

# Exploring Learning Motivation: A Literature Review of Influencing Factors and Educational Intervention Strategies

Yuhan Qiu

*Essex business school, University of Essex, Colchester, CO2, U.K.*

**Keywords:** Learning Motivation, Psychological Factors, Self-Efficacy, Goal Orientation.

**Abstract:** Learning motivation is the core driving force of students' learning, which is affected by a variety of psychological factors, including internal factors such as self-efficacy, attribution style, goal orientation, and external factors such as teacher support and classroom atmosphere. Through literature review, this paper analyzes the concept, classification and performance of learning motivation in different cultural backgrounds, subject areas and education stages. At the same time, it summarizes the specific influence of internal and external psychological factors on learning motivation, and discusses its application in educational practice, such as differentiated teaching and educational intervention strategies. Although the existing research provides important support for the theory and practice of learning motivation, there are still limitations in the selection of research methods and objects. Future research should further focus on individual differences, cultural comparisons, and the combination of neural and behavioral data to enrich theoretical research and practical guidance in the field of learning motivation.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Learning motivation is one of the core issues in educational psychology and is widely present in academic research and teaching practice. It is the psychological motivation that drives students to participate in learning and achieve specific goals. It not only determines students' learning attitudes and efforts but also has a great impact on students' academic performance and future development (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Learning motivation is usually divided into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is usually the students' interest in learning and satisfaction with learning outcomes, such as enthusiasm for exploring knowledge and sense of achievement in solving problems. Extrinsic motivation is the pursuit of external factors, such as getting good grades, getting rewards or avoiding negative consequences (Filgona et al., 2020).

In recent years, researchers have realized that learning motivation is affected by many factors, including self-efficacy, attribution style, goal orientation from within the individual, and external factors such as teacher support and classroom atmosphere (Bandura, 1997; Pintrich, 2000). At the same time, cultural background, subject area and

education stage will also have an impact on learning motivation. This paper analyzes relevant literature and systematically explores the impact of these factors on learning motivation and their significance in educational practice, so as to provide effective theoretical support and practical guidance for educators.

## 2 INTRODUCTION OF THE RESEARCH OBJECT

### 2.1 The Concept of Learning Motivation

Learning motivation refers to a psychological driving force that motivates individuals to learn and strive to achieve specific goals (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). It is particularly important in the education system. Sterling pointed out that the intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation of learning motivation are directly affected by the educational environment and teaching methods (Stirling, 2014). Conversely, teachers' positive feedback on students' learning motivation will also prompt teachers to actively improve their teaching methods. Therefore, educators should pay attention to and cultivate students' intrinsic

motivation, so that students can show more positive learning behaviors and achieve better academic results (Pintrich & Groot, 1990).

## 2.2 Classification and Characteristics of Psychological Factors

The psychological factors of learning motivation can be explained from two aspects: internal personal factors and external environmental factors.

Internal personal factors include self-efficacy, attribution style, and goal orientation. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief that he or she can successfully complete a certain behavior in a specific situation, which often directly affects learning motivation. People with high self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals and show more endurance when facing difficulties. People with low self-efficacy may exhibit avoidance behavior and their learning motivation will also decrease (Bandura, 1997). Attribution style refers to the factors that an individual tends to attribute to his or her success or failure. If an individual tends to believe that the reason for success comes from internal, stable, and controllable factors such as high ability and high effort, then the individual's self-confidence and learning motivation will increase accordingly. On the contrary, if an individual believes that the reason for failure is internal, stable, and controllable factors such as low ability, it may lead to a decrease in learning motivation (Weiner, 1985). Goal orientation refers to whether the student's learning goal is mainly to master knowledge or to get good grades. Students who focus on mastering knowledge can still maintain their interest and enthusiasm in learning when faced with failure, perhaps because they regard failure as an indispensable part of the learning process (Pintrich, 2000).

From a non-personal perspective, learning motivation is often influenced by the external environment. For instance, teachers' teaching methods, classroom atmosphere, and the resources and facilities of the school all play a crucial role in stimulating and maintaining students' learning motivation (Palmer, 1998).

## 2.3 The Performance of Learning Motivation in Different Cultures and Contexts

From a cross-cultural perspective, Niles compared the learning motivations and strategies of 72 overseas students and 136 local Australian students at the University of the Northern Territory in Australia from

a cross-cultural perspective (Niles, 1995). The results showed that overseas students scored significantly higher than Australian students in the field of learning motivation influenced by external factors. Therefore, educators should adjust their teaching strategies based on students' cultural backgrounds. For instance, they should design cooperative tasks for students who value social recognition and offer more opportunities for autonomous learning to those who emphasize personal achievement (Pada et al., 2023).

The differentiation of learning motivation across different subject areas is particularly notable. Ramadhan and Sugito conducted a comparative experiment, which indicated that different subjects require differentiated teaching strategies to better stimulate students' learning motivation (Ramadhan & Sugito, 2022). For instance, in language courses, intrinsic motivation can be strengthened by increasing fun and interaction; while in science courses, extrinsic motivation can be enhanced through practical applications and goal-oriented designs, and at the same time, more ways to stimulate intrinsic motivation should be introduced.

Learning motivation may also vary across different educational stages. In primary school, students' learning motivation mainly stems from the desire to explore, with a stronger intrinsic motivation. As the grade level increases, extrinsic motivation begins to dominate, and students pay more attention to external factors such as exam scores, peer evaluations, and teachers' expectations. After entering university, for some students, due to the autonomy in choosing their majors, intrinsic motivation increases, but for others, extrinsic motivation remains significant due to external factors such as employment pressure.

## 3 ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

### 3.1 Influence of Internal Psychological Factors

Mastery goals are about guiding students to focus on learning and mastering content or tasks, while performance goals are about guiding students to focus on their own abilities and performance relative to others. Pintrich conducted an experiment and surveyed 150 students at three different time points in grades 8 and 9 (Pintrich, 2000). The results showed that mastery should be the primary goal of teaching in

the classroom. Students who focus on mastery have good learning motivation, emotional and cognitive adaptability, and will not lose interest in learning because of temporary setbacks. At the same time, mastery goals can be combined with performance goals, which will not weaken students' adaptability. In the experiment, students who only focused on grades had significantly lower learning motivation and self-confidence, and their math scores were significantly lower in the ninth grade, so performance could not be set as the main goal.

### 3.2 Influence of External Psychological Factors

It is generally believed that high levels of social support will enhance students' motivation to learn. However, Kristensen et al. found that parents' academic support for their children, teachers' support for students' autonomy, and peer support all had a positive impact on academic self-efficacy (ASE), while neither parental nor peer support had a significant impact on GPA (Kristensen et al., 2023). Only support from teachers could affect GPA through AES, which may be because teachers play a major role in the learning process.

Providing autonomy support to students can motivate students to learn and enable them to think independently. Autonomy support means understanding and fully responding to students' views and providing students with meaningful learning tasks rather than forcing them to think in a specific way. When teachers and parents provide autonomy support, students show higher engagement, performance, and higher well-being. In addition, providing students with challenging but achievable tasks and providing appropriate help can allow students to receive feedback, stimulate their sense of achievement, and increase their self-confidence, thereby improving their learning motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

A positive classroom climate can lead to higher levels of student engagement and motivation, such as enthusiasm, respect, and emotional support. These factors can help students improve their learning, autonomy, and relationships with others. When teachers provide more support, student engagement, attendance, and grades improve (Klem & Connell, 2023).

## 4 IMPLICATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS ON EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

### 4.1 Significance of Differentiated Teaching

Differentiated teaching is particularly important within the framework of multicultural education. Differentiated instruction requires not only adjusting teaching methods according to students' academic levels but also recognizing and respecting each student's unique cultural and social background. It not only helps improve academic performance but also enhances understanding and trust between teachers and students in multicultural classrooms and also provides a practical way to build a more equitable and inclusive education system (Gay, 2018).

### 4.2 Educational Intervention Strategies

Aronson has demonstrated that educational interventions can be significantly enhanced by incorporating psychological principles (Aronson, 2012). Specifically, educators can design more targeted instructional programs that include methods such as enhancing self-efficacy, fostering a growth mindset, creating a supportive learning environment, and leveraging social influences to help students overcome learning challenges, thereby improving their motivation and academic performance.

## 5 DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Limitation of Current Studies

At present, surveys on learning motivation often focus on the same age group or specific region, ignoring the potential impact of these factors on learning motivation and learning behavior. In addition, the sampling time points of the survey are insufficient, and most of them are based on annual intervals, resulting in insufficient experimental data. Lee et al. have found that students of different ages will have different feelings about the same factor (Lee et al., 2009). In addition, survey data often come from the self-evaluation of the respondents, which may cause the results to be affected by social expectations and individual biases. Moreover individual differences such as gender, social background, and personality are not included in the discussion, which may lead to deviations in research results.

## 5.2 Future Research

Due to cultural differences between the East and the West, Eastern classrooms tend to be more teacher-led, but this environment can also fully motivate students' learning motivation. Therefore, it is possible to study the differences between classrooms led by students and teachers in affecting students' self-efficacy. It is also possible to explore what kind of adaptive changes classroom teaching strategies need to make under different cultural differences to fully mobilize students' learning motivation (Lee et al., 2009). At the same time, due to the two-way feedback between teachers and students, this also needs to be further studied (Jang et al., 2016).

Research needs to pay more attention to individual differences, and explore how individual differences such as gender, personality, and family background are related to learning motivation, and then affect learning performance. The study of these factors is helpful for personalized educational intervention design.

What kind of changes will be learning motivation make to different feedback is also a possible research direction. Individuals may get different amounts of motivation changes from material feedback and spiritual feedback. It is possible to further study the impact of feedback, rewards and classroom atmosphere received by students from teachers on students' learning motivation.

Survey data can not only be limited to questionnaires, but also include neural data, behavioral data, and physiological data into the research to further study how learning motivation changes.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The current study discussed that learning motivation was affected by various aspects such as self-efficacy, task value, and social and cultural background. However, there are some limitations in the current study, including the limitation of cultural background, the singleness of research methods, and the neglect of individual differences. Future research should focus on cross-cultural comparison, longitudinal research, and individual differences to further enrich theoretical research and learning motivation interventions.

## REFERENCES

- A. Bandura, Self-efficacy: The exercise of control, (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997), <https://archive.org/details/selfefficacyexer0000band>
- A. M. Klem, J. P. Connell, Relationships Matter: Linking Teacher Support to Student Engagement and Achievement, *J. School Health*, 74(7), 231–299 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2004.tb08283.x>
- A. Pada, N. Nasaruddin, B. Lutfi, The effect of differentiation learning to increase learning motivation of students in elementary schools, *Int. J. Eng. Bus. Soc. Sci.*, 1(03) (2023), <https://doi.org/10.5845/ijebss.v1i03.39>
- B. Weiner, An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion, *Psychol. Rev.*, 92(4), 548–573 (1985),
- D. Palmer, Students' perceptions of the usefulness of the interactive science notebook: A case study, *Int. J. Sci. Educ.*, 20(6), 697–704 (1998), <https://doi.org/10.1080/0950069980200609>
- D. Stirling, Motivation in education, (Learn. Dev. Inst., 2014), Retrieved from [https://www.learndev.org/dl/Stirling\\_MotEdu.pdf](https://www.learndev.org/dl/Stirling_MotEdu.pdf)
- F. S. Niles, Cultural differences in learning motivation and learning strategies: A comparison of overseas and Australian students at an Australian university, *Int. J. Intercult. Relations*, 19(3), 369–385 (1995), [https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(94\)00025-S](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(94)00025-S)
- G. Gay, Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice (3rd ed.), (Teachers College Press, 2018), <https://www.tcpress.com/culturally-responsive-teaching-9780807758762>
- H. Jang, E. J. Kim, J. Reeve, Why Students Become More Engaged or More Disengaged during the Semester: A Self-Determination Theory Dual-Process Model, *Learn. Instr.*, 43, 27–38 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2016.01.002>  
[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bernard-Weiner/publication/19257755\\_An\\_Attributional\\_Theory\\_of\\_Achievement\\_Motivation\\_and\\_Emotion/links/5434140a0cf294006f734b2c/An-Attributional-Theory-of-Achievement-Motivation-and-Emotion.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bernard-Weiner/publication/19257755_An_Attributional_Theory_of_Achievement_Motivation_and_Emotion/links/5434140a0cf294006f734b2c/An-Attributional-Theory-of-Achievement-Motivation-and-Emotion.pdf)
- J. Aronson, A social psychological approach to educational intervention, In *Behav. Found. Public Policy*, (pp. 475–490, Princeton University Press, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400845347-023>
- J. C. Lee, H. Yin, Z. Zhang, Exploring the Influence of the Classroom Environment on Students' Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning in Hong Kong, *Asia-Pac. Educ. Res.*, 18(2), 219–232 (2009)
- J. Filgona, J. Sakiyo, D. M. Gwany, A. U. Okoronka, Motivation in learning, *Asian J. Educ. Soc. Stud.*, 10(4), 16–37 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2020/v10i430273>
- P. R. Pintrich, D. H. Schunk, Motivation in Education: Theory, Research, and Applications (2nd ed.) (Merrill Prentice Hall, 2002), <https://archive.org/details/motivationineduc0000pint>

- P. R. Pintrich, E. V. De Groot, Motivational and self-regulated learning components of classroom academic performance, *J. Educ. Psychol.*, 82(1), 33–40 (1990), <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.82.1.33>
- P. R. Pintrich, Multiple Goals, Multiple Pathways: The Role of Goal Orientation in Learning and Achievement, *J. Educ. Psychol.*, 92(3), 544–555 (2000), <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.92.3.544>
- R. M. Ryan, E. L. Deci, Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions, *Contemp. Educ. Psychol.*, 61, 101860 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860>
- S. A. Ramadhan, S. Sugito, Motivation in learning: Its effect on student achievement in science subjects, *J. Student Res.*, 11(2) (2022), <https://doi.org/10.47611/jsrhs.v11i2.5817>
- S. M. Kristensen, M. Jørgensen, E. Meland, H. B. Urke, The Effect of Teacher, Parental, and Peer Support on Later Grade Point Average: The Mediating Roles of Self-Beliefs, *Psychol. Schools*, 60(7), 2342–2359 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22865>

