

MOTIVATION OF STUDENTS

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Abstract: *Within this essay the author combines the theoretical elaborations concerning motivation of students with results from questionnaires conducted with Officers Cadets at the Austrian Theresan Military Academy. Mainly intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors can be identified. Apart from these motivation factors, not only for military education institutions but also for all other institutions which are teaching students, the leadership skills and competences apart from special knowledge of Lecturers seem to be important to motivate them. In the conclusions the author gives some proposals which steps must be done to motivate students and consequently to increase their performance.*

Keywords: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, leadership, officers' skills and competences

1. Introduction

“People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing – that's why we recommend it daily” (Ziglar, n. d.). The topic “motivation of students” should be taken seriously by all those persons who are being responsible for education – independently which echelon and which field of responsibility they have – according to the citation above – on a daily basis.

This short essay leads from some principal motivation theories via the description of methodology to the results of research which are based on past and actual questionnaires conducted with Officer Cadets of the Austrian Theresan Military Academy in April 2015 – to achieve up-dated results for the XXXIII International Colloquium in Brno. The essay should answer – based on a comparison of available literature with questionnaires conducted with students of the Theresan Military Academy – the following two questions:

Which are the expected skills and competences of Officers teaching at the Theresan Military Academy from students' point of view to increase their motivation?

Which are the students' motivating factors before and during the Basic Officer Education?

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2. Theoretical Part

Taking a closer look at the literature, in principle the subject of motivation can be divided into two parts. **Intrinsic motivation** is the self-desire to seek out new things and new challenges, to analyse one's capacity, to observe and to gain knowledge (Ryan & Deci, 2000). **Extrinsic motivation** comes from influences outside of the individual. This could be a motivation to earn more money or the fear of punishment in a case that the expectations are not fulfilled (Dewani, 2013).

Author's comment: Inside military forces – consequently also inside their education institutions – it seems that e.g. because of their well elaborated punishment systems the extrinsic motivation is the more important one because the rules are available in a written form, therefore can be distributed easily and – as a general rule – have not to be adopted to individuals because of the general validity of regulations. From the author's point of view this can be seen contradictory because motivation of students implies behaviours concerning reaching learning outcomes during study periods and not only behaviours concerning military training where extrinsic motivation may have a place under certain circumstances. We also have to take into consideration that students inside military education institutions concerning their learning circumstances do not differ that much from other – civilian – education institutions.

Hereinafter some relevant theories are presented and – as a consequence – those parts are commented and taken out which are worth to be compared on a later stage with the questionnaires conducted with Austrian students.

Taking into consideration **Maslow's hierarchy of needs** (Maslow, 1943, revised 1970) of human beings – it seems to be clear that the intrinsic motivation is the only one which creates the basis for long-lasting and therefore more effective motivation – meaning motivation of students to achieve proper learning outcomes. The figure hereinafter shows Maslow's hierarchy created in 1943.

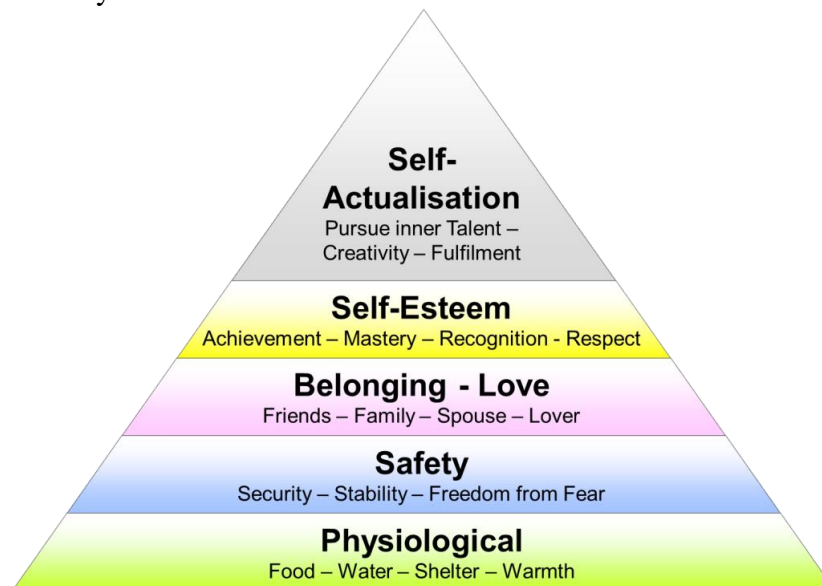


Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Author's comment: Whereas responsible persons for students' education for the first three steps of Maslow's hierarchy of needs may create an ideal organisational frame, for the last two steps the intrinsic motivation has an extreme importance.

McClelland developed the **theory of needs** – with connection to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In his approach not only social and development factors play a role but also more the achievement motive and the desire to avoid failure (McClelland, 1961). According to him we all have – regardless of gender, culture or age – three motivating drivers, out of them one is the dominated one which is dependent on culture and life experience. The three motivating drivers and the characteristics of the person as explanation of the motivating drivers are listed within the following table:

Table 1: McClelland's three motivators and persons' characteristics – table is arranged by the author.

Motivator		Person's characteristics
Achievement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a strong need to set and accomplish challenging goals. • Takes calculated risks to accomplish their goals. • Likes to receive regular feedback on their progress and achievements. • Often likes to work alone.
Affiliation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to belong to the group. • Wants to be liked, and will often go along with whatever the rest of the group wants to do. • Favours collaboration over competition. • Doesn't like high risk or uncertainty.
Power	personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to control and influence others. • Likes to win arguments. • Enjoys competition and winning. • Enjoys status and recognition.
	institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize the efforts of a team.

Author's comment: McClelland's motivators refer mainly to intrinsic motivation factors. He assumes that human beings have different motives and – consequently – different motivating factors.

In 1959 – with some connection to Maslow's hierarchy of needs – Frederick **Herzberg** published the so-called **dual-factor theory** or with another name **motivation-hygiene theory** (Herzberg, 1959). Herzberg differs between two influencing factors, on the one hand factors concerning the content of the work – called motivators and comparable with intrinsic motivation – on the other hand factors referring to the context of the work – called hygiene factors and comparable with extrinsic motivation. According to Herzberg, satisfaction and dissatisfaction must be seen independently or in other words, the lack dissatisfaction does not necessarily cause satisfaction. Only if both, motivators and hygiene factors cause satisfaction, the motivation can be seen entirely satisfactory. The combination of these motivators and hygiene factors cause four possible situations according to the following table:

Table 2: Herzberg's motivation combinations – table is arranged by the author.

		Hygiene factors:	
		Low hygiene	High hygiene
Motivators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievements and success. • Appreciation. • Content of the work. • Responsibility. • Promotion and growth. 	Low motivators	Unmotivated, major complaints.	Low motivated, minor complaints.
	High motivators	Highly motivated, major complaints.	Highly motivated, minor complaints.

Author's comment: Herzberg's theory aroused criticism because of his method and moreover, other empirical researches led to results that also motivators or hygiene factors alone may cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction – not necessarily a combination of both is needed (Semmer & Udris, 2007 and Buettner, 2013). In spite of this criticism all results showed a certain importance of the listed factors and motivators; some of them – intrinsic motivators and extrinsic hygiene factors – will appear again when a comparison with students' questionnaires will be made.

According to **Vroom's expectancy theory** individuals' performance is considered as desirable if the wished goal can be achieved. The motivation for the effort is the relative benefit (Vroom, 1964). Concerning the effect onto motivation, Vroom takes three factors into consideration: expectancy, instrumentality and valence. **Expectancy** is the probability of occurrence of a certain result – conceived subjectively and measured on a scale from 0 to 1. **Instrumentality** is the relationship between an action's outcome and the resulting action's consequence. It may lead to advantageous or disadvantageous impacts. **Valence** is the degree of a certain condition for an individual and how much this condition is desirable or important. As a basis for a motivational decision the three factors are calculated according to a formula taking into consideration the interaction between expectations and value of the acting outcome.

Author's comment: According to Vroom's theory individuals would achieve a good performance if a high probability of achieving the goal can be considered – this means that an individual's work performance is extrinsically motivated.

Nilson describes some credible **theories of motivation** (Nilson, 2010). He writes that if talking about motivation of students within this context – actually we all mean **stimulating of students' interest in the subject matter**. Nilson's theories are simplified by the author in a table hereinafter:

Table 3: Nilson's positive and negative theories of motivation – simplified by the author.

Theory	Positive motivation	Negative motivation
Behaviourism	Students are rewarded for their behaviour.	Students are punished for their behaviour.
Goal orientation	Students are allowed to take risks and make mistakes without any disadvantages, therefore they can improve.	Students work just for good grades, they are afraid of mistakes and this creates insecurity.
Relative value of the goal	Integrate students into the learning process; give them responsibility – even to the course content – and increase social learning.	Make the content more stimulating, interesting and emotionally engaging – from the Lecturer's point of view.
Expectancy of goal achievement	Give students tools – e.g. learn how to learn – to achieve their goals. Do not overwhelm them. Give students the feeling that Lecturers like them.	Lectures which are just requesting reproduction of knowledge without critical thinking.

Author's comment: According to Nilson we should concentrate our efforts just onto positive motivation to achieve the goal – meaning the intrinsic motivation. The question is, if within our study systems this is the only option because students are to be evaluated to determine if they reach a certain level, therefore the extrinsic motivation must have a certain place as well – even if in Nilson's theory this can be considered as just negative motivation.

Especially the positive motivation of the last theory – “*give students the feeling that Lecturers like them*” – forges a bridge to one of the most numerous researches which has ever been done within this perspective.

John Hattie, a professor of the University of Melbourne, issued the study “*Visible Learning*” – he based his results concerning the question “what is a good lecture?” on researches with 250 million students and pupils (Hattie, 2008). He comes to the conclusion that the Lecturer has the vital impact onto students’ performance – all the other circumstances he sees not that important. The following table describes Hattie’s results concerning increasing fruitful frames for and motivation of students:

Table 4: Hattie’s results listed according to priorities.

What really helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback of the Lecturer. • Problem-solving Lessons. • Advanced specialised education for Lecturers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes to stimulate reading. • Trust between Lecturer and student.
What helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular performance review. • Pre-study assistance measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer-managed lessons. • Additional offers for outstanding Students.
What helps a little bit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small groups. • Expensive equipment of the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovering learning. • Homework.
What does not help but does not harm either	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open lessons. • Inter-year lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web-based teaching and learning.
What harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition of years. • Excessive watching television. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long breaks (summer holidays).

Author’s comment: Because of Hattie’s priorities, in the military education context this means that **leadership skills and competences of Lecturers** must be the priority number one when talking about motivation of students. That is why the author concentrates the results of the first questionnaire onto this topic – it will be presented in the chapter “results of research”.

Taking the above mentioned theories into consideration, of course we have to think about different circumstances at different education institutions and different cultures (Dambeck, 2013) and we have to find the golden mean, but in all cases – when it comes to motivation of students – the Lecturer and his/her leadership performance seems to be one of the central points. That is why we have to concentrate our means onto the education of the educators – the increasing motivation of students should be the logical result then.

3. Methodology

According to Nilson, the literature does not come to a clear conclusion concerning the relationship between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and students’ performance (Nilson, 2010). The author elaborated results from questionnaires conducted with students of the Theresan Military Academy for this essay to find out how from the students’ point of view these motivation factors are seen and – on a later stage – how these answers fit to the theories described above. It is worth to mention that all education goals of the Austrian Basic Officer Education are connected to Heyse’s and Erpenbeck’s model of competences (Heyse & Erpenbeck, 2004). According to this model, all lectures, classes and modules must aim at increasing the four basic competences, which are the personal competence, the special knowledge, the activity & acting competence and the social & communicative competence. If there is a lack of one of the competences at the end of education, an Officer Cadet cannot graduate. As a consequence this theory also aims at Lecturers; having a certain level of all these competences is the best pre-condition to act as a Lecturer who has the ability to motivate students.

3.1 Skills and competences of Officers teaching at the institution

The author asked five classes of the Master and Bachelor Programme Military Leadership at the Theresan Military Academy which of the leadership skills and competences of Officers teaching at the institution are important. The Officer Cadets had total freedom for their written answers; the only task was to list them according to priorities and to describe in short words the respective skill and competence to avoid misunderstandings of terminology. By purpose the Officer Cadets were not framed with their answers to Heyse's and Erpenbeck's model of competences because the author saw possibilities for "thinking out of the box". Out of 1,308 answers given by 327 Officer Cadets the author gave them points according to the Officer Cadets' priorities, calculated the percentage in comparison with all answers and listed them on a scale from zero to 100 (Gell, 2011).

3.2 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors

Just some weeks before the start of the 2015-colloquium in Brno, the author asked representatives from three classes of the Bachelor Programme Military Leadership at the Theresan Military Academy which factors motivate them and which factors demotivates them. The questionnaire was to be answered by one branch- representative from each class – in total by 21 Officer Cadets. Again, they had a total freedom for their written answers; in some cases the author asked them verbally more deeply on a later stage to be sure what they exactly meant. The answers were to be given concerning the motivation before the study – meaning what motivated them to start the education to become an Officer – and during the education – meaning which factors motivate them to increase their performance. Afterwards, the answers were clustered into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors.

4. Results of Research

4.1 Skills and competences of Officers teaching at the institution

In chapter 2 of this essay the author describes the importance of leadership skills and competences of Lecturers (Hattie, 2008). Out of all the answers given by the 327 Officer Cadets just 36 skills and competences could be clustered which are listed in the following table according to priorities.

Table 5: Answers of Officer Cadets concerning importance of skills and competences of Officers teaching at the institution.

01	Special knowledge and ability	13	Inspiring confidence	25	Authority
02	Expert in knowing people	14	Fairness	26	Life experience
03	Power to convince	15	Responsible-minded	27	Reliability
04	Resilient and calm	16	Motivator	28	Intelligence
05	Decision-making ability	17	Directness	29	Self-criticism
06	Role-model	18	Loyalty	30	Humour
07	Charism	19	Comradeship	31	Command language
08	Analytical thinking	20	Discipline	32	Creativity
09	Honesty	21	Sportsmanship	33	Self-reliance
10	Purposefulness	22	Behaviour	34	Ability to teach
11	Self-assurance	23	Courage	35	Moral & ethics
12	Flexibility	24	Capacity for teamwork	36	Punctuality

If now the importance of given answers is listed on a scale, we can see that for Officer Cadets – being students of a higher education programme at the same time – the first eleven skills and competences have a more important significance. Because of better overview just these eleven skills and competences are shown in the following figure 2:

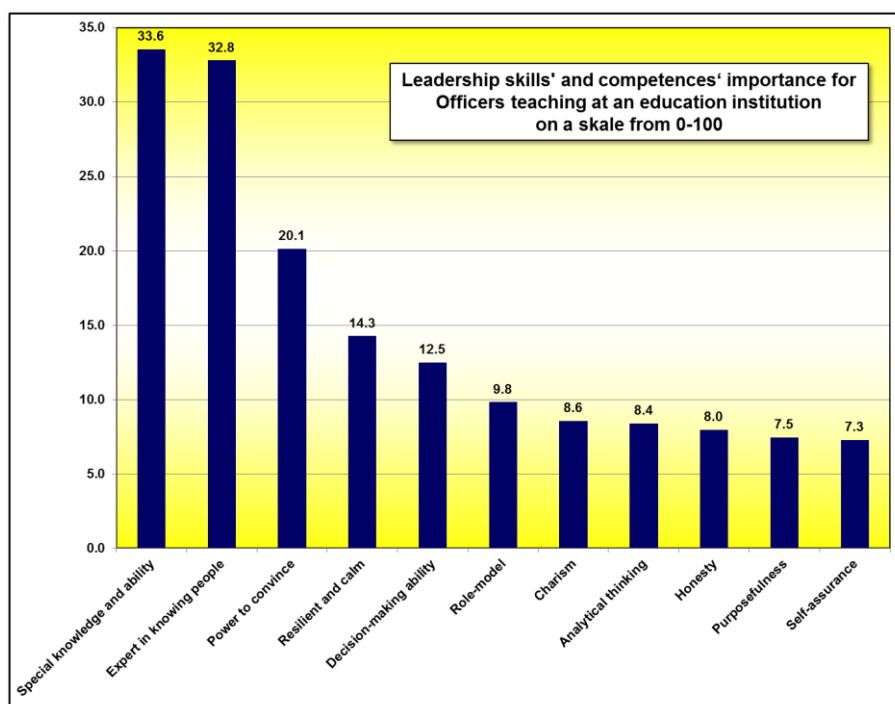


Figure 2: Importance of skills and competences from Officer Cadets' point of view.

Discussion: We can see that for Officer Cadets a good Lecturer should have a variety of skills and competences. According to Heyse's and Erpenbeck's model of competences, special knowledge – meaning that from the Lecturer it is expected that he/she is an expert – is important but it is not the only ability, other skills and competences – especially those ones which military personnel subordinate under the term **leadership** – are important as well. Taking the motivation theories into consideration which are described in the theoretical part the following connections can be made:

- Students expect from Lecturers according to McClelland's motivators mainly personal and institutional power.
- Herzberg's motivators apply a bit concerning appreciation and responsibility.
- Nilson's theories and Hattie's results obviously apply mostly because their theories focus more on how to motivate others – in the sense of extrinsic motivation – than on the other theories which focus onto self-motivation.
- A lot of answers can be integrated into Heyse's and Erpenbeck's model of competences and their detail-characteristics.

The added value of this questionnaire's results is that Officer Cadets expect from Lecturers specific skills and competences to be motivated – this refers more to the extrinsic motivation. When selecting Lecturers the results may be taken into consideration on the one hand – on the other hand a specific Lecturers' education may focus onto increasing skills and competences listed in table 5.

4.2 Intrinsic motivation factors

It is described in chapter 3.2 how the following answers were achieved. The first part of the answers refers to those motivation factors which motivated the students to start the education to become an Officer. Logically, all of these factors are intrinsic ones, since it is difficult to imagine that aspirants are punished if they do not start the education.

The author could neither identify certain priorities out of the answers nor in a personal talk to the students any of them were determined as vital ones; therefore, the answers of the following table can be considered as of equal importance:

Table 6: Answers of Officer Cadets concerning motivation factors to start the education.

Accept a challenge.	Possibilities to go abroad.
Climbing up a hierarchy.	Varying education.
Convey interest in military matters.	Thirst for adventure.
Interest to take over responsibility.	Reputation of the Officer's profession in society.
Knowing what a Student can expect.	Possibility to know more than the average population.
Occupational safety.	

The question “*what motivates students during their education*” resulted just in a few intrinsic answers. They are listed in the following table – again – because of the students’ answers the factors can be considered as of equal importance:

Table 7: Answers of Officer Cadets concerning motivation factors during their education.

Appreciation of performance.	Ranking list among the students.
Comradeship.	Taking over of responsibility.
Imitation of a role-model.	Variety of the education.

4.3 Extrinsic motivation factors

All of the extrinsic motivation factors which the Officer Cadets mentioned can be summarized as negative motivation (Nilson, 2010). Therefore, one of the fastest avenues of approach to motivate students could be to eliminate those negative factors (Semmer & Udris, 2007 and Buettner, 2013). The extrinsic motivation factors are listed in the following table and can be considered as of equal importance:

Table 8: Answers of Officer Cadets concerning extrinsic motivation factors.

Additional tasks not coordinated with the study programme.	Lack of responsibility.
Just a means to an end of Officer education.	Mental underload.

Discussion: In times of decreasing interest for the military Officer’s profession it is important to know which intrinsic motivation factors attract possible future students. Even if the Basic Officer Institutions fulfil the students’ expectations during the study period it may be considered if the advertisement methods are aiming at the right priorities. According to McClelland’s three motivators it can be stated that the expectations during the study period can be fulfilled; also Herzberg’s motivators fit to the students’ answers. Nilson’s positive and negative motivators apply as well as Hattie’s results. In contrary to Herzberg’s theory – which is criticised anyway in this particular case (Semmer & Udris, 2007 and Buettner, 2013) – the elimination of demotivating factors cause motivation – we can underline this argument when taking the intrinsic motivation of “taking over of responsibility” in comparison with the extrinsic one “lack of responsibility”. The elimination of the extrinsic one consequently leads to motivation.

Coming back to the intrinsic motivation before starting the education, just an example illustrates the further steps to be done: One of the students’ answers was that they start the education to become an Officer because of the possibilities to go abroad. The reality according to the valid accreditation paper for the studies of military leadership is that 100 percent of the students have to spend an entire semester as well as an internship abroad. If the advertisement expresses this fact explicitly, probably more aspirants may consider starting the education. This situation also refers to the other motivating factors mentioned by the Officer Cadets.

5. Conclusions

Within this essay the author tries to combine the theoretical elaborations concerning motivation of students with results from questionnaires conducted with Officers Cadets. Two research questions were determined; the first one aims at skills and competences of Officers – answered in chapter 4.1 – and the second one aims at motivating factors before and during the Basic Officer Education – answered in chapter 4.2 and 4.3. Following the results, some appropriate actions can be taken how to motivate students for the purpose of increasing their performance.

1. **Educate the educators:** Just to have an excellent knowledge about a certain topic in a special field is not enough. Professors, Lecturers and Officers need more. In general it can be summarized as a mix of skills and competences according to Heyse's and Erpenbeck's model of competences (Heyse & Erpenbeck, 2004) – just one of them is special knowledge. Other competences aim at social ones; especially the trust between students and Lecturers seems to be an important one (Hattie, 2008). Moreover, Lecturers should be seen and act as role-models – then it will be much easier for them to motivate the students. Leadership skills – in the military context this is more seen as the ability to lead troops in combat – are essential for university and academy Lecturers as well. If all these – mentioned before – a Lecturer does not have, it should be logical that he or she must undergo an education to reach all these competences. Then it will be much easier to motivate students.
2. **Give students room for achieving their intrinsic motivation:** In this context the handover of responsibility seems to be important – especially for future military Officers. It goes hand in hand with (new) learning methods, even to such methods where the students are allowed to take over the role as a Lecturer. A proper feedback of the experienced Lecturer is a must to increase students' performance for the future.
3. **Eliminate de-motivation:** First of all the institutions have to know which the real de-motivating factors are. In all higher education institutions evaluation systems exist as part of the quality assurance system. The question is – is this enough to discover the de-motivating factors? Only trust and open-minded talks may help – the students have to have the feeling not to face negative consequences if they are telling the truth. As soon as the de-motivating factors are identified, it is the fastest way to motivate students because of eliminating them.

Finally, it can be said that motivation of students always requires a bunch of actions to be taken to increase their performance. But that is why Lecturers' jobs at education institutions exist – **we are there for our students!**

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