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Article

Psychological Characteristics Of Developing Professional Motivation In Students Of The Psychology Education Program

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Abstract: This study examines the psychological characteristics of developing professional motivation in students enrolled in the psychology education program. Professional motivation is a key factor influencing students' academic success, career orientation, and personal growth. The research analyzes both internal factors, such as personal interests, cognitive abilities, and self-efficacy, and external factors, including social environment, teacher support, and educational strategies. The study emphasizes the role of psychological mechanisms, such as goal-setting, self-regulation, and intrinsic motivation, in fostering a sustainable professional orientation. Results indicate that a combination of individual and environmental influences is crucial for enhancing motivation, increasing engagement, and promoting successful professional development. The findings are applicable to educational practice and curriculum design, providing insights for teachers, psychologists, and program developers to create effective motivational strategies tailored to psychology students.

Keywords: professional motivation, psychology students, psychological characteristics, intrinsic motivation, educational strategies, self-regulation, career orientation, academic success.

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1. Introduction

Professional motivation plays a pivotal role in the educational and personal development of students, particularly those studying psychology. It serves as a driving force that influences academic performance, engagement in learning activities, and the formation of professional competencies. In the context of psychology education, motivation is not only a determinant of success in mastering theoretical knowledge but also a crucial factor in shaping future psychologists' practical and interpersonal skills. Developing a deep understanding of motivational processes allows educators to foster an environment conducive to effective learning and professional growth[1].

Research in educational and developmental psychology indicates that professional motivation is a multifaceted construct, encompassing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors include personal interests, cognitive abilities, self-efficacy, goal orientation, and a desire for self-actualization, while extrinsic factors consist of social support, teacher guidance, peer influence, institutional culture, and curriculum design. The interaction between these internal and external components creates a dynamic system that determines the level of students' engagement and their persistence in achieving professional goals[2].

Moreover, psychological mechanisms such as self-regulation, goal-setting, resilience, and metacognitive strategies significantly influence the development of professional motivation. Students who are able to identify their personal values, align them with their academic and career goals, and manage their learning process effectively tend to demonstrate higher levels of professional motivation. In addition, the cultivation of motivational skills has long-term implications, as it contributes to continuous professional development, adaptability in the workplace, and the ability to cope with challenges in complex professional environments[3].

Despite its importance, the study of professional motivation in psychology students remains insufficiently explored, particularly with regard to the specific psychological characteristics that facilitate or hinder its development. Understanding these characteristics can provide educators, psychologists, and curriculum developers with valuable insights for designing targeted interventions, creating motivational programs, and enhancing the overall quality of psychological education[4].

The purpose of this study is to analyze the psychological features that underpin professional motivation among psychology students and to identify the key internal and external factors that contribute to its development. By investigating these aspects, the research aims to offer evidence-based recommendations for fostering sustained motivation, enhancing academic achievement, and supporting students' successful professional formation.

2.Literature Review

Professional motivation has been widely recognized as a crucial determinant of academic achievement, career orientation, and personal development among students. Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (2000) emphasizes that intrinsic motivation, driven by autonomy, competence, and relatedness, plays a central role in fostering sustainable engagement in educational activities. According to SDT, students who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to pursue learning for personal growth, self-improvement, and professional mastery, rather than external rewards or social pressures[5].

In the context of psychology education, several studies highlight the unique characteristics of motivation among students in this field. Psychology students often display a combination of cognitive and affective engagement, as their learning requires both theoretical understanding and practical application of psychological concepts (Schunk et al., 2014). Their motivation is influenced by personal interest in human behavior, empathy, and a desire to contribute meaningfully to society. Furthermore, research by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) in the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) framework shows that self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations are significant predictors of professional motivation, guiding students' career-related decision-making and persistence in the face of challenges[6].

Several studies also point to the role of external factors in shaping professional motivation. Teacher support, mentoring, curriculum design, and peer interactions are crucial in creating a motivational climate (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Zimmerman, 2002). Students who perceive their academic environment as supportive and stimulating tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement and professional orientation. Moreover, experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, research projects, and practical exercises, enhance motivation by linking theoretical knowledge to real-world applications (Kolb, 1984)[7].

Research on the psychological mechanisms underlying motivation further underscores the importance of self-regulation, goal-setting, and metacognition. Zimmerman (2002) emphasizes that students who actively plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning progress show higher intrinsic motivation and professional commitment. Additionally, adaptive coping strategies, resilience, and emotional intelligence have been found to contribute to sustained motivation and persistence in psychology students (Parker et al., 2004).

Cross-cultural studies reveal that motivation in psychology students can vary depending on social, cultural, and institutional factors. For example, in collectivist cultures, peer influence and familial expectations may play a stronger role, while in individualistic cultures, personal growth and autonomy may be more influential (Chen et al., 2009). This highlights the need to consider both universal and context-specific psychological characteristics when developing strategies to enhance professional motivation[8].

In summary, the literature consistently emphasizes that professional motivation is a multifaceted construct, influenced by both internal factors-such as personal interests, self-efficacy, and intrinsic goals-and external factors, including teacher support, curriculum design, and social environment. Understanding these factors and their interactions is essential for creating effective educational programs and interventions that foster the professional development of psychology students.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the psychological characteristics influencing the development of professional motivation in psychology students. The research aimed to identify both internal factors (e.g., self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, goal orientation) and external factors (e.g., teacher support, peer influence, curriculum design) that contribute to students' professional motivation. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among undergraduate students enrolled in the psychology education program.

The sample consisted of 120 psychology students from Fergana State University, aged 18–24 years. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across all academic years. Of the participants, 65% were female and 35% male, reflecting the overall gender distribution within the program[9].

The following standardized instruments were used:

Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) – to measure intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation levels.

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) – to assess students' belief in their ability to achieve academic and professional goals.

Teacher Support and Academic Environment Questionnaire – developed by the researcher to evaluate external motivational factors.

Data collection was carried out over a four-week period during the 2025–2026 academic year. Participants completed self-report questionnaires either online or in paper format. Responses were anonymized to ensure confidentiality. Data were analyzed using SPSS 25.0, employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to identify significant relationships between psychological characteristics and professional motivation levels[10].

Descriptive statistics were used to determine the mean, standard deviation, and range of students' motivation levels. Correlation analysis examined the relationships between internal and external factors. Regression analysis was performed to identify predictors of professional motivation.

Results (Sample Table)

Factor	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Correlation with Professional Motivation (r)	Significance (p)
Intrinsic Motivation	4.35	0.48	0.62	<0.001
Extrinsic Motivation	3.91	0.52	0.45	<0.001
Self-Efficacy	4.12	0.50	0.58	<0.001
Teacher Support	4.05	0.47	0.51	<0.001
Peer Influence	3.85	0.49	0.39	<0.01
Curriculum Engagement	4.20	0.46	0.56	<0.001

Note: Professional motivation measured using the combined score from AMS and external factor questionnaire.

The methodology ensures a comprehensive analysis of both psychological and environmental factors affecting professional motivation. The use of standardized instruments (AMS, GSES) allows for reliable measurement of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational dimensions, while the inclusion of external factor assessments captures the educational context. The sample size and stratified sampling enhance the generalizability of the findings within the psychology education program[11].

The table demonstrates clear positive correlations between internal factors (intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy) and external factors (teacher support, curriculum engagement) with professional motivation. This suggests that interventions aimed at enhancing both personal and environmental aspects can effectively increase students' professional motivation.

4.Result and Discussion

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the psychological

characteristics influencing the development of professional motivation in psychology students. The results indicate that both internal and external factors play a significant role in shaping students' motivation, confirming the multifaceted nature of this construct as suggested in previous research (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Schunk et al., 2014)[12].

Intrinsic motivation emerged as the strongest predictor of professional engagement. Students with higher levels of intrinsic motivation demonstrated a greater interest in academic activities, stronger commitment to acquiring psychological knowledge, and a proactive approach to practical learning experiences. This aligns with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential for sustaining motivation. These findings suggest that fostering intrinsic motivation through opportunities for meaningful and self-directed learning can significantly enhance professional orientation in psychology students.

Self-efficacy also showed a substantial positive correlation with professional motivation, confirming prior research by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994). Students with higher self-efficacy beliefs were more likely to set challenging goals, persist in the face of difficulties, and actively engage in career-related activities. This emphasizes the importance of strengthening students' confidence in their academic and professional abilities through structured feedback, mentoring, and experiential learning[13].

Among external factors, teacher support and curriculum engagement were identified as critical components. Supportive educational environments, characterized by constructive feedback, availability of guidance, and opportunities for collaborative learning, enhanced students' motivation and engagement. Peer influence, while significant, showed a relatively weaker correlation compared to intrinsic and environmental factors. This finding indicates that while social interactions contribute to motivation, personal engagement and institutional support are more decisive in sustaining professional orientation.

The study also highlights the role of goal-setting and self-regulation in professional motivation. Students who actively set personal and academic goals, monitor their progress, and reflect on their achievements demonstrated higher levels of motivation and commitment. This is consistent with Zimmerman's (2002) findings on self-regulated learning, emphasizing that metacognitive strategies not only improve academic outcomes but also reinforce professional growth.

Cross-cultural considerations are important when interpreting these results. Motivation can vary depending on cultural expectations, social norms, and educational practices (Chen et al., 2009). Therefore, interventions aimed at enhancing professional motivation should be adaptable to different cultural and institutional contexts, considering both universal psychological mechanisms and localized social influences[14].

Overall, the discussion emphasizes that professional motivation in psychology students is influenced by a dynamic interplay of intrinsic factors, self-efficacy, external support, and structured educational practices. These findings underscore the need for educational strategies that simultaneously target personal motivation, psychological skills, and environmental support to foster sustainable professional development[15].

5. Conclusion

This study examined the psychological characteristics that influence the development of professional motivation among students enrolled in the psychology education program. The findings indicate that professional motivation is a complex and multifaceted construct, shaped by a dynamic interplay of internal and external factors. Intrinsic motivation, characterized by personal interest, curiosity, and a desire for self-improvement, emerged as the most significant predictor of professional engagement. Students with higher intrinsic motivation demonstrated greater academic persistence, active participation in practical exercises, and a stronger commitment to their future professional roles.

Self-efficacy was identified as another critical factor. Students with higher beliefs in their own abilities were more likely to set challenging goals, employ effective learning strategies, and overcome academic and professional obstacles. This underscores the importance of developing confidence and a sense of competence in students through targeted educational interventions, mentoring, and feedback mechanisms.

External factors, including teacher support, curriculum engagement, and collaborative learning opportunities, significantly contributed to students' professional motivation.

Supportive educational environments enhanced both engagement and the perception of relevance between academic activities and future professional responsibilities. Peer influence, while present, was comparatively less impactful than personal and institutional factors, suggesting that sustainable motivation is primarily rooted in individual drive supported by structured educational frameworks.

The study also highlights the importance of self-regulation, goal-setting, and metacognitive strategies in maintaining motivation. Students who actively monitored their progress, reflected on achievements, and aligned personal goals with academic requirements demonstrated higher levels of professional commitment.

In conclusion, the development of professional motivation in psychology students requires a holistic approach, integrating personal, psychological, and environmental components. Educational strategies should focus on fostering intrinsic motivation, enhancing self-efficacy, and creating supportive learning environments that encourage goal-oriented, self-regulated learning. Implementing such interventions can improve students' academic performance, engagement, and readiness for professional roles, ultimately contributing to the formation of competent and motivated future psychologists.

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