

# On the Factors Influencing Learning Motivation of College Students

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## Abstract

**Learning motivation is the internal process or psychological state that drives individuals to engage in learning activities. It is one of the most critical factors in maintaining learning behavior and also a key factor affecting learning outcomes. Therefore, it is very important to explore the factors that affect learning motivation. This article first comprehensively reviews and summarizes the influencing factors of learning motivation in domestic and foreign research based on existing research. Then, the factors that affect college students' learning motivation are studied, and it is believed that these factors mainly include gender, age, needs and goals, personal cognition, family environment, social environment, learning platforms, learning resources, teachers, school types, etc. Finally, feasible countermeasures and suggestions were proposed for the above influencing factors.**

## Keywords

**College Students; Learning Motivation; Influence Factor.**

## 1. Introduction

Motivation, in psychology, usually refers to an internal psychological activity that motivates individuals to move towards a certain goal and maintain this activity. Learning motivation is one of the types of motivation, which is a social motivation that drives individuals to engage in learning activities. It is one of the most critical factors in maintaining learning behavior. Learning motivation can promote students to improve their learning behavior and habits, thereby better mastering knowledge and achieving good learning outcomes. On the contrary, if students have insufficient learning motivation, they will lack a positive attitude and investment in learning, which may lead to their inability to achieve excellent academic results. Therefore, learning motivation is very important for students. At present, scholars both domestically and internationally have summarized the influencing factors of learning motivation, while foreign scholars have mainly conducted investigations and analyses from the perspectives of education and psychology. Chinese scholars have mainly conducted research from the perspectives of learners themselves and schools, mainly targeting primary and secondary school students. Currently, there is still a lack of comprehensive summary and summary of the influencing factors of learning motivation among college students. Therefore, this study will comprehensively summarize the influencing factors of college students' learning motivation from various aspects based on existing research, attempting to provide reference value for teachers in formulating teaching plans and using teaching methods.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Foreign Literature Review

The study of learning motivation in foreign countries regards the 1960s as a watershed. Prior to the 1960s, it was mainly influenced by behaviorism. Its representative figure, Hull, proposed the theory of drive and motivation. He focused on studying the external factors generated by learning activities and weakened the individual's own factors, advocating that individual learning motivation is mainly influenced by factors such as success and failure, praise and blame, reward and punishment, cooperation and competition, results and expectations.

After the 1960s, cognitive theory became the mainstream of research, and psychologist Albert Bandura from Stanford University in the United States began to pay attention to the impact of individual internal factors on learning activities. He proposed learning motivation theories such as self-efficacy theory, attribution theory, self-worth theory, and achievement goal theory. Hull divided learning activities into three types of motivation, namely goal orientation, activity orientation, and learning orientation. Biggs divided learning motivation into four categories, namely external motivation, internal motivation, achievement motivation, and social motivation.

American psychologist Maslow associates learning motivation with needs. He believes that human needs can be divided into five levels, namely physiological needs, safety needs, emotional and belonging needs, respect needs, and self actualization needs. These five levels are formed from a lower level to a higher level and are gradually satisfied, the most fundamental and natural. He believes that motivation is generated on the basis of needs. When a person realizes their needs, they will search for objects that meet their needs, and then the motivation for the activity arises, which is the reason for the behavioral activity. Therefore, Maslow's theory of these five levels of needs has important inspiration and guidance for the study of learning motivation.

The famous Yerks Dodson law, also known as the inverted "U" curve, proposed by American psychologists Yerks and Dodson, reflects that the higher the level of motivation, the better. When it exceeds a certain level, the worse the effect, but a moderate level of learning motivation is most conducive to achieving excellent grades. This law provides reference significance for teachers in the course design and learning content arrangement of the teaching process. Teachers should arrange course plans reasonably based on the difficulty of learning tasks, and properly control the level of motivation for learning. When the learning content is easy, it can add significant pressure to students. When learning content is difficult, students should be guided to relax their mindset as much as possible to achieve the best learning effect.

### 2.2. Domestic Literature Review

The development of research on learning motivation in China is relatively late, probably dating back to the 1980s. It was inspired and guided by foreign theoretical and practical research. In recent years, research on the learning motivation of college students has mainly focused on its characteristics, structure, differences, and influencing factors. Representative figures include Huang Xiting, Mao Jinping, Liu Chunsong, etc.

Mao Jinping conducted extensive research on the characteristics of contemporary college students' learning motivation, attribution of learning success or failure, learning methods, learning aversion issues and strategies, and the construction of learning concepts. She believes that college students' learning motivation is complex, diverse, and unstable, with unclear learning goals. She also believes that the learning motivation of contemporary college students is driven by material interests and exhibits strong utilitarianism.

Huang Xiting divided the needs of college students into physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, respect needs, and development needs. Based on this, he created a learning motivation

survey questionnaire and tested college students. The results showed that learning motivation is caused by learning needs, and the motivation and needs are consistent. In the study of learning motivation, Huang Xiting also found that there are significant gender differences in college students' learning motivation, especially in social orientation, fear of failure, personal achievement, and small group orientation. There are significant differences between males and females. The motivation level of female students is significantly higher than that of male students in terms of social orientation, fear of failure, and small group orientation; In terms of personal achievement, the motivation level of boys is significantly higher than that of girls. In addition, he believes that there are significant differences in learning motivation in grades and disciplines. In terms of the level of motivation for seeking knowledge and progress, senior students are significantly more affected by employment pressure factors than junior students in terms of learning motivation. Therefore, learning motivation is influenced by factors such as gender, age, motivation and needs, subject setting, and school type, which provides us with strong reference value literature and data for studying the influencing factors of learning motivation.

Liu Chunsong pointed out through investigation and research that the winter status level of college students is not only influenced by their motivation to seek employment and progress, but also by their material interests. He conducted research by conducting surveys on students of different grades. In terms of pursuing knowledge and material pursuits, the motivation level of lower grade students is lower than that of higher grade students; In terms of small group oriented motivation, the motivation level of lower grade students is significantly higher than that of higher grade students. This fully demonstrates the close relationship between learning motivation and individual intellectual goals and material gain, providing us with a more comprehensive theoretical reference for studying the influencing factors of learning motivation.

### 3. Factors Influencing Learning Motivation of College Students

By studying the dynamics of learning motivation among college students both domestically and internationally, it can be seen that the learning motivation of Chinese college students is mainly influenced by both subjective and objective factors. The subjective aspects include gender, age, individual needs and interests, learning goals, and self-awareness. The objective aspects mainly include family, society, schools, and teachers.

#### 3.1. Learner Factors

Students are the main body of learning, and their impact on learning motivation is the most primary and direct. The diversity, realism, and ambiguity of students' learning motivation are mainly caused by their lack of knowledge and experience. Different genders, grades, internal needs, learning goals, and self-awareness abilities lead to different levels of learning motivation. Therefore, students need to constantly enrich their knowledge and experience, enhance their ability to judge right and wrong, and strive to resist the erosion of erroneous ideas and values.

(1) Gender factors. Huang Tingxi's research found that male and female college students have significantly different levels of learning motivation, especially in terms of social orientation, fear of failure, personal achievement, and small group orientation. There are significant differences between male and female students. The motivation level of female students is significantly higher than that of male students in terms of social orientation, fear of failure, and small group orientation; In terms of personal achievement, the motivation level of boys is significantly higher than that of girls. Therefore, there are differences in learning motivation between male and female students in terms of gender, which will directly affect students' learning outcomes and academic performance.

(2) Age factor. As students age, their experiences become more diverse, their perspectives on things change, their ideas become more mature, and at the same time, their learning motivation changes. Liu Chunsong's research found that in terms of seeking knowledge and enterprising motivation, first-grade students have lower motivation levels than third and fourth grade students due to their recognition of the intense competition and the cruelty of reality; In terms of material pursuit and personal achievement motivation, the motivation level of first grade students is lower than that of third grade students; In terms of small group oriented motivation, the motivation level of first grade students is significantly higher than that of third grade students. Zhang Hongru's research starts from three aspects of knowledge, experience, and skills, and finds that students believe that the importance difference between the three aspects is not significant. Generally, the decline is faster in the third grade, and it rises more in the fourth grade, and even rebounds. In terms of knowledge, its importance decreases as grades increase, but learning methods increase, especially in fourth grade. In terms of experience and skills, the main interests of first grade students are relatively high, while motivation in second and third grades shows a downward trend, but motivation in fourth grade has rebounded. Therefore, differences in grade or age also have a significant impact on students' learning motivation. Students should strive to enhance their competitive awareness, promote the level of learning motivation, and thus improve their learning outcomes.

(3) Needs and target factors. Learning motivation is formed under the impetus of needs, and the intensity of needs determines whether learning motivation can be generated. If students cannot meet certain needs, they will have a strong motivation to actively seek goals and take action to meet their needs. Therefore, Huang Xiting divided the needs of college students into six types, and based on this, he created a learning motivation survey questionnaire and tested college students. The results showed that learning motivation is caused by learning needs, and motivation is consistent with needs. In addition, interest can also promote the formation of learning motivation to a certain extent. When students have a strong curiosity and thirst for knowledge, they are more likely to develop learning motivation; On the contrary, it will not generate learning motivation. Therefore, schools should also develop corresponding incentive mechanisms in the reward system to promote the generation of external needs for students, in order to enhance motivation.

### **3.2. Family and Social Environmental Factors**

Learning motivation is a reflection of social requirements in students' minds, and the formation and structure of individual learning motivation are constrained and influenced by social living conditions. Social requirements first influence students through their families, with lower grade students having a greater impact on their learning motivation. As students age, the social impact becomes greater.

(1) Family factors. The first teacher of a child is always their own parents. Children grow up in a family environment and are easily influenced by it. Therefore, family factors have a huge impact on students' learning motivation. The quality, concepts, methods, and humanistic environment of parents can all have an impact on children's learning motivation. Families that generally focus on cultivating students' independence and abilities have a longer intensity and duration of their learning motivation. A harmonious and democratic family atmosphere, as well as good exemplary behavior, can guide children to establish the correct learning motivation.

(2) Social environmental factors. Compared to the influence of family, as students age and gradually mature, the social impact becomes increasingly significant. The social environment not only directly affects students' learning motivation, but also indirectly affects students' learning motivation through their family environment. So, fostering a culture of respect for knowledge, talent, and teachers in the whole society is beneficial for students to develop positive and correct learning motivation.

### 3.3. Learning Resources and Platform Factors

In the context of the digital education strategy, with the rapid development of information technology, the existing learning environment has undergone significant changes compared to traditional learning environments. New information technology has gradually integrated into students' learning environment and played a corresponding role, and the learning environment is gradually moving towards digitization, intelligence, and intelligence. According to existing research, different learning platforms and resources have a significant impact on learning motivation. When students face their favorite platforms and resources, their learning motivation opportunities increase, and vice versa.

(1) Learning resource factors. In the era of "Internet plus education", teaching has broken the restrictions of time and space, and students no longer rely on teachers and classrooms for learning. Especially with the popularization of mobile terminals, students can access shared educational resources anytime and anywhere. A survey shows that in the current environment supported by the internet, the types of learning resources are also becoming more diverse, such as "online videos", "electronic textbooks", "electronic pictures" and other learning resources, which are ubiquitous online. Among them, online videos are the most popular among students, indicating a preference for intuitive and visual learning resources. According to Wiener's attribution theory, the factors of learning resources belong to external influencing factors. The richer the types of learning resources, the closer the design is to students' cognitive level, and the closer the organizational form is to real life, the higher students' interest in learning, the more obvious their enthusiasm for learning, and the higher their learning motivation. Therefore, in order to improve the quality of teaching, teachers should design diverse learning resources, especially consciously using resources that students like for teaching, to meet the needs of students.

(2) Learning platform factors. In the era of the Internet, college students are more willing to accept new things and are good at searching for information and acquiring knowledge from online platforms. Active and effective interaction between teachers and students not only helps students master course knowledge, but also creates a good learning environment to make up for the lack of emotional communication between teachers, students, and students caused by spatial distance. Compared to face-to-face conversations, some students are more comfortable using online platforms to communicate and share with teachers and classmates. Therefore, for students with strong learning motivation, teachers should give affirmation, which can not only narrow the psychological distance between each other, but also enhance learners' sense of achievement and self-efficacy.

### 3.4. Factors Related to Teachers and School Types

School education plays a leading role in the formation and development of students' learning motivation. It can strengthen the correct learning motivation initially formed by students under the influence of family and society, and can also correct the wrong learning motivation formed by students under the influence of family and society. The impact of school education on students' learning motivation is mainly achieved through the role of teachers.

(1) Teacher factor. Teachers are one of the main groups of students who teach, and factors such as their quality, values, teaching arrangements, teaching tools and classroom atmosphere, as well as teacher-student relationships, can all affect students' learning motivation. Teachers with strong personal charm and professional abilities can stimulate learning motivation, while conversely, it can easily reduce students' learning motivation. Therefore, while doing a good job in teaching, teachers should also continuously improve their personal charm and comprehensive quality, constantly learn new cultural knowledge, convey positive outlook on life and values to students, and promote students' learning motivation towards diversity and realism.

(2) School type factors. In terms of comparing disciplines, Huang Xiting believes that the type of school also has a significant impact on learning motivation. He selected engineering colleges, medical colleges, and military academies as the survey subjects. Through comparison, he found that students from medical colleges and engineering colleges have lower levels of motivation in seeking knowledge and progress, and higher levels of motivation in fear of failure; Military academies have higher levels of motivation in social orientation and personal achievement, but lower levels of motivation in material pursuit. Therefore, different types of schools can also have a significant impact on learning motivation.

## 4. Conclusion

The learning motivation of college students is influenced by various factors and is unstable. Based on existing research, this article uses literature research methods and inductive deduction methods to summarize and summarize the influencing factors of college students' learning motivation. The research results indicate that college students' learning motivation is mainly influenced by two aspects, one is subjective internal factors, and the other is objective external factors. Subjective factors are mainly influenced by the learners themselves, including internal factors such as gender, age, needs and goals, and differences in self-awareness. The objective aspects mainly include external factors such as family, school, and society. Therefore, in cultivating and stimulating students' learning motivation, ideological and political educators should pay attention to educating students on their outlook on life and values; Teachers should put in effort in curriculum arrangement, scenario setting, teaching tools, and teaching methods, and clarify learning objectives in the classroom; Schools should attach importance to feedback on learning, introduce competitive mechanisms, and establish reward mechanisms to promote students' learning motivation, thereby improving learning outcomes, and providing the backbone of comprehensive development for the country and society.

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