept fundamental to the study, a notation using a capital letter, as in 'Motivation', will be used discriminating the concept from a regular, more conventional usage. The notation using capitals will be used likewise for all concepts throughout this study to differentiate between a theoretical and a common application.

2.3. Problem Demarcation

A number of additional Fundamental Assumptions are made that are further reducing the field of study and demarcating the area to which the Problem Statement is to be confined.

2.3.1. Fundamental Assumptions

In this dissertation a distinction is made between a Process of Motivation and a Process of Interference. *The Process of Motivation in this study is to be defined as including all processes that are involved in intentionally oriented mental activities initiated by an individual that are aimed at intervening in or responding to a surrounding that is perceived by the individual to be either mental or physical, or both. All other processes indirectly related to the Process of Motivation are to be excluded from the analysis.* This restriction further reduces the scope of the study. It eliminates person- and personality related factors, such as age or gender, intellectual capacities or education. The dissertation is to exclude all processes or mechanisms involved in person- and personality related factors. Feelings or emotions, thoughts or cognitions and behavior or activities of the Individual that are not directly related to the Process of Motivation as defined, are to be excluded from the study. In addition, by aiming exclusively at the processes involved, the content, topic, or subject these processes are aiming at, are excluded from the analysis.

An important Fundamental Assumption has already been implicitly made: the study aims at observing a single person not a group of persons. The underlying rationale is that mechanisms involved in addressing a single person will provide fundamental information enabling further insights into the effects on multiple persons, whereas effects on multiple persons are assumed to be less applicable to a single person. This unidirectional applicability justifies the single person approach. Thus, the study aims at unveiling mechanisms involved in Motivation of a single person, and in processes involved when a single person motivates another single person. To this aim the concept of the 'Individual' is introduced.

In observing processes involved in addressing Motivation a principle of unilateralism is introduced: processes are analyzed of an Individual motivating another Individual and not vice-versa. The underlying rationale is that the same mechanisms are assumed to be operational when an Individual motivates another Individual in a unidirectional interaction as in a bidirectional interaction. Although the one process can induce another, both processes are assumed to proceed along comparable lines. In order to provide a clear distinction between both Individuals a differentiation is made between the Individual who is being motivated and a so-called 'Actor-Intervener' whose aim it is to motivate. Thus:

- The Actor-Intervener is the agent who motivates;
- The Individual is the agent being motivated.

In order to further simplify this interaction, it is assumed the activity of addressing Motivation can be clearly defined and isolated from other processes involved and related to, thus enabling an adequate analysis of these distinct processes. To this end, the concept of a 'Process of Interference' is introduced¹: *The Process of Interference is an activity by the Actor-Intervener aimed at influencing, or addressing Motivation within an Individual. In this dissertation, the Process of Interference refers to all processes and mechanisms involved in the activity of addressing Motivation, thus excluding any other processes, or states of mind, or processes of Motivation generating the Interference. As such, a distinction is made between a Process of Interference associated with the activity of an Actor-Intervener and Motivation associated with the Individual, as the objective of the activity.* Processes that are causing or generating the Interference are considered to be separate and isolated from the Actor-Intervener initiating the act of Interference. Thus, the Motivation, or rationale, or any other processes behind the act of Interference are to be excluded from the analysis. It is assumed the process and state of Motivation and other related processes within the Actor-Intervener follow a same course as within the Individual and would not add to the insights already provided in the analysis of the concept of Motivation associated with the Individual. These processes, then, generating the act of Interference within the Actor-Intervener, are considered given.

It is assumed that the Process of Interference aimed at the Process of Motivation constitutes of three distinct sequential phases, or so-called 'Determinants':

- *A Condition, a Determinant within the Process of Interference that is assumed theoretically from its specific characteristics to generate a circumstance that causes a certain impact, or effect within the Process of Motivation;*
- *A Competency, a Determinant within the Process of Interference that is assumed theoretically to contain specific attributes that initiate the Conditions enabling an effect to occur within the Process of Motivation;*
- *An Instrument, a Determinant within the Process of Interference that is assumed theoretically to facilitate a Competency which, in turn, could generate circumstances where a Condition can cause an effect within the Process of Motivation.*

A Condition is a causal element, a Competency a theoretical characteristic and an Instrument an operational or physical situation that enables the initiation of the Interference to take place.

2.3.2. Fundamental Definitions

Marking the start of the study, the outline of a Problem Statement calls for a summary and specification of definitions that are to be used in its final formulation. Following the gradual reduction of the field of study so far, a number of distinct concepts emerge that have been defined:

¹ The wording of 'Interference' is chosen, as it is assumed to have a neutral, i.e. nor positive, nor negative connotation.

1. *Defining the 'Process of Motivation'*
In this dissertation the Process of Motivation is to be defined as including all processes involved in intentionally oriented mental activities initiated by the Individual that are aimed at intervening in or responding to a surrounding that is perceived by the Individual to be either mental or physical, or both.
2. *Defining the 'Interaction'*
The Interaction is the setting in which an Actor-Intervener, through a Process of Interference, addresses a Process of Motivation within an Individual
3. *Defining the 'Individual'*
The concept of the 'Individual' is reserved for the agent within the Interaction who's Process of Motivation is being addressed.
4. *Defining the 'Actor-Intervener'*
The concept of the 'Actor-Intervener' is reserved for the agent within the Interaction who addresses through a Process of Interference, a Process of Motivation within the Individual.
5. *Defining the 'Process of Interference'*
The Process of Interference in this dissertation refers to all processes and mechanisms directly involved in the act of addressing the Process of Motivation within the Individual, by the Actor-Intervener, thus excluding any other processes, procedures, or states of mind, generating the Interference that are originating within the Actor-Intervener. These internal processes within the Actor-Intervener are considered given.
6. *Defining 'Determinants'*
It is assumed that the Process of Interference aimed at the Process of Motivation consists of three distinct sequential phases, or so-called 'Determinants':
 - *A Condition;*
 - *A Competency;*
 - *An Instrument.*
7. *Defining 'Conditions'*
A Condition is a Determinant within the Process of Interference that is assumed theoretically from its specific characteristics, or properties, to generate a circumstance that causes a certain impact, or effect within the Process of Motivation.
8. *Defining 'Competencies'*
A Competency is a Determinant within the Process of Interference that is assumed theoretically to contain specific characteristics, or properties, in actions or activities that initiate the Conditions enabling an effect to occur within the Process of Motivation.
9. *Defining 'Instruments'*
An Instrument is a Determinant within the Process of Interference that is assumed theoretically to contain specific characteristics, or properties in its design that facilitate a Competency, which, in turn, are assumed to initiate the Conditions enabling an effect to occur within the Process of Motivation.

2.3.3. Conclusions; A Preliminary Problem Statement

Fundamental Assumptions have simplified the initial Problem Definition of providing insights into the concept of Motivation and in the processes involved in addressing Motivation.

These gradual reductions now enable us to refine the initial Problem Definition into a first Preliminary Problem Statement:

- *This dissertation aims, as its primary objective, at providing insights into the Process of Motivation,*
- *to unveil elementary processes involved in addressing Motivation, by providing insights into the Process of Interference,*
 - *into the Conditions necessary for effects to occur within the Process of Motivation,*
 - *into the Competencies initiating the Conditions to come into effect,*
 - *and of exemplary Instruments that provide the means for these Competencies to occur.*

2.4. Problem Approach

Now that the Problem has been demarcated and central concepts of the study have been isolated, the fundamental approach is to be defined, both in form and in content.

2.4.1. The Form

Earlier, in Chapter 1.5., foundations were laid for a differing approach in obtaining insights called for in the Preliminary Problem Statement. Following an overview on inductive and deductive modes of inference, it was concluded that a synthesis of both would combine the strengths of the inductive and deductive strategies in obtaining scientific knowledge and reduce inherent weaknesses.

With reference to Chapter 1.6., the approach would consist of a four-fold sequence:

- *A theoretical Model of Motivation as obtained through inductive inference;*
- *An embedment of the theoretical Model in the existing body of knowledge obtained from literature;*
- *An empirical validation of hypotheses derived from the theoretical Model following standard statistical procedures within a traditional hypothetico-deductive approach;*
- *A separate overview of Implications to segregate the inductive inferences made from the findings obtained from the empirical research.*

2.4.2. The Content

Thus, hypotheses are to be derived from the theoretical Model of Motivation to be tested through empirical research. Support from empirical research for these embedded hypotheses would reflect on the robustness of the explanatory theoretical Model.

However, the Preliminary Problem Statement not only calls for insights into the Process of Motivation by means of a theoretical Model, but also into the Process of Interference and its elementary Determinants.

Within the boundaries set forth in Chapter 2.4.1., combining both requirements in the choice of hypotheses, would allow for a coverage of all the elements called for in the Preliminary Problem Statement within constraints of the study and limitations set to the size in reporting the various research-outcomes. As all Determinants, then, are theoretically derived from the Model of Motivation, hypotheses associated to each Determinant would provide not only insights into the Process of Interference, but would provide also a means of verification reflecting on the robustness of the theoretical Model of Motivation.

The approach is to lead to a four-fold sequence in hypothesis-testing in the problem approach, covering:

- *The Model of Motivation,*
- *Conditions enabling intervention,*
- *Competencies enabling these Conditions,*
- *Instruments providing the means for these Competencies to occur.*

Hypotheses derived from the Model of Motivation are to aim primarily at critical elementary constructs from the Model. Hypotheses associated with the Determinants are to provide indirect, or secondary, evidence of the Model of Motivation from which they are derived, by aiming at an identification of the Determinants, i.e. distinct Conditions, Competencies and Instruments.

Thus, combining a suggested form of the Problem Approach in Chapter 2.4.1., with the four-fold hypothesis testing, would result in a content of the dissertation aimed at providing insights into the Process of Motivation by means of an explanatory theoretical Model, an embedment in literature and empirical research into its elementary constructs, and insights into the Process of Interference by providing an explanatory theoretical Model and an empirical validation for its respective Determinants

2.4.3. Limitations to the Content

A number of limitations are to further restrict the content of the study.

1. Restrictive Limitations on Reporting the Theoretical Model

Referring to Chapter 1.6., two restrictive limitations are set for reporting on the theoretical Model of Motivation and its derived Determinants. First, the inference process itself and associated background rationale is provided in abbreviated form in separate Appendices, with only principal outcomes of the inference process provided in the respective texts for reasons of brevity. The succession of arguments constituting the inference process itself is considered less relevant, where only its outcomes are evaluated with an embedment in literature and a validation in empirical research.

Second, the inductive inference is to be initiated by an overview of initial propositions preceding the inference process. As these initial propositions and restrictions made to the inductive inference process are important in defining its outcomes and are thus part of the evaluative process and inherent validation of the inductive inference process, they are to be briefly included. These successive overviews of propositions will be referred to as 'Assumptions' and are to be provided in shorter summary, with reference to more extensive overviews in respective Appendices.

2. Restrictive Limitations on the Literature

Referring to Chapter 1.6., an overview of current literature is to be provided separately from the overview of the Model of Motivation in a separate Chapter. *As a result, no references to current literature will appear in Chapters covering the empirical research findings.* The analysis will be aimed at coverage of the current literature covering a period of over 100 years, extending from the start of the twentieth century to the present. To enable a sustained accessibility of sources, references to internet-sites will be avoided where possible, as a primal reference.

3. Restrictive Limitations on the Empirical Research

A third and final set of restrictive limitations affects the content of the empirical research. The empirical research is to generate data enabling an adequate analysis of hypotheses associated to the Model of Motivation and the three Determinants derived from the Model.

Although literature seems slightly divergent in its conceptualization, three types of empirical research have been identified: exploratory research aimed primarily at (qualitative) observational studies, descriptive research aimed at quantification of these observations and establishing relations, and causal research seeking evidence not only for relations between concepts but also for defining a sequence or direction in these relations (Gupta, 2007; McNabb, 2010; Silver, Stevens, Wrenn, & Loudon, 2012; Hair, Wolfenbarger, Celsi, Money, Samouel & Page, 2011). The empirical research is to provide empirical evidence through all three types of research.

Separate Chapters are to cover each of the four central concepts. The empirical research is initiated by descriptive research on the Model of Motivation, exploratory and descriptive research on Conditions, descriptive research on Competencies and causal research on Instruments, relating these to the Model of Motivation.

Given the Fundamental Assumptions in Chapter 2.3.1. excluding all processes indirectly related to the Process of Motivation or the Process of Interference, an environment is sought after where these indirect processes are minimal, or at least clearly defined, without indistinct interventions. *To this end, the empirical research is to be performed within a business environment, in the assumption that it provides the best setting for an unambiguous environment.* Within a business environment, separate companies are to be observed in the various quasi-experimental designs. Each distinct company is designated with an alias to preserve anonymity. Units within a same company that are differing in location, and/or type of industry or mode of operation, are considered as a distinct company.

2.4.4. Conclusions

These observations on the Problem Approach enable a further refinement of the Preliminary Problem Statement:

- *This dissertation aims, as its primary objective, at providing insights into the Process of Motivation,*
 - By means of:*
 - *A theoretical Model of Motivation as obtained through inductive inference;*
 - *An embedment of the theoretical Model in literature;*
 - *An empirical validation of hypotheses derived from the theoretical Model;*
 - *A separate overview of Implications.*
- *to unveil elementary processes involved in addressing Motivation, by providing insights into the Process of Interference,*
 - *into the Conditions necessary for effects to occur within the Process of Motivation,*
 - *into the Competencies initiating the Conditions to come into effect,*
 - *and of exemplary Instruments that provide the means for these Competencies to occur.*
 - By means of:*
 - *a theoretical Model based on the Model of Motivation, as obtained through inductive inference;*
 - *an empirical validation of hypotheses of respective Determinants,*
thus providing secondary empirical evidence in support of the Model of Motivation, from which these Determinants are derived.

2.5. Problem Statement

In finalizing the fundamentals of the study, the series of Fundamental Assumptions expressed in the Problem Demarcation, Chapter 2.3., together with the structuring provided in the Problem Approach, Chapter 2.4., enable a formulation of the final Problem Statement, as a principal outcome of this Chapter.

The Problem Statement of this study is formulated as follows:

- *This dissertation aims, as its primary objective, at providing insights into the Process of Motivation, by means of:*
 - *a theoretical Model of Motivation, as obtained through inductive inference, provided in a summarized overview,*
 - *an embedment in current literature, provided by a brief, annotated overview of principal findings,*
 - *and empirical research providing evidence of the elementary constructs from the Model, in terms of components and their respective items, capturing the Process of Motivation, thus providing empirical evidence in support of the Model,*
- *to unveil elementary processes involved in addressing Motivation, by providing insights into the Process of Interference,*
 - *into the Conditions necessary for effects to occur within the Process of Motivation, by means of:*
 - *a theoretical Model based on the Model of Motivation, as obtained through inductive inference, provided in a summarized overview,*
 - *and exploratory and descriptive empirical research providing evidence of the relation between the isolated constructs operationalizing the Process of Motivation and concepts presumed to be indicative of these Conditions, thus providing secondary empirical evidence in support of the Model of Motivation, from which these Conditions are derived,*
 - *into the Competencies initiating the Conditions to come into effect, by means of:*
 - *a theoretical Model based on the Model of Motivation, as obtained through inductive inference, provided in a summarized overview,*
 - *and descriptive empirical research providing evidence of the relation between concepts presumed to be indicative of these Conditions and concepts operationalizing these Competencies, thus providing secondary empirical evidence in support of the Model of Motivation, from which these Competencies are derived,*

- and into exemplary Instruments that provide the means for these Competencies to occur¹,
by means of:
 - a theoretical Model based on the Model of Motivation, as obtained through inductive inference, provided in a summarized overview,
 - and empirical research providing evidence for a causal relation to exist between the isolated constructs operationalizing the Process of Motivation and concepts operationalizing these exemplary Instruments,

thus providing secondary empirical evidence in support of the Model of Motivation, from which these Instruments are derived.

2.6. The Structure of the Dissertation

Following the final formulation of the Problem Statement in Chapter 2.5., the content of the dissertation can now be formalized in its final structure.

- *Chapter 3, The Process of Motivation - Theoretical Model:* Chapter 3 presents a theoretical Model on the Process of Motivation as outcome of an inductive inference.
- *Chapter 4, Literature:* An overview of the current state of literature on Motivation is provided. In this manner the outcomes of the inference process are to be linked to findings obtained from theory and research.
- *Chapter 5, Empirical Research:* Descriptive research capturing the concept of Motivation, following the Problem Statement.
- *Chapter 6, Empirical Research:* These findings are complemented with both exploratory and descriptive research linking the effects of Conditions to the concept of Motivation and providing empirical evidence for the Conditions allegedly causing these effects to occur.
- *Chapter 7, Empirical Research:* Descriptive research on Competencies initiating the Conditions enabling effects on the Process of Motivation.
- *Chapter 8, Empirical Research:* Causal research linking specific Instruments enabling Competencies to effects on the Process of Motivation.
- *Chapter 9, Conclusions:* A final and formal overview of conclusions in response to the Problem Statement.
- *Chapter 10, Summary:* A synopsis of principal findings.
- *Implications:* An overview of derived Implications following the rationale provided in Chapter 1.5.
The Implications, together with a subsequent *Epilogue*, are to be the legacy of this dissertation.

¹ A restriction will be made limiting the study to a single Instrument addressing so-called 'Intrinsic Intervention Competencies'. Reference is made to Chapter 8.2.

2.7. Summary

In initiating the study, a two-fold preliminary Problem Definition was formulated:

- *The dissertation aims, as its primary objective, at providing insights into the concept of Motivation,*
- *to unveil elementary processes involved in addressing Motivation.*

In a sequence of Fundamental Assumptions, the initial Problem Definition was gradually reformulated into a first outline of a Preliminary Problem Statement. Four central concepts remained as the elementary framework of the dissertation: a Process of Motivation, addressed by a Process of Interference, consisting of three Determinants: Conditions causing an effect, Competencies evoking these Conditions, and Instruments enabling, in turn, these Competencies.

This sequential reduction restricted the course of this study to a four-fold approach in the analysis.

Thus, in Chapter 2.5., the Problem Statement of this dissertation was formulated, reflecting this four-fold approach in analyzing the Process of Motivation, distinct from the Process of Interference in its three Determinants, to obtain the two-fold objective of the dissertation.

Insights into the Process of Motivation were to be provided by means of an explanatory theoretical Model, an embedment in literature, and empirical validation of hypotheses derived from the explanatory framework of the Model, thus reflecting on its robustness.

Likewise, insights into the Process of Interference and its Determinants were to be provided by means of a theoretical Model, and empirical validation of derived hypotheses. However, as all Determinants were theoretically derived from the Model of Motivation, hypotheses associated to each Determinant were to provide not only insights into the Process of Interference, but would also constitute a means of verification of the theoretical Model of Motivation where multiple empirical studies, derived from a common explanatory Model, were assumed to further add to its authority.

The analysis of a Theatro Motivarum, then, is to progress along these lines, where the Process of Motivation, together with the three Determinants, is to produce theoretical Models and empirical validation of derived hypotheses, that are to generate the insights called for in the Problem Statement.