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STUDENT MOTIVATION: OVERVIEW OF KEY THEORIES

Abstract

The phenomenon of student motivation in high school is crucial for academic success and long-term educational outcomes. It is a complex and multidimensional construct, with both internal and external influences. However, despite extensive research on motivation, there remains a need to deepen our understanding of how various factors such as individual characteristics, teacher practices, and the learning environment interact to influence student motivation specifically in the high school setting. In order to understand the psychological dimension of motivation, its internal and external aspects need to be considered in such discussions. The internal refers to what exists within us and focuses on the individual and their actions. Specifically, it is fostered when the action is experienced as autonomous. On the contrary, external motivation is dependant on external factors. For high school students, motivation for studying relates to the internal or external drive that pushes students to engage in learning activities, complete assignments, and strive for academic success during their middle school years. This demonstrates that there are a range of factors that influence the encouragement of motivation for learning. This review aims to portray the complex dynamics of student motivation in high school and identify key determinants and barriers to motivation. Self-Determination Theory and Achievement Goal Theory can be distinguished among main theories related to motivation. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and competence in driving behavior. On the other hand, Achievement Goal Theory explores how students' goals and the classroom environment influence their motivation and achievement.

Keywords: *student, motivation, Self-Determination Theory, Achievement Goal Theory*

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1. **The Concept of Student Motivation**

1.1. The Definition and Importance of Student Motivation

The term "motivation" comes from the word "motive," referring to "something that drives someone to act." (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/). Using this root, motivation can be defined as something that directs and guides behavior towards a goal. Another way to express this concept is that motivation is goal-directed behavior, combined with efforts to work towards that goal. Motivation directs learning, guides students in the right direction, and keeps them engaged.

Motivation is a key issue in learning. Considering that it is a complex and multidimensional construct, with both internal and external influences, Williams and Burden (as cited in (Svobodova 2015)) divide motivational components into two categories: internal and external influences, with several sub-components. The internal relates to learner control and external to environmental or contextual factors, which both interact with one another.

Of the fourteen principles, three are directly related to motivation for learning. The first principle is linked to the motivational and emotional influences of learning, which are triggered by emotional states, beliefs, interests, goals, and expressions of thought. The second principle refers to the creativity of learners, high-level thinking, and natural curiosity, which influence internal motivation for learning. Internal motivation for learning is stimulated by new and challenging tasks, important for personal interests, which provide personal choice and control. The third principle deals with the impact of motivation during learners' efforts. If the practice is not motivated, the willingness to continue efforts is not assured. These three principles demonstrate the range of factors that influence the encouragement of motivation for learning. They include the learner's being expressed through values and attitudes, student engagement in learning, their understanding of control and self-efficacy, as well as students' willingness to exert effort in achieving learning goals.

Ginsberg (2005) has proposed various hypotheses about motivation for learning, as motivation cannot be directly observed and measured precisely. In general, researchers examine signs, behaviors, words, and expressions of individuals, which serve as indicators of interest, effort, and perseverance. Motivation is the drive or desire to do something, typically stemming from a combination of internal and external factors. It is what pushes people to take action, pursue goals, and achieve results. Motivation can be influenced by various factors such as personal values,

beliefs, desires, rewards, consequences, and the environment. For middle school students, motivation for studying refers to the internal or external drive that pushes students to engage in learning activities, complete assignments, and strive for academic success during their middle school years. Such desire, ambition, or determination propels students to invest time and effort into their studies, pursue knowledge, and achieve their educational goals (Ackerman 2018). The relevant literature to the conceptual framework of this study on student motivation in high school encompasses various perspectives that shed light on different aspects of motivation and its influence on academic success.

Self-Determination Theory and Achievement Goal Theory can be distinguished among main theories related to motivation. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Hattie 2023) emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and competence in driving behavior. Researchers like Deci and Ryan, who developed the Self-Determination Theory, emphasize the significance of intrinsic motivation and autonomy in driving student engagement and achievement (Drew 2023). Their work provides valuable insights into the psychological factors that influence motivation. Another relevant theory is the Achievement Goal Theory (Duda 2004), which explores how students' goals and the classroom environment influence their motivation and achievement.

Furthermore, scholars like Carol Dweck have explored the concept of mindset, highlighting the importance of a growth mindset in fostering resilience and perseverance among students (C and Drew 2023). Dweck's research (Toshihiko and Weiner 1991) underscores the idea that beliefs about intelligence and abilities can significantly impact motivation and learning outcomes. In terms of practical strategies, researchers such as John Hattie have conducted meta-analyses to identify high-impact teaching practices that positively influence student motivation and achievement (Hattie 2023). Hattie's work emphasizes the importance of providing effective feedback, setting clear learning goals, and fostering positive teacher-student relationships. Drawing from these various perspectives, it becomes evident that student motivation in high school is influenced by a combination of internal factors (such as mindset and intrinsic motivation) and external factors (such as teacher practices and classroom environment).

To this end, it is crucial to acknowledge the complexity of the issue and recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, educators should employ a variety of evidence-based strategies tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of their students. While intrinsic motivation holds

undeniable importance, external incentives and nurturing educational surroundings also wield considerable influence in cultivating student commitment and achievement. External incentives, such as rewards or recognition, play a significant role in motivating high school students by providing tangible benefits for academic success. Additionally, nurturing educational surroundings, including supportive teachers, engaging learning environments, and opportunities for autonomy and growth, foster a sense of belonging and intrinsic motivation.

1.1.   Motivation of Students

Lack of students` motivation has been an area of concerns for teachers, parents and researchers. In the educational setting, the reasons for the decline in motivation can vary from the large number of students in the class, insufficient time to engage all students during the lesson, to the dominant role of the teacher and students left mostly passive role during the teaching process (Lama, Sula and Gjokutaj 2011). As argued by Hamp-Lyons (2007) empirical studies show that some key components in learning are: allocated time for learning, motivation to learn, opportunities to practice, smaller class sizes, confidence, classrooms equipped with contemporary technology, and trained teachers in effective teaching and student motivation techniques. It is important to identify the source of students' motivation so that teachers can utilize different tools, methods, and strategies to increase students' motivation levels.

As Pintrich argues, some sources of student motivation include (2003):

> "Some students may be motivated and sustained by their self-confidence, while others are motivated by working hard to achieve goals, various personal interests, beliefs, or contextual factors that directly motivate, support, and direct their behavior. At this point in the development of motivation theories, it is most productive to understand the different ways and various contextual and personal factors that interact to create different models of motivated behavior" (p. 671).

The above argument encapsulates the essence of dominant theories of motivation for learning. When we address students` beliefs and self-efficacy, focusing on how they are motivated to work hard to achieve their goals, we are attempting to understand motivation from a psychological perspective at the individual level of the learner. In this sense, we assess their belief

in their abilities to succeed and the role this belief plays in stimulating further effort to achieve their goals.

On the other hand, when we consider contextual factors such as school environments and the influence of others, we describe motivation from a contextual perspective. In such a context, we understand that environments such as the classroom, social relationships in school, and the teacher's teaching style influence students' motivation. These contextual factors affect students' perception of themselves, their belief in their abilities, and their sensitivity to school and the learning process.

Therefore, to understand students' motivation, it is important to look in two directions: from an individual psychological perspective and from a contextual perspective that includes significant environmental and social factors. Combining these two perspectives gives us a deeper understanding of the process of students' motivation and enables us to develop effective strategies to enhance their motivation and performance in school.

2. Types of Motivation
2.1.Internal and External Motivation

Internal and external motivation are key conditions for understanding the psychological dimension of motivation more deeply. Their definitions and usage are closely linked with many other elements of motivation. A further exploration is depicted below.

"Internal" means something that exists within us that does not come from outside. Syamsuddin (Syamsuddin 2021) has identified two forms of internal motivation, which focus on the individual and their actions. According to Syamsuddin,

> "Students may primarily study because they want to gain certain knowledge, or because they are interested in a particular subject" (2021: 233-234).

Deci and Ryan (2015) have also argued that "internal motivation is fostered when the action is experienced as autonomous and, at the same time, the supportive learning context and self-confidence provide the conditions for the development of internal motivation".

"External motivation," on the other hand, means "something that comes from outside." (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ n.d.). According to Syansuddin (2021), external motivation refers to external stimuli of learning, if we base ourselves on the behaviorist notion of reinforcement. If students have external motivation, they engage in certain behaviors because "the predicted responses satisfy their needs (primary needs), or are a modified form of socialization to satisfy primary needs (e.g., prestige = secondary need)" (p. 233). Maehr and Stallings (1972) studied students performing tasks of varying difficulty under the influence of internal and external motivation. They found that students who worked under conditions of internal motivation remained interested in working on difficult tasks, while students who worked under conditions of external motivation lost interest in tackling difficult tasks, preferring to only engage in easier ones.

Syamsuddin (2021) has also emphasized the importance of external forces such as rewards and punishments. This relationship implies the influence of others in the school context; for example, teachers are usually the ones who give rewards and punishments when classmates study and are compared with each other. Harter and Jackson confirm the importance of influence from others, especially from teachers. According to them, external motivation is: "Orientation, when students are motivated by the desire to get high grades, to gain the confidence of teachers. So, to meet the external demands of the school system" (Harter and Jackson, 1992, as cited in Murphy and Alexander, 2000, p. 13). Pintrich (2003) has classified external motivation into four categories: External: Which is controlled by others or by external constraints such as rewards. Influence of others: In this case, control is perceived as external, as the individual seeks the approval of others. Identified: Where there is more internal control and self-support of values and goals. Integrated: Reflects high internal control and harmony between oneself, values, and goals" (p. 673).

2.2. Intrinsic Motivation

Psychologists Richard Ryan and Edward Deci are renowned for developing the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of motivation. This theory challenged the prevailing notion that the most effective method for motivating individuals to perform tasks is through the use of external rewards. SDT, with its emphasis on full functioning, aligns closely with eudaimonic thinking, a philosophical tradition that distinguishes mere happiness from living well. The concept of eudaimonia, rooted in Aristotelian philosophy, concerns the content and process of a fulfilling life. Unlike the hedonic

perspective, which focuses on happiness as a specific outcome, the eudaimonic perspective revolves around the principles for leading a rich and meaningful human existence that realizes valued potential.

Within this framework, happiness is not synonymous with wellness, nor is it the primary goal of living well. Instead, eudaimonia emphasizes the pursuit of intrinsic values and the fulfillment of one's human capacities. While happiness may arise as a natural byproduct of living a eudaimonic lifestyle, shallow or inauthentic pursuits that deviate from intrinsic values are unlikely to sustain overall wellness.

SDT recognizes happiness as a potential indicator of wellness, stemming from the fulfillment of intrinsic needs and the authentic pursuit of meaningful goals. However, it also acknowledges that genuine wellness extends beyond momentary pleasure, emphasizing the importance of aligning actions with intrinsic values for sustained fulfillment and flourishing. Richard Ryan and Edward Deci's research on motivation, particularly within the context of high school students, has significantly contributed to our understanding of how to foster intrinsic motivation and promote academic engagement. Their work, often grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), highlights the importance of satisfying three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the high school setting, providing students with opportunities to make choices and have control over their learning (autonomy), ensuring that tasks are appropriately challenging yet achievable (competence), and fostering supportive relationships with teachers and peers (relatedness) are crucial for promoting intrinsic motivation. Ryan and Deci emphasize the significance of intrinsic motivation, which arises from engaging in activities for their inherent enjoyment and satisfaction rather than for external rewards or pressures. They advocate for educational practices that nurture students' intrinsic motivation, such as promoting a sense of autonomy in learning tasks, providing constructive feedback that supports competence development, and fostering a sense of belonging and connection within the school community.

Furthermore, their research underscores the detrimental effects of extrinsic motivators, such as rewards and punishments, on intrinsic motivation. Instead, they advocate for a motivational climate characterized by autonomy support, where students feel empowered to pursue their interests and passions, take ownership of their learning, and develop a sense of competence and mastery (Deci and Ryan 2015). In summary, Ryan and Deci's work highlights the importance of

creating a supportive and autonomy-supportive environment in high schools to foster intrinsic motivation, academic engagement, and ultimately, student success. Their research informs educators' practices and interventions aimed at promoting a love of learning and enhancing students' overall well-being.

3. Selected Theories
3.1. John Hattie`s Meta-Analysis

John Hattie, a distinguished faculty member at the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education, has dedicated nearly three decades to his research known as Visible Learning (Hattie 2023). This extensive body of work involves the meticulous synthesis of over 100,000 studies encompassing the educational experiences of over 300 million students worldwide. In 2008, John Hattie published the book "Visible Learning" (Hattie 2023), which aimed to elucidate the most effective approaches to fostering student learning. At the time, it was hailed as the world's most extensive evidence-based investigation into factors enhancing learning outcomes. The book synthesized findings from 800 meta-analyses, pooling data from 50,000 individual studies. It concluded that among the myriad factors influencing learning success – including student characteristics, home environment, school environment, teacher quality, curriculum design, and instructional strategies – teachers exerted the most significant influence within the school setting.

After its publication, partners (Hattie 2023) have implemented the "visible learning" approach in over 10,000 schools worldwide. This approach prioritizes rendering student learning processes transparent, enabling students to comprehend the impact of their efforts and learning strategies, while also empowering teachers to assess the efficacy of their teaching methods through the lens of student experience. This shift in focus from teaching to learning and from pedagogical discourse to measurable impact is essential for cultivating safe, equitable, and engaging learning environments, conducive to experimentation, collaboration, growth, and flourishing the years following its initial publication, the landscape of education has undergone significant transformations. With the emergence of over 1,300 new meta-analyses and the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schooling, our understanding of effective teaching practices has evolved.

The new version of "Visible Learning: The Sequel" was unveiled to the world in 2023. Built upon an extensive foundation of research encompassing over 2,100 meta-analyses and drawing from

more than 130,000 studies, this sequel engaged with the experiences of over 400 million students aged three to 25, predominantly from developed nations. Reaffirming the enduring significance of high-impact teaching, the sequel underscores the pivotal role of educators who prioritize the outcomes of their pedagogical efforts and engage in collaborative reflection with peers to assess the effectiveness of their instructional strategies. This includes evaluating not only what was taught effectively, but also who benefitted and the extent of improvement achieved. Beyond this, the ongoing analysis has yielded a wealth of additional insights into effective teaching practices, further enriching our collective understanding of how-to best support student learning and achievement.

New research findings (Hattie 2023) have shed light on additional factors that impact student achievement levels. The analysis reveals that certain elements, such as boredom, teacher-student dependency, and the use of corporal punishment, can have detrimental effects on student performance. The study (Hattie 2023) has identified several strategies and practices that have been shown to enhance student learning outcomes:

- Computer tutoring programs that offer immediate feedback, especially those leveraging artificial intelligence.
- Implementation of "flipped learning" approaches, where students receive instructional content before attending class.
- Teachers' explicit outlining and summarization of learning materials to aid comprehension.
- Instruction on effective rehearsal and memorization techniques for students.
- Adoption of the "Jigsaw method," which combines individual and group learning activities to collaboratively solve problems.

The foremost responsibility of teachers is to maintain high expectations for every student. This entails refraining from labeling students based on perceived abilities or challenges, such as categorizing them as "bright," "strugglers," etc. Such labels can lower both teacher and student expectations, undermining the belief in each student's potential for significant growth. Instead, teachers should view all students as capable learners who can make substantial progress in their learning journey. Clarity is paramount in communicating learning objectives and content to students, ensuring they understand the goals they are working towards.

3.2. Carol Dweck's Theory

Carol Dweck is renowned for her research on human motivation, dedicating her time to understanding the factors that contribute to success or failure and how we can cultivate success. Her exploration into the theory of two mindsets and their profound influence on outcomes has garnered widespread recognition (Drew, 2023). In her own words, she explains that her work delves into the intersection of developmental psychology, social psychology, and personality psychology. She investigates the various self-conceptions or mindsets; individuals adopt to shape their sense of self and guide their actions. Her research focuses on uncovering the origins of these mindsets, their role in motivating behavior and facilitating self-regulation, and their impact on academic achievement and social interactions.

Dweck's exploration of human beliefs is encapsulated in her book "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success". Through this work, she guides readers on a journey into the intricate ways in which our conscious and unconscious thoughts shape our lives, illustrating how even subtle differences in language can profoundly impact our ability to grow and succeed. Her research underscores the profound influence of our fundamental beliefs. Whether these beliefs are consciously acknowledged or operate beneath the surface, they significantly influence our desires and our capacity to achieve them. Dweck emphasizes that much of our understanding of ourselves stems from our mindset, which can either propel us toward our goals or hinder us from realizing our full potential. More than three decades ago, Carol Dweck and her colleagues embarked on a study focusing on students' responses to failure. They observed a stark contrast in how some students bounced back from setbacks, while others were profoundly affected by even minor challenges. Through extensive research involving thousands of children, Dr. Dweck introduced the concepts of a fixed mindset and growth mindset to elucidate individuals' underlying beliefs regarding learning and intelligence.

In essence, individuals with a growth mindset believe in the potential to enhance their intelligence through effort and perseverance. They recognize that dedication and hard work contribute to personal growth and achievement. Recent advancements in neuroscience have provided remarkable insights into the brain's remarkable plasticity. Studies (Drew, 2023) on brain plasticity have demonstrated how neural connections can adapt and evolve based on experiences. Through deliberate practice and learning, networks form new connections, reinforce existing ones, and

enhance the efficiency of signal transmission. These findings underscore the notion that our actions, such as effective strategies, asking questions, practicing diligently, and maintaining healthy lifestyle habits, can foster growth and enhance cognitive capabilities.

Researchers (Black, et al. 2004) have not only focused on educating students about the concept of malleable intelligence but have also turned their attention to the significant influence of teacher practices on student mindset. They have observed that the feedback provided by teachers can either motivate students to embrace challenges and strive for increased achievement or lead them to seek easier tasks. For instance, studies investigating various forms of praise have revealed that praising students for their innate intelligence tends to promote a fixed mindset, whereas acknowledging their hard work and effort fosters a growth mindset. When students adopt a growth mindset, they exhibit a willingness to tackle challenges and derive valuable learning experiences from them. Consequently, they enhance their skills and accomplishments over time.

4. Conclusion

Motivation is considered as a factor that directs and guides behavior towards a goal. In education, motivation directs learning, guides students in the right direction, and keeps them engaged. Motivational components are divided into two categories: internal and external. Certain elements, such as boredom, teacher-student dependency, and the use of corporal punishment, can have detrimental effects on student performance. However, among the myriad factors influencing learning success, the literature suggests that teachers exerted the most significant influence within the school setting (Hattie 2023). In addition, individuals with a growth mindset believe in the potential to enhance their intelligence through effort and perseverance. On the other hand, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) challenged the prevailing notion that the most effective method for motivating individuals to perform tasks is through the use of external rewards. It highlights the importance of satisfying three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the high school setting, it provides students with opportunities to make choices and have control over their learning (autonomy), ensuring that tasks are appropriately challenging. This way, it ensures achievable competence, and fosters supportive relationships with teachers and peers (relatedness) that are crucial for promoting intrinsic motivation. Overall, internal and external aspects of motivation are key conditions for understanding the dimension of motivation more

deeply. All things considered; student motivation is a primary factor that affects learning in education.

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