An Exploratory Study on the Influencing Factors of Personal Development Motivation in Learners to Improve Quality Education

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Abstract

This research explores the interconnected aspects of personal and social development in educational psychology, focusing on the role of schools, the influence of the home environment, and the effects of motivation on students' educational outcomes. The study aims to understand the formation of personal development motivation in university students through qualitative research, which includes in-depth interviews with a diverse sample. The research objectives are to identify the factors affecting learning motivation and to investigate the role of schools and the home environment in shaping students' motivation. The findings reveal the significance of intrinsic motivation in promoting engagement, autonomy, and quality education. Extrinsic motivation, while providing initial support, lacks the lasting impact of intrinsic motivation. Universities play a vital role in shaping motivation, providing an intellectually stimulating and supportive environment. The family environment significantly influences motivation, with parental encouragement and financial support fostering a conducive atmosphere for learning. To support students' growth and development, educators must recognize the interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and create environments that encourage both types. By adopting the recommendations, schools and families can inspire students and foster their motivation for studies.

Keywords: *motivation; environment; learning; personal development; quality education.*

1. Introduction

The background of the research lies in the significance of personal development motivation in shaping academic achievements and overall success among university students. Identifying the factors influencing personal development motivation is essential for educational practitioners and institutions to effectively support student growth (Mega, Ronconi, & De Beni, 2014). According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (2022), the school environment provides a social context that promotes cognitive growth and the acquisition of social skills. Also, the home environment is recognized as a crucial factor influencing students' learning outcomes. Research by Epstein (2020) emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in fostering academic achievement (Skinner,2019). A supportive home environment characterized by parental encouragement, engagement in educational activities, and access to learning resources has been linked to positive

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educational outcomes (Sui-Chu & Willms, 2021). Motivation is a critical factor that influences students' engagement and success in the learning process. The Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) posits that intrinsic motivation, driven by personal interest and satisfaction, is vital for optimal learning outcomes. Extrinsic motivation, such as rewards or punishments, may have short-term effects but can undermine long-term intrinsic motivation (Grolnick, 2021). The Achievement goal theory (Wentzel, 2021) suggests that students' beliefs about intelligence and the purpose of learning can influence their motivation.

The current research involves qualitative research, specifically in-depth interviews with university students. The research objective is to investigate the factors affecting the formation of learning motivation and the roles of schools and homes in motivating students to learn. The research involves collecting data from 20 university students through face-to-face interviews.

2. Methodology

The primary research conducted in this study employed the qualitative method, specifically in-depth interviews with a diverse sample of 20 university students. The objective was to comprehensively understand the factors influencing the formation of personal development motivation in students. The study focused on the role of schools and the home environment on learning and the effects of motivation on educational outcomes. These questions aim to explore the factors influencing students' motivation to study and the role of internal and external factors, including personal drive, university support, and the home environment. This is as per the goal of SDG 4 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations [UN], 2015, Target 4.1. The focus on the university's role and approach, as well as the comparison between the university and home environment, provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing motivation in the learning process.

3. Results

Of the 20 student respondents, 12 were females and eight males. Their ages were between 18 and 24 years, encompassing university students hailing from five countries: Myanmar, India, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Of these, four were raised in single-parent households while the remaining 16 hailed from dual-parent families. In exploring students' inclinations toward intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, it was found that three students prioritized extrinsic motivation, six acknowledged the significance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and nine emphasized the importance of intrinsic motivation. Regarding the impact of family and school on motivation formation, ten students regarded family as the primary influencer, three students deemed both equally influential, and three students leaned toward school as the dominant factor.

4. Discussion

4.1 Learning Motivation

4.1.1 The Favorable Influence of Intrinsic Motivation on Learning

The learning process is influenced by various factors categorized into four major groups: intrinsic, extrinsic, family, and university factors (Lee & Martin, 2017). Intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing engagement, autonomy, and academic performance (Guay, 2022). It also promotes creative thinking and problem-solving in creative learning tasks (Cheng, 2019). Students with high intrinsic motivation are more

likely to employ deep learning strategies such as active thinking, concept integration, and self-directed learning (Premkumar et al., 2018).

Based on the insights shared by the 20 participants, we can discern a logical process through which intrinsic motivation exerts its positive influence on learning. Specifically, 16 participants expressed that their 'Enthusiasm for learning' and the sense of 'Personal fulfillment' they derive serve as intrinsic motivators propelling their educational journey. Some participants highlighted their innate drive to study, fueled by an 'Ardent enthusiasm' for learning and the 'Personal satisfaction' that accompanies the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. For these individuals, joy and fulfillment manifest in the mastery of complex concepts and the completion of arduous projects. Similarly, 14 participants cited the 'Sense of achievement' as a significant intrinsic motivator that fuels their learning. These participants find gratification in achieving high academic rankings and securing commendable grades, serving as a driving force for their continued efforts in learning. Mastery of intricate concepts and the completion of challenging tasks also contribute to their sense of joy and fulfillment. Furthermore, 11 participants emphasized 'Personal growth' as their intrinsic motivation for learning. They recognize the importance of self-improvement and envisioning a promising future as influential factors that drive their diligence in studying, aiming to achieve favorable outcomes.

4.1.2 Favorable Effects of Extrinsic Motivation on Learning

External rewards, such as monetary incentives, can enhance student motivation and performance, especially when learning tasks lack inherent appeal or challenge (Westera, 2019). High school students who receive monetary rewards for academic achievements tend to invest more time and effort, leading to improved academic outcomes (Barrow & Rouse, 2018). External motivation can also encourage students to set ambitious goals and put in more effort (Seo, Patall, Henderson, & Steingut, 2018). However, it's essential to strike a balance, as over-reliance on external rewards may harm intrinsic motivation and overall learning motivation (Malek, Sarin, & Haon, 2020). Therefore, a holistic approach that combines both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation strategies may be more effective in practice.

Drawing from the responses of the 20 participants, we can discern a logical process through which extrinsic motivation exerts a positive influence on learning. 13 participants cited the motivation to 'Graduate successfully and achieve personal success' as a driving force that encourages their dedication to learning. Their extrinsic drive to study stems from the desire to attain successful graduation and secure a prosperous future. They also emphasize the importance of 'Personal accomplishment' and the 'Satisfaction' derived from excelling academically, serving as motivating factors that propel their learning efforts. Similar sentiments are echoed in the joy and fulfillment they experience through the mastery of complex concepts and the completion of challenging tasks. Additionally, seven participants attributed their external motivation to 'Comparisons with peers' and the establishment of 'Personal goals', both of which fuel their commitment to learning. They value the drive to catch up with exceptional peers and the need for continual improvement, emphasizing the significance of gradual progress and daily achievements in overall growth. Compared with peers, external support and obligations were also mentioned as factors that influence intrinsic motivation to some degree. Furthermore, participants noted the 'Guidance and encouragement provided by teachers', 'Support' from family, and 'Positive reinforcement' from peers as external factors that foster their continued learning. 'Educational expenses', 'Familial expectations', and the necessity of 'Passing exams' were identified as additional influencing factors that motivate their learning efforts. In conclusion, extrinsic motivation contributes to the promotion of learning. Comparisons with peers, external support, and obligations hold varying degrees of influence on learning motivation. Factors such as recognition, support, competition, and anticipated future prospects of work motivate individuals to engage in the learning process. A study by Tan et al. (2022) examined the direct relationship between learner

quality, learning environment quality and content quality on students' employability. The study's findings show the marked influence of learning environment and content quality over learner quality.

4.2 University environment influence

4.2.1 The Role of University in Forming Students' Motivation

By providing a challenging and supportive academic environment, universities can help students develop a sense of purpose and direction, and further motivate them to achieve their goals (Ryan & Deci, 2020). University factors mainly include the university's educational philosophy, curriculum, teaching resources (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2019). A university's educational philosophy shapes its educational environment and affects student learning and development (Miranda et al., 2021).A study by Núñez and León (2015) explored the impact of autonomy support from teachers on students' intrinsic motivation. The findings indicated that autonomy support positively influenced students' intrinsic motivation, leading to increased engagement and performance.

Specifically, 11 respondents emphasized the importance of a 'supportive' and 'stimulating learning environment', with 'excellent faculty', a 'wealth of resources' and 'research opportunities' at the university, 'encouraging' and 'motivating' students to learn. They further commented: "Teachers and classmates are excellent, they indirectly encourage me to study hard and keep up with them". Students in this perspective feel cared for and supported in their academic journey. Seven respondents view the university as a 'platform' that guides and shapes students, stimulating their inner motivation. Understanding, learning, and striving for success are 'encouraged', and the availability of 'scholarships' further motivates students. By fostering a culture of academic excellence and personal growth, universities can inspire students to reach their full potential and become lifelong learners.

4.2.2 The Ways University Have an Effect on Student Motivation

A study by Wang and Eccles (2012) found that students who perceived a positive and supportive classroom climate in college reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation and academic engagement. Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT)(2016) suggests that when students have the freedom to pursue their interests (autonomy) and take ownership , they saw the relevance of their studies and were more likely to be motivated and committed to their academic endeavors (Jiang, Simpkins, & Eccles, 2020). Implementing High-Impact Educational Practices (HIPs) as suggested by Rajanthran, Wider, Wong et al. (2023), can enhance classroom self-management, student engagement, and overall student success.

Specifically, in this interview, 14 interviewees emphasized that a supportive classroom environment had a positive impact on their motivation to learn, namely the 'participatory teaching methods', 'positive feedback' and 'collaboration' with peers. The interactions help to increase their learning motivation and interest. Eight respondents mentioned that the teacher's "guiding direction," "freedom" "independent thought" would make them feel motivated. When students are free to explore their interests, set their own learning goals and think independently in an encouraging academic environment, they are more motivated to develop their own academic thinking. Nine students mentioned the use of "internal textbooks", "specific system outline textbooks" and teaching "resources" under "teacher guidance" and believed that universities play an important role in providing relevant resources and guidance for students. The availability of specialized materials, faculty guidance, and a stimulating academic atmosphere help motivate students to pursue knowledge and engage in meaningful discussions with their peers.

4.3 The Effect of Family Environment on Students Motivation

Family factors include parents' support, family economic status, and family environment (Chen, Kong, Gao, and Mo 2018).

4.3.1 Parents Encouragement of students Motivation

In this research, nine of the 20 respondents say their parents' encouragement is important to their learning. Parents' "encouragement" was a big part of helping me "relax and feel more at ease" while I was learning. They were always "offering words of encouragement" and caring about my education. Their positive words and support foster students' motivation to learn. This aligns with Social Cognitive Theory, which highlights the "influence of observation and social influences on behavior" (O'Connor, K. (2020). Studies show that a good relationship exists between parental support and academic success (Shahzad et. al., 2020). Overall, parents' constant support helped students stay motivated, which helped their educational journey.

4.3.2 Financial support impacts student motivation.

Bronfenbrenner (2019) emphasized the importance of the family environment for individual development in his ecosystem theory. According to this theory, family serves as a primary context that "influences a person's growth and well-being (Roostin, 2018). In this research, five of the 20 respondents agreed that financial support motivated their learning, allowing them to focus on learning without worrying about "survival issues" such as "food, clothing, and shelter". Also, all respondents concurred that the financial support from parents has a big effect on motivating students to learn . If parents cannot help students with finances, it makes students less interested in studying, which hurts their academic performance (Moneva, Pestano, and Vertulfo, 2020). The results align with Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, which says that the "home environment is very important to a person's growth" (the Asian Parent, 2020). Parents' financial support lets students focus on their studies without having to worry about basic needs.

4.3.3 Conductive environment: motivation for students to learn

A conductive home environment plays a critical role in motivating students to learn. Five of the 20 respondents supported the view that a "quiet and comfortable space" for studying contributes strongly to students' motivation to learn. It aligns with the Cognitive Load Theory, which highlights the "influence of the learning environment on cognitive resources and outcomes (Dong, Jong, and King 2020). Creating a dedicated study area at home with "minimal distractions reduces the cognitive load" (Westlake, 2020). This optimized environment makes it "easier to concentrate and focus, which leads to better academic success" in the long run (Stewart and Maisonville, 2019). The optimized environment view to spur motivation and interest in studies was supported by all respondents.

4.4 Limitations of the Research

The research has certain limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the study's sample size was relatively small, involving only 20 university students, which may limit the generalizability of the results to a broader population. Secondly, the data collected through face-to-face interviews may be susceptible to self-reporting bias, potentially influencing the accuracy and authenticity of participants' responses. Thirdly, the research was conducted in specific countries and universities, potentially restricting the applicability of the findings to other cultural and educational contexts. Therefore, further research with larger and more diverse samples, employing longitudinal approaches, is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of motivation in education.

5. Conclusion

The factors influencing student motivation are multifaceted, with intrinsic motivation driving sustained and meaningful learning experiences. While extrinsic motivators can provide initial support, they may lack lasting impact. Universities play a pivotal role in shaping motivation by fostering an intellectually stimulating and supportive environment. The family environment also significantly impacts motivation, with parental encouragement and financial support fostering a conducive atmosphere for learning. A holistic approach that nurtures intrinsic motivation at home and in educational institutions is essential for cultivating lifelong learners and enabling students to reach their fullest potential. Recognizing the interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, along with the influence of family and university, educators can better support students' personal motivation to learn and help them achieve their academic and personal goals. Universities too must develop action plans for integrating sustainability to give students the skills and knowledge required to apply the different competencies inside the university ecosystem (Rasli et al., 2022).

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