

**Overview of Motivation Theories Regarding the Field of Education****Gulsume Satir<sup>1</sup>****Nezihe Kizilkaya Beji<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Biruni University Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Midwifery, İstanbul.<sup>2</sup> Biruni University Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Nursing, İstanbul.**Abstract**

Motivation is an essential driver for student success. The main theories that increase students' motivation are Self-Determination Theory, Social Learning Theory, Goal Orientation Theory, Expectation-Value Theory, Attribution Theory. Self-determination theory has an impact on health education. Researchers have emphasized the importance of social learning theory in nursing and medical education. Self-efficacy, one of the subheadings of social learning theory, is one of the essential concepts emphasized in education studies.

On the other hand, the goal orientation theory tries to explain the students' reactions to the problems they encounter in the learning process. According to the Expectation-Value Theory, the value given to the goals and the expectation created to achieve the goal affect the motivation equally. Causality Attribution Theory deals with the causes of success and failure. In this review, the most fundamental theories about motivation in education are examined.

**Keywords:** Education, Motivation, Theory**Introduction**

Motivation is defined as "the individual's desire to act" and "the reasons why individuals behave in a certain way in a certain situation" (1). Motivation is the most important force that affects the continuity of individuals' actions. It especially provides the necessity of success in education and effective learning (2). The most basic theories about motivation in the field of education; are Self-Determination Theory, Social Learning Theory, Goal Orientation Theory, Expectation-Value Theory, Causality Attribution Theory (Attribution Theory).

Self-Determination Theory

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Edward Deci first discussed the Self-Determination Theory in detail in 1970. Richard Ryan is also known as the representative of the theory. In theory, it is stated that people are active organisms with a consistent self, tend to develop psychological, and strive to integrate their lives and overcome obstacles. In addition to these innate tendencies, it is said that the characteristics of the environment in which people are located are also effective in shaping their behaviors (3). Its theory has gained importance in many fields such as education, health, and psychology, and some researchers have emphasized its effects on health education (4). Self-Determination Theory is an active research area in medical education (5). It suggests that the theory's principles can explain why many students are successful in clinical educational settings (6).

The theory focuses on personality and motivation (7). According to the theory; intrinsic motivation depends on three basic psychological needs; autonomy needs, competence need, and relatedness need. Autonomy refers to being the perceived source of one's own actions. In other words, people feel autonomous when they internalize their behavior as an expression of their own freedom (6). It is important to support medical students and assistants for autonomy in working with patients. In this case, autonomy means that the student or assistant perceives it as their choice to handle the patient independently. It was stated that medical students also chose the specializations of the educator that supported autonomy (8). Competence means feeling active in one's ongoing interactions in a social environment. Relatedness refers to the perception of a connection with other people. Multiple studies have shown that instructors who support students' autonomy, competence, and relationships through their behavior are more likely to increase students' intrinsic motivation. For this reason, health educators play an important role in increasing students' intrinsic motivation (6). According to motivation self-determination theory, motivation is examined as intrinsic, extrinsic, and lack of motivation (9). Intrinsic motivation is doing what he does voluntarily because he is happy with his job and finds it different. Behaviors are formed by feelings such as interest, curiosity, and need, and the person feels independent (9).

Intrinsic motivation has been defined as one of the most important psychological concepts in education. When students are intrinsically motivated, they engage in activities that interest them and are open to self-development (6). When university students are intrinsically motivated, they find academic activities meaningful and regularly increase their knowledge by using existing learning resources to acquire new skills (6, 10). Studies have shown that students with intrinsic motivation struggle with problems more easily and are more successful academically (9).

According to the theory, intrinsic motivation has three sub-dimensions. These are intrinsic motivations to know, to experience stimulation, and to achieve. Intrinsic motivation to know is related to curiosity or motivation to learn. Intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation defines behavior development for fun, excitement, and positive emotions (4). Intrinsic motivation to achieve is the state of completing the task successfully, being satisfied with creating, and having pleasure (9).

Extrinsic motivation, another dimension of motivation, includes external incentives for learning such as getting a reward or avoiding punishment, and it is result-oriented (11,12). It is not

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important for the person to enjoy the activity, but the benefits to be obtained from the activity are important.

Studies on motivation have shown that intrinsic motivation results in higher quality learning, experience, and performance when compared to extrinsic motivation. Therefore, educators should focus on intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation in undergraduate education (12).

The third dimension of motivation is amotivation. The absence of intention to develop behavior means that individuals are not motivated internally or externally. It is the situation in which the individual does not feel the competence to do the activity (2). People feel inadequate and cannot make a connection between the actions they will take and the results they will achieve (13).

The theory assumes that motivation is affected by both intrapersonal and interpersonal factors. Interpersonal factors are related to an individual's natural characteristics (gender, age, or ethnicity) and personality traits. It has also been noted that interpersonal factors, with social factors, i.e., others, strongly influence our motivation. Studies in the field of education have emphasized the effect of the educators' giving students autonomy, support and responsibility, and factors such as early patient contact of health students (4).

**Social Learning Theory**

George Kelly (1905-1967) introduced the theory of personality structure psychology. According to personal construct psychology, man is a pure scientist who sees the world through his own lens. This lens is a uniquely organized structural system and the individual uses it to predict (coming) events. In the social learning theory developed by Rotter, it is stated that learning takes place in a social context. In theory, it has been suggested that it can be realized by observation and direct narration without a behavioral (motor) production or direct reinforcement. According to him, the individual's behavior is not passively reflexive responses to environmental stimuli but is largely dependent on the individual's previous learning experiences, observations, the conclusions drawn from these observations, and the "information" presented to him (14).

Albert Bandura is the first name that comes to mind when social learning theory is mentioned nowadays. Bandura expanded the theory by including processes explaining how people learn moral values, thinking, memory, language, predicting, and evaluating the consequences of behavior (15). According to Bandura; Beyond observation and direct narration, the observation of reward and punishment has a role in social learning. Basic features of social learning are listed as; learning is not only behavioral and is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context, learning can occur by observing behavior and observing the consequences of behavior, learning can occur without an observable change in behavior, reinforcement plays a role in learning. However, it is not solely responsible for learning, and the learner is not passive (14). In the field of nursing and medical education, many scholars have brought attention to the importance of social learning theory;

- Bahn (2001) states that social learning theory is necessary for nursing students to learn and solve problems,

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- Abbey et al. (2010) believe that social learning theory can help medical students develop their professionalism (attitudes, behaviors, and personality), including reflection on medical care, the interaction between patient's family members and nurses.
  - Hsieh et al., (2018), in clinical settings of nursing courses to teach medical terminology,
  - Green et al. (2018) applied social learning theory to teaching surgical tasks via a mobile learning platform and achieved good results,
  - McGaghie et al. (2010) pointed out that virtual reality or a computer environment can help students learn professional skills.
- Therefore, using real teaching materials and incorporating social learning theories in learning is important for effective learning (16).

**Self-sufficiency**

Bandura first discussed the concept of self-sufficiency in social learning theory. Bandura defines self-sufficiency as "an individual's self-judgment about his capacity to organize and successfully perform the activities necessary to show a certain performance" (17). Concepts such as successful experiences, positive feedback, and positivity increase self-sufficiency belief. Individuals with high self-sufficiency do not directly claim failure, and they think they are on the wrong path, recover quickly and focus on success (18).

Self-sufficiency belief is one of the most important concepts emphasized in studies on education (19). As the self-sufficiency belief rises, the effort, endurance, and motivation also increase. People who give up quickly in the face of difficulties, which are not entrepreneurial, who have high stress, low performance, and low success rate are those with low self-sufficiency beliefs. For example, a medical student may have very high self-efficacy for simple suturing but much lower self-sufficiency for other surgical procedures (5).

**Goal Orientation Theory**

Goals are advocated as the most important building blocks of individuals' motivation (20). Goal orientation was revealed as a result of the studies of Marty Maehr (1980), Carole Ames (1984), Carol Dweck (1986), and John Nicholls (1984) (21). One of the most important reasons why students are motivated to achieve success is the achievement goal orientation. This theory concentrates on why students are motivated during learning (22). In addition, it tries to explain students' reactions in difficult situations they encounter during the learning process and how they interpret their own sufficiency (21).

Goal orientations are divided as; performance approach, performance-avoidance, learning-approach, and learning-avoidance. While students with performance-approach orientation aim to prove their abilities to others and get high scores from their friends, students with performance-avoidance orientation avoid being mocked in the classroom or being known as inadequate. While students with a learning-approach orientation aim to improve their proficiency levels in the teaching process and learn the subjects completely, students with a

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learning-avoidance orientation avoid misunderstanding the subjects, failing to learn fully, and performing tasks (23).

**Expectancy-Value Theory**

Many theories have been put forward to explain how motivation affects people's behavior and activity choices (24). According to the theory, the value given to the goals and the expectation created to reach the goal affect motivation equally (25). Sufficiency expectancy is a person's perception of how well they can complete a present and future task (24). If the student is ready for the learning goal, he/she participates more easily in the given task, acts more decisively, and tackles difficulties (26). Another element of the theory is the perception of value. According to the perception of value, if the given task is easy, accessible, interesting, and logical, it is valuable for the person. Values are subjective. For example, some students want to be successful in certain courses, that course is valuable for them.

Value perception has four basic elements: intrinsic value, benefit-importance, extrinsic value, and cost. The feelings of pleasure for performing the task and succeeding in the task that is given to the individual are defined as intrinsic value.

The person is more willing to do a task that has intrinsic value for him. If the person does the task to achieve his future goals, that task has extrinsic value to the individual. In this case, the individual will make an effort to complete the task, and he thinks that accomplishing that task will offer him some opportunities in the future (24).

Students will not be motivated to succeed when they do not have information about what they will learn in the lesson and the results or when what they will achieve with their learning does not seem valuable. If it is seen as impossible for students to reach the goal, they will still not show motivation, even if the determined goal is valuable. When students are given very difficult tasks, they will be afraid that they will fail and not want to do this task. According to this theory, reducing the fear of success and the hope of being successful increases motivation (27).

**Causality Attribution Theory (Attribution Theory)**

Attribution theory is concerned with the causes of success and failure (28). Causality attribution is the process of understanding the reasons for the behavior of individuals or others (29). The theory deals with the issue of how people use information to reach causal explanations for events (30). The attribution process in motivation is important for ensuring the productivity of people and performing the behaviors desired from them, together with the incentive tools (29). According to Weiner, there are three dimensions based on causal attributions for outcomes in terms of success and failure. The dimension of determination, among these dimensions, shows whether the cause will change and indicates that there is a strong link between it and the following expectations of success or failure. The focus dimension is concerned with whether a person's performance is related to internal or external factors (30). On the other hand, locus of control is the individual's assessment of the source of his control over events that affect him. People with an internal control center believe that their behavior and activities impact many

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events in their lives, while people with an external control center believe that what happens to them is determined by change and other people (29).

Attribution patterns have important consequences for following emotional reactions and behaviors. For example, believing that a negative event or feature is internal may lead to more self-blame (31).

**Conclusion**

As a result, in this review, basic theories about education are mentioned. Self-Determination Theory, Social Learning Theory, Goal Orientation Theory, Expectation-Value Theory, Causality Attribution Theory (Attribution Theory) guide educators to increase students' motivation and offer different learning opportunities. If the educator chooses and applies the appropriate theory for the student, it will increase his knowledge level and ensure his success.

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