Analysis Learning Motivation from Internal and External Perspectives: Recommendations Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

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Abstract: Motivation is a key factor in education, and the factors that drive it influence its direction. Therefore, understanding the determinants of motivation plays a crucial role in the educational process. Understanding the factors that affect the motivation of learning can understand the behavior and needs of students, to provide students with more effective guidance. Factors affecting learning motivations can be divided into external factors and internal factors. The external factors include schools and families, and internal factors include interest and satisfaction. Based on Maslow's demand level theory, and considering the factors that affect learning motivation, the following suggestions are put forward: First, create a safe and stable campus environment to ensure students' safety. Secondly, to cultivate students' sense of collective belonging, parents need to maintain good family relationships. Furthermore, respecting and encouraging students to bravely express their ideas helps to maintain their interest in learning. Finally, guide students to further realize personal value through learning, and get satisfaction from it, thereby improving their interest in learning.

Keywords: Learning Motivation, self-determination theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs

1. Introduction

Motivation can be defined as the reason for individuals to engage in certain activities or tasks [1]. The relationship between it and learning is inextricably linked. Learning motivation affects all aspects of learning, including learning purposes, excessive effort of learning, concentration during learning, and academic performance most commonly used to quantify learning. Driven by strong learning motivation, individual has a strong self-confidence in learning, thus formulating high goals, advertising themselves with high requirements, and continuous efforts to break through various learning obstacles. In addition, learning motivation also affects learning methods and the utilization rate of learning resources. Learners with motivation will actively look for learning opportunities, participate in learning activities, and seize their future education programs. On the contrary, a lack of motivation will hinder the learning process, leading to low effort, not investing, and lack of interest in tasks generated by learning, which will eventually lead to a decline in learning effects. In general, the motivation and learning process are intricately intertwined. Learning motivation is the driving force for learning. Therefore, the factors that affect the motivation of learning are of great significance to the field of education. Education practitioners can understand the behavior and needs of students

to a deeper degree of internal factors and external factors that affect the motivation of learning motivations, simulate more real students' learning situations, and provide effective guidance.

An internal factor is any combination of traits, passions, and mental capacities that influence a person's drive to learn. For instance, engagement in learning tasks is strongly impacted by an attitude of actively seeking out new information. People also possess the necessary knowledge, abilities, and self-efficacy to learn motivation. Conversely, social situations and diverse settings are examples of external influences that have an impact on individuals. These prerequisites include friends, family, and schools.

To thoroughly evaluate these influencing elements and better satisfy the demands of students in enhancing learning motivation, this paper employs Maslow's demand-level theory and the self-determination theory (SDT) for research and inspection. While Maslow's demand level theory categorizes human requirements into five levels and holds that people will pursue greater levels of demand if lower-level demands are satisfied, the self-decision theory emphasizes the interaction between internal motivations and external incentives. This essay will investigate the demands of the student body and how to raise their general level of learning motivation by integrating these two theoretical frameworks.

2.   Factors Affecting Learning Motivation

2.1.   External Factor

As people are the sum of social relations, their learning motivation will undoubtedly be affected by the social environment. The SDT is a theory of motivation and personality of human beings, emphasizing the impact of the social environment on self-motivation and health psychological adjustment [2]. Theoretical basic psychological needs theory (BPNT), a subset of the SDT, believes that when the individual's autonomy, ability, and belonging are supported by social and environmental background, individual functions and growth are the most effective [2]. When it comes to the social environment that affects learning motivations, schools, and families are the two most influential factors that have to be mentioned.

2.1.1. Family Factor

The family serves as the primary context for students' activities before their enrollment in school, with parents assuming the role of their initial educators [3]. The initial education plays a fundamental role in fostering students' holistic perspectives and shaping their personalities from the very beginning, encompassing their attitudes towards the process of learning. If parents neglect education in the early stages and view learning as dispensable, their children are likely to adopt the same attitude, resulting in a lack of learning motivation. In addition, strained family relationships often give rise to frequent parental conflicts, in which students as children are either compelled or willingly involved [4]. Consequently, the time allocated for post-school studying diminishes [4]. Moreover, anxiety and depression ensue from concerns regarding parental disputes occurring when the student is away from home or questioning whether their conduct instigates such arguments [4]. Anxiety and depression may also stem from parents' excessive focus on their children's academic performance, which can create pressure for students who worry about not meeting their parents' expectations. These adverse emotional pressures subsequently result in a dearth of motivation to actively engage in learning during school hours [4]. Therefore, the family environment has a significant impact on students' learning motivation, both directly and indirectly through the quality of initial education and parental expectations.

2.1.2. School Factor

As the primary setting where students dedicate a significant portion of their weekdays, schools function not only as social environments but also as educational institutions. It is evident that interactions with other individuals within the school context can significantly influence students' motivation to learn.

The role of teachers in the school, as respected figures and leaders, holds significant influence especially over lower grade students, thus amplifying the impact of their words and actions on students' perspectives. The teaching methods employed by educators, as well as their feedback and interaction with students, constitute the primary means through which teachers can influence students' levels of learning motivation [5]. According to the SDT, in an educational institution characterized by permissive policies and progressive leadership, teachers are granted greater autonomy in their instructional approaches [6]. This facilitates the fulfillment of students' individual needs, consequently fostering a higher degree of self-motivation in their learning process [6]. Experiments demonstrate that positive feedback, such as encouragement, typically elicits students' enthusiasm for learning, whereas negative feedback, even when reasonable and objective suggestions are provided, undermines students' confidence in their learning abilities [5]. Furthermore, based on interviews with students, the reality is that students frequently experience a dearth of teacher feedback, resulting in confusion and impeding their motivation to acquire knowledge [5].

However, given the limited time and resources available in a classroom setting where one teacher is responsible for dozens or even hundreds of students, it may be unrealistic to expect teachers to cater to each student's individual needs and provide timely feedback. As the most frequent social group during their spare time at school, classmates are all students of similar ages, thus forming a peer relationship among them. The peer relationship primarily refers to an interpersonal connection established and nurtured among individuals of similar psychological development during the process of communication [7]. Peer relationships play a distinctive role in the growth and maturation of children and adolescents, which cannot be substituted by adult interactions [7]. After conducting interviews with students, it was universally acknowledged by the respondents that exchanging opinions and ideas with peers can stimulate their enthusiasm for learning [5]. Additionally, the presence of emotions, whether negative or positive, in a student can potentially lead to their transmission among peers. For example, when elementary school students first start school, initially everyone may be suppressing the feelings of nervousness and unfamiliarity that come with entering a new environment. However, when one child starts crying, the previously suppressed emotions of other children also burst forth, leading to rejection towards the school and teachers. The initial curiosity-driven motivation for learning naturally fades away.

The concept of peer relationships can be categorized into two distinct types: one characterized by acceptance and recognition from others, fostering a profound sense of belonging within the group, known as peer acceptance. The other type entails difficulties in being embraced and acknowledged by the group, often resulting in neglect and exclusion from peers, referred to as peer rejection [8]. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, humans need belonging and love. By gaining recognition and approval from peers, the need for belongingness and love in the hierarchy of learning motivation is fulfilled. Conversely, if one experiences rejection, it may lead to feelings of loneliness, which in severe cases can result in bullying on campus, mental depression, and threats to personal safety. No need for further explanation, in such severe situations, people simply won't pay attention to learning and naturally lack the motivation to study.

In conclusion, the role of teachers and peers in the educational setting exerts a substantial impact on students' motivation to learn. Teachers can shape motivation through effective teaching methods, feedback, and fostering autonomy and belonging. Peers influence motivation by providing support,

recognition, and emotional connection. However, both of them can also negatively impact motivation if they fail to meet needs or create conflicts. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to be aware of factors influencing student motivation and strive to establish a positive learning environment.

2.2. Intrinsic Factors

2.2.1. Interest

Curiosity and interest serve as a proactive, deliberate learning and assimilation process that is known as internal motivation [9]. The formation and evolution of a person's interests are frequently closely related to shifts in their motivational framework. Individuals are naturally motivated to study when they are deeply engaged in a particular subject or concept. In order to develop self-intention and personal significance in the learning process, this internal motivation is typified by making a connection between learning activities and personal interests [10]. Interest and learning motivation are substantially positive, according to the findings of data analysis tests of hypotheses [11]. Studies have shown that students who are interested in a certain discipline have higher learning results and understanding capabilities than those with weak interests [10].

Interest not only helps people retain more knowledge but also motivates them to go beyond the obvious to grasp important ideas and possible connections, which enhances learning. Furthermore, contextual interest—that is, one's level of interest in the learning environment or tasks—also has a significant impact on learning motivation [10]. A rise in interest level contributes to greater attention and participation, which raises the likelihood that knowledge will be successfully acquired. Research has demonstrated that the presence of text-based interests has a substantial impact on children's learning outcomes, outweighing the influence of readability and other variables [10].

To put it briefly, interest is an emotional state that arises in response to novel learning activities and is marked by high levels of awakening, alertness, concentration, and attentional focus [12]. It is essential and critical in driving learning [12]. People are more likely to exhibit an intrinsic desire to engage in learning activities linked to a topic or issue in which they have a significant interest, which enhances learning outcomes and comprehension [10].

2.2.2. Satisfaction

Students' satisfaction is often used as a way to gauge their perceptions of the educational environment [12]. The primary measure of assessment is students' satisfaction [13]. Various factors, such as teacher appreciation, self-directed problem-solving when faced with difficult math tasks, and superior academic results can lead to feelings of fulfillment and satisfaction throughout the learning process. Motivation and learning satisfaction are in a constant relationship [14]. Satisfaction with learning plays a key role in the interaction between motivational factors for learning and behavioral intentions [15]. Therefore, if students experience satisfaction in their studies, they are more likely to continue.

3. Suggestions based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943. It implies that human wants can be classified hierarchically, with basic physiological demands at the bottom and higher-level psychological needs at the top [16]. The hierarchy consists of five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs [16]. According to Maslow, individuals progress through the hierarchy of needs in a sequential manner. The lower-level needs must be satisfied before higher-level needs become important [16]. Maslow's theory has been widely discussed and researched, and it provides a framework for understanding human motivation and the factors that drive individuals to fulfill their needs. The following paper

will integrate the factors influencing learning motivation derived from Maslow's four levels of needs, in addition to physiology, and provide suggestions for enhancing learning motivation.

3.1. Safety Needs

Once individuals have their physiological needs fulfilled, they will strive for safety and security, encompassing protection against physical harm, a stable environment, and a sense of order and predictability [16]. Therefore, the foundation for students' willingness to learn is creating a safe and fearless campus environment. However, as indicated by the aforementioned factors impacting learning motivation, the campus bullying that may arise from the severe issue of peer rejection is a factor that influences students' safety needs. The vast majority of bullies are cognizant of the wrongfulness of their behavior, yet they persist in engaging in it, rendering verbal education alone ineffective in achieving practical outcomes [17]. Furthermore, bullying primarily occurs outside the classroom, and relying solely on teachers to stop bullying is insufficient. Henceforth, during such instances, other campus personnel including cafeteria and cleaning staff as well as responsible adults should also assume responsibility for curbing bullying incidents [17]. Additionally, distinguishing between ordinary student conflicts and acts of bullying can sometimes prove arduous, therefore administrators must promptly intervene when conflicts exhibit signs indicative of bullying.

3.2. Belongingness and Love Needs

Once individuals' safety needs are met, they develop a fundamental requirement for social connection, affection, and a sense of belonging. This encompasses the establishment of interpersonal relationships, active participation in community life, and the experience of emotional intimacy [16]. The students in school establish meaningful relationships with their teachers and classmates to foster a sense of belonging within the group, gain emotional support, and further enhance their motivation for learning at school. Thus, schools should strategically plan and implement diverse volunteer cultural activities, fostering a harmonious and friendly teacher-student environment that cultivates a sense of belonging and compassion [18]. As for family, harmonious parental relationships contribute to the healthy growth of students in a nurturing family environment, enabling them to feel the love of their parents and a sense of belonging within their family. The positive relationships between parents also influence children's interactions with peers, helping them fit in and feel a sense of belonging [4]. As a result, they look forward to meeting friends at school and become more motivated to learn.

3.3. Esteem Needs

The motivation to learn is closely tied to the pursuit of self-esteem, recognition, and independence. This requires the respect and guidance of teachers, parents, and peers, as well as an appreciation for diversity and individuality among students. Once individuals have fulfilled their basic needs, they strive for self-esteem and recognition, encompassing the acquisition of respect from others, attainment of personal objectives, and experiencing a sense of accomplishment [16]. As students acquire knowledge from the outside world, they gradually develop their ability to think independently. At this stage, teachers should respect students' wishes and view them as independent individuals rather than just paltering. For those students who have their ideas, the elders should first affirm and then guide them patiently. Meanwhile, it is essential to respect students' diverse interests, ideals, and lifestyle habits to avoid suppressing them and losing their vitality [19]. Each student is a unique individual with their perspectives. However, they are relatively susceptible to being influenced by others' ways of thinking and viewpoints. Therefore, teachers and parents should guide students with a positive attitude while respecting everyone's opinions and allowing different voices [19]. Additionally, maintaining mutual respect among peers along with an inclusive mindset towards

classmates from different backgrounds and personality traits is crucial [18]. Each student grows up in a different environment with various family backgrounds, interests, hobbies, and daily habits. Therefore, every student needs to understand how to respect others and maintain respect for each other's interests beliefs, and daily habits to truly achieve equality and respect [18].

3.4. Self-Actualization Needs

One effective approach to enhance students' learning motivation is to cultivate their self-actualization by providing guidance, constructive feedback, and ample opportunities for exploring interests and pursuing goals. Individuals at the top of the hierarchy strive for self-actualization, which means realizing one's full potential and achieving optimal personal development [16]. This includes features like constant growth, introspection, and the pursuit of meaningful goals [16]. Self-actualization is an important intrinsic motivation for students to pursue things. Therefore, teachers should listen to students more and guide them to have a reasonable understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, encouraging them to strive towards more comprehensive and effective goals, maximizing their potential, and assisting in achieving self-transcendence [20]. Self-actualization essentially requires students to demonstrate great interest in a particular industry or field based on their characteristics and interests [21]. Thus, during the teaching process, teachers should guide students to integrate self-actualization with career planning and help them discover their interests through diverse campus activities, which will enhance students' learning motivation [21].

4. Conclusion

Motivation is a dynamic process that drives individuals to learn, set goals, exert effort, and persevere through challenges, significantly impacting learning and influencing effective strategies adoption.

The social environment significantly influences learning motivation, particularly in terms of family factors and the school setting. Family education plays a fundamental role in shaping students' attitudes toward learning, particularly during the early stages of parental involvement. Moreover, family dynamics also impact students' motivation to learn. In these major social and educational places in schools, teachers and students' interaction is a common form of participation. The teaching method, feedback method, and teacher -student interaction of teachers are the key factors affecting students' learning motivation. Establishing interactive relationships such as exchanges and cooperation between peers has a unique and irreplaceable role in the growth of children and adolescents. However, rejection can lead to loneliness, bullying, and other issues. From an internal perspective, interest is one of the important factors that inspire individuals to engage in activities. Interests promote autonomy and sense, and at the same time, it is significantly positively correlated with gaining good results, improving understanding ability, and acquiring knowledge. Students' satisfaction reflects students' perception, attitude, and expectations of learning environmental quality, and is a common indicator for measuring students' learning motivation.

Based on this, one recommendation is to create an environment that is safe for students, involving all members of the staff and not just teachers, to protect students. Additionally, schools should organize cultural events for volunteers aimed at building close and friendly relations between students and teachers, creating a sense of community, and encouraging community involvement among its students. Parents need to maintain positive relationships with their families to encourage emotional growth in children. Teachers and elders are expected to respect and support children's expression while recognizing their unique characteristics and differences as individuals. Furthermore, teachers should assist their pupils in recognizing their value by applying the knowledge they have acquired in real-life situations, which will bring greater satisfaction through engaging in various actions while boosting intrinsic motivation levels.

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