



Enhancing Student Motivation to Learn Using Self-Determination Theory as a Framework

An Exploration of Internal and External Factors in the Context of Sekolah Dasar Negeri 1 Kapoa, Buton Selatan

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Abstract

This qualitative research study conducted at Sekolah Dasar Negeri 1 Kapoa during the 2020/2021 academic year delves into the intricate web of factors influencing fourth-grade students' motivation to learn, particularly within the context of the pandemic. Through interviews and meticulous data analysis, this research unravels the multifaceted nature of student motivation, shedding light on both internal and external elements that come into play. While physiological factors such as vision and hearing were found to have limited direct influence on motivation, the study highlights the pivotal role of psychological factors. Competence, talents, and family harmony emerged as significant determinants of students' learning motivation. Moreover, external factors proved crucial contributors to this intricate motivational landscape. Parental support, effective teaching methods, peer interactions, and community engagement played vital roles in shaping students' motivation. This research underscores the complexity of student motivation and its dependence on many factors. Understanding these influences is paramount for educators, parents, and policymakers alike. Tailoring teaching approaches, providing robust family support, and creating a nurturing learning environment are key strategies to enhance student motivation and foster academic success. As such, further research and targeted interventions addressing these motivational factors can contribute to the development of more effective, student-centered educational practices.

Keywords: Elementary Education, Learning, Self-Determination Theory, Student Motivation

Introduction

Education is a conscious effort to nurture and develop human resources' potential through teaching activities. Within the overall educational process in schools, learning is the primary key. Students' learning process serves to achieve academic goals at various levels. Students, or learners in schools, are both the objects and subjects of education, and their engagement in learning determines the extent of their involvement in the educational process [1]. Motivation is an essential indicator of a student's engagement in the educational process [2],[3]. In this context, schools, particularly teachers, are tasked with instructing and motivating students to learn. Students or learners can excel when they are genuinely interested in what they are studying. The cultivation of this interest in students is rooted in motivation.

Students' motivation influences the learning process's effectiveness during the pandemic [4]. Learning motivation plays a crucial role in teaching and learning. Students who learn with sufficient learning motivation will need help grasping the core lessons compared to those motivated to learn [5]-[8]. This, in turn, affects students' academic performance. Students with adequate learning motivation are diligent and attentive in the teaching and learning process, resulting in positive learning outcomes.

Conversely, students needing more learning motivation may experience difficulties in their academic journey.

Motivation resides within an individual as a driving force to undertake an action in alignment with their desired objectives. Motivation is a force that emanates from both internal and external sources, propelling individuals to act in pursuit of their goals [7],[9]. The nature of motivation involves regulating and directing behaviour. It can be assured that motivation serves specific objectives, embodies perseverance, and maintains a sense of diligence in action. In other words, when someone is motivated towards a particular goal, their movements become more directed and organised, and they exhibit extraordinary dedication and consistency in their actions. Motivation can also filter an individual's behaviour, preventing deviant and unfocused acts from straying from their intended goals [10]. Furthermore, motivation can sustain interest or effort over an extended period. Low learning motivation can lead to a lack of enthusiasm for learning, ultimately resulting in poor academic performance. Characteristics of individuals with low motivation include reluctance to study, unwillingness to complete assignments, indifference towards subject matter, indifference towards grades, and a lack of enthusiasm in the classroom [11]-[13].

Motivation is a process that stimulates the desire to take action to fulfil needs as required by the set goals of individuals. Learning is considered a paramount activity, and achieving educational goals largely depends on how effectively the student learning process unfolds [9]. For a student, learning motivation can ignite the passion for learning, driving them to engage in learning. Students who exhibit high enthusiasm in their learning generally achieve better academic results than those with low motivation, as their motivation guides their learning efforts [10]. Thus, students' learning success is significantly determined by their level of motivation.

Based on preliminary observations, as described by the Class Teacher of SD Negeri 1 Kapoa, Buton Selatan, especially in the context of online learning, several students have exhibited low academic performance, scoring below the Minimum Mastery Criteria, displaying a lack of interest during class, prioritising gadget use over studying and showing no inclination or desire to learn. This is a matter of concern for teachers, as the students of Grade VI will face the National Examination. Yet, they seem to need to pay more attention to their studies. Additionally, learning motivation serves as a guiding force for learning actions toward the expected goals that can be achieved.

The issue among students indicates poor learning motivation. Therefore, the researcher is motivated to investigate the topic of Student Learning Motivation during the Pandemic. This research is essential for the school because, after initial observations and interviews, it is hoped that the cases provided to students will be beneficial, leading to improved learning motivation. This research also aims to assist teachers in addressing issues related to learning motivation at the school. This study aims to describe the aspects of student learning motivation during the pandemic.

Methods

This research was conducted at SD Negeri 1 Kapoa in the Kadatua Subdistrict of Buton Selatan Regency. The research was carried out from February to April 2021. The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative research. Qualitative research is descriptive in nature and tends to

utilise analysis. It emphasises process and meaning (from the subjects' perspective). The theoretical framework ensured that the research remained focused on the facts in the field. Furthermore, the theoretical framework provided an overview of the research background and as a basis for discussing the research findings. This research is Qualitative Descriptive research, aiming to comprehend phenomena related to what is experienced by the research subjects. The research subjects in this descriptive study are 21 students of Grade IV. They serve as respondents for the investigation to identify the various aspects of students' learning motivation in the school. This research is classified as a literature study, conducted primarily through data collection techniques such as inventorying, recording, and documentation. The Inventorying Technique examines relevant books and written works related to the research topic. Additionally, the researcher sought informants connected to the aspects influencing students' low learning motivation among Grade IV students. Data was obtained from informants, including student respondents and guidance counselling teachers, who were the research targets. The research utilised open-ended interviews, whereby the researcher posed direct questions to selected informants. These informants were chosen based on their competence and ability to provide insights and information relevant to addressing the research questions. The interviews were conducted with student respondents and guidance counselling teachers. Following the inventorying process, the researcher employed the recording technique, which involved careful and repeated audio recording of informants. These activities aimed to investigate and scrutinise the aspects influencing students' low learning motivation among students. The collected data underwent analysis using hermeneutic and semiotic analysis modes. The hermeneutic analysis mode involves interpreting interviews and texts. The data analysis process included the following stages: data reduction, data presentation, and data verification.

Results

This qualitative research aimed to identify the aspects influencing students' learning motivation. Two fundamental elements were explored in this research:

A. Internal Aspects

Interviews regarding physiological aspects, precisely vision and hearing, were conducted. It was found that, in terms of hearing, six respondents reported good and clear hearing. However, in the case of vision, five respondents reported normal and good vision, while one respondent reported impaired vision during learning. This suggests that poor vision can contribute to low motivation when a student's dream is unclear during education. Psychological reasons were explored through three questions about students' ability to respond to lessons, their talents, and family harmony.

Among the respondents, three students indicated difficulty responding to lessons for various reasons, such as playing with friends during class or occasional lack of understanding due to excessive play. This implies that students with lower responsiveness to lessons may also have lower learning motivation. Six respondents reported that their talents did not affect their learning motivation. Therefore, talent has little influence on students' motivation to learn.

Four students reported good family harmony among the respondents, while two indicated less than ideal family harmony. The latter group suggested that low-income family harmony may negatively

impact their learning motivation. Therefore, family harmony can be one of the factors influencing students' learning motivation.

B. External Aspects

Four respondents reported that they were encouraged by their parents to study diligently, while two students mentioned a lack of parental attention. This suggests that parental engagement plays a significant role in motivating students to learn. Five respondents reported that their parents' education level did not influence their learning motivation, while one student mentioned that it did have an impact. Therefore, the influence of parental education level on students' motivation varies among individuals.

Four students did not feel the teacher's behaviour or demeanour impacted their learning motivation. However, two students reported a need for more understanding of the material taught by the teacher, indicating that teacher influence can affect students' learning motivation. Four respondents preferred discussion-based teaching methods, suggesting that this method positively influenced their motivation. However, two students mentioned that they liked something other than question-and-answer teaching methods, which could negatively affect their learning motivation. All respondents had positive relationships with their guidance counsellors. Therefore, the relationship with a guidance counsellor was not identified as influencing students' learning motivation. Most students found that library facilities were adequate for their learning needs, which did not significantly affect their learning motivation. Most students indicated that peer influence during discussions positively impacted their learning motivation. However, distractions and lack of concentration due to peers were reported by two students, which could hurt the cause.

Four respondents reported frequent engagement in community activities, such as playing. This can be considered a contributing factor to lower learning motivation. Respondents generally reported positive interactions with friends of different religions, suggesting that this factor did not significantly influence their learning motivation. Four students mentioned being distracted by electronic media at home during learning. This indicates that the presence of electronic media can negatively affect students' motivation to learn. While most respondents reported good harmony in their communities, one student mentioned experiencing conflicts with friends outside of school, suggesting that community harmony could affect learning motivation.

These findings reveal a complex interplay of internal and external factors influencing students' motivation to learn at SD Negeri 1 Kapoa in the 2020/2021 academic year. The diversity of responses emphasises the need for a multifaceted approach to addressing and improving students' learning motivation.

Discussions

The findings of this study can be analysed and explained through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a widely recognised psychological theory that focuses on human motivation and the factors that drive individuals to engage in certain behaviours, such as learning [14]-[17]. SDT posits that people are inherently motivated to satisfy their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Fulfilling these needs is essential for fostering intrinsic motivation, which is the internal desire to engage in an activity for its own sake.

According to SDT, the basic physiological needs of an individual must be met for optimal motivation. In this context, clear vision and good hearing are prerequisites for effective learning. A respondent who reported impaired vision likely experiences a barrier to autonomy and competence in learning. This impairment may hinder her independence in understanding and participating in class, negatively affecting her motivation. SDT suggests that competence, the need to feel capable and practical, is crucial for motivation [18]. Students who reported difficulties in responding to lessons due to distractions or lack of understanding may experience diminished competence in their learning, leading to reduced motivation. These students may perceive a lack of control over their learning environment, compromising their autonomy.

Although talents were generally perceived as having no significant influence on motivation, it's essential to consider that skills can be closely related to one's sense of competence. If students feel their talents are not acknowledged or utilised in the learning process, it can undermine their sense of competence and intrinsic motivation [19]. SDT emphasises the role of relatedness, the need for meaningful social connections, in motivation [15]. Respondents who reported good family harmony likely experienced a sense of relatedness, which can positively impact their motivation. In contrast, one respondent who mentioned family disharmony may experience diminished relatedness, potentially affecting her motivation.

The positive influence of parental attention on motivation aligns with SDT. When parents provide support and encouragement for their child's learning (relatedness), the child's intrinsic motivation can be enhanced [20]. Conversely, a lack of parental attention may lead to reduced relatedness and decreased motivation. SDT's emphasis on autonomy can explain the mixed findings regarding parental education level [17]. Some students may be more autonomous in their learning and less influenced by their parent's education level, while others may rely more on external guidance. Students' responses regarding teacher influence can be understood through the lens of competence and autonomy. Students who find their teachers' methods compelling and understandable likely experience higher competence and independence in learning, leading to increased motivation [21]. However, those who need help understanding the material may experience reduced competence and motivation.

The preference for discussion-based teaching methods among some students suggests that these methods support autonomy and competence, contributing positively to motivation [22]. On the other hand, the dislike for question-and-answer methods might stem from reduced independence and perceived ineffectiveness in fostering competence, affecting motivation negatively. Peer influence during discussions can be seen as relatedness fulfilment. Positive peer interactions and engagement satisfy the need for relatedness, which can enhance motivation [23]. However, distractions and lack of concentration due to peers can hinder relatedness fulfilment and intrinsic motivation.

Frequent engagement in community activities, such as playing, can compete with learning time, potentially hindering autonomy and competence in academic pursuits [24]. This competition for time and attention may lead to reduced motivation (as observed in respondents who reported frequent engagement). The positive interactions with friends of different religions align with relatedness fulfilment, promoting cause. In this context, students do not perceive differences in faith as a barrier to

relatedness, which supports their motivation. The negative impact of electronic media on learning motivation can be understood through the lens of autonomy. Excessive use of electronic media may undermine students' freedom to manage their time effectively, reducing motivation [25]. Community harmony, when disrupted, can hinder relatedness fulfilment and may lead to decreased motivation.

Conclusion

This qualitative study conducted at SD Negeri 1 Kapoa during the 2020/2021 academic year aimed to explore the factors influencing the motivation to learn among fourth-grade students. Several key findings emerged through interviews and data analysis, shedding light on internal and external factors affecting students' learning motivation. Motivation to learn among fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 1 Kapoa is a complex interplay of internal and external factors. While physiological factors like vision and hearing have limited direct influence, psychological factors such as competence, talents, and family harmony play significant roles in shaping motivation. External factors, including parental support, effective teaching methods, peer interactions, and community engagement, contribute to the intricate inspiration web. Understanding these multifaceted influences on student motivation is vital for educators, parents, and policymakers. Tailoring teaching methods, providing family support, and fostering a conducive learning environment can help enhance students' motivation and, ultimately, their academic success. Further research and interventions addressing these motivational factors can contribute to more effective and student-centred educational practices.

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