

The Motivation of Adolescents

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to reveal the motivation of adolescents in learning is an important issue of nowadays academic settings. This is because adolescence is a time of changing, not only physically, but above all, mentally and psychologically, to get ready for a further stage in life. To know how they are motivated, we should try to understand their goals and their way of pursuing them. Among the most famous psychologist of education who have strongly conducted research about motivation are Ames (1992) and Archer (Ames & Archer, 1988). Their investigation on motivation is land upon the achievement and social goals. The recent study examines the goals pursued by 160 adolescents from the high schools of Durrës city and investigates the importance of motivation and achievement goals in learning and the desire to achieve.

Keywords: motivation, achievement goals, social goals

1. Introduction

In recent years a lot of studies are directed to the importance of motivation. It is considered as a great concern of educators, how to maintain in higher levels the eagerness to achieve and the motivation.

The researchers as Ames (1992), Ames & Archer (1998) have focused their research in achievement goals, which represents the aim, also the eagerness for the students' engagements.

The achievement behavior is studied by Anderman (1990), Elliot (1997) and Wentzel (1991) to better understand how motivation works through multiple goals working simultaneously. Even though achievement goals are widely studied, it is still worth investigating on the goals that keep high levels of motivation, the desire of achievement. This kind of research needs deductive methods to reveal the full-understanding of goals' power.

This study conducted in two secondary schools, examines:

1. The range of goals in achievement
2. The importance of these goals

2. Theory Overview

2.1 Achievement and social goals

Researches of Ames (1992., pp. 261-271) and Ames & Archer (1988 ., pp. 478-487) about achievement goals and the ones of Wentzel (1991., pp. 202-209) about social goal, are used to have a clean understanding about the needs and desires of students in order to achieve in particular learning issue. Achievement goals reveal themselves in the way of the performance and competence. Both of these reactions are clear components of the need to achieve.

Researches connected with the performance goals, (Elliot 1997., pp. 143-179; 1999., pp. 169-189) have revealed the findings that students aim to demonstrate high levels of ability, connected to the performance goals or they aim to avoid low levels of ability connected with others' avoidance goals. On the other hand, social goals are viewed upon two perspectives:

1. What social goals the students try to achieve in academic settings (Wentzel 1991)
2. What social goals do they follow, linked with their school achievement (social reasons)

These kinds of goals consist on the level of consciousness, the desire to collaborate inside the class, making good friends and receive a desirable status among their peer group (L. H. Anderman & Anderman, 1999., pp. 21-37).

2.2 *In their finding*

For example, in their research on the United States L. H. Anderman and Anderman (1999., pp. 21-37) found that consciousness and responsibility goals were associated with mastery goals. Also, they found a positive correlation between performance, relationships and status goals.

These conclusions have been a great support to other researchers who wanted to measure the connections between academic motivation and social relationships (Patrick, Anderman, & Ryan 2002., pp. 85-108).

2.3 *Motivation in the adolescence*

Motivation of adolescents has become a field of a great interest (L. H. Anderman & Anderman 1999., pp. 21-37; Eccles & Midgley 1989., pp. 139-186). According to L. H. Anderman & Anderman (1999., pp. 21-37), the performance goals increase meanwhile there is a decrease in the mastery goals. Such changes happen due to the changing of school environment.

Other recent studies show that the motivation in adolescence can change during the same academic youth (Bong, 2005., pp. 656-672; Shim, Ryan & Andersson 2008., pp. 655-671). While there are some other findings which shows that goals don't always change, but they can have stability at various stages of schooling (Middleton, Midgley & Kaplan 2004., pp. 289-311).

Another key concept in motivation of adolescents is the development of self-concept. This is of a great importance because it is formed through the interactions with the environments (Shavelson, Hubner & Stantos 1976., pp. 407-441). Having a positive self-concept plays an important role in education and is linked with positive educational outcomes. It was seen cited as a major factor in motivation in the academic settings (Harter 1999).

Marsh (1990., pp. 646-656) conducted a study to test the academic self-concept and academic achievement. The results showed to be a reciprocal effect between the academic self-concept and attainment. This suggests that self-concept is closely related to the academic attainment and vice versa

3. **Method**

This study was conducted on 160 students, 35 from secondary school; 16 boys and 19 girls; 125 from two high schools of the city.

The age of the students was 14-18 years old, 23 students were 14-15 years old and 75 students were 16-17 years old and 28 of them were 18-19 years old.

48,4 % had Durrës city as birthplace and 68 of them lived in the city center; 56 lived in the suburb and 2 students lived in the countryside.

54,29 % of the students were girls, 45,71% were boys.

3.1 *Data collection*

The survey included open-ended question: "Do you want to do well at school?" "Why/Why not?"

According to the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (Midgley et al, 2000), students wrote six statements about goal achievement.

3.2 *Data analysis*

The procedures of qualitative data analysis were used to analyze. The question "Do you want to do well at school" was analyzed by three coders: from not familiar to very familiar to the literature, verified 60% of the total data with inter-rates reliability of 90%.

The rating activity was to unable about understanding why students perceived mastery and achievement goals, also failure avoidance goals. The percentage used were just to give an impression of the number of students who emphasized particular goals.

4. Results

In the answers given to the question "Do you want to do well at school?" all the students (number=160) answered "Yes" and explained the reason but some answered briefly and some others took their time to get a proper answer.

This table presents the students goals:

Goals	Definition	Percentage of students
Future goals	To get a good, well-paid job and build a career	83%
Achievement goals (Mastery goals)	To perfect learning	12%
Performance	Good marks	30%
Social goals	Meeting the expectations of family, teachers	12%
Responsibility	Wanting to enhance self esteem, self confidence	10%

Future goals were most commonly emphasized by 138 students who expressed their desire to have a good, well-paid job, a well-built career.

- "I want a well-paid job."
- "I want to have a successful career after attending successfully the university."
- "If I don't study, I will have nowhere to go."

So, as far as we understand, the future goals play an important part for the students success at school.

4.1 Achievement goals

75 students referred to mastery goals and performance ones, as they explained the importance of doing well at school:

- "I want good results for a better career"
- "I want to understand and learn more"

4.2 Social goals

The social goals were identified to 22% of students:

- "I want to do well at school to make my parents proud"
- "I want to have good grades, to be evaluated and noticed from my peers"
- "I want to get good grades to show the teachers my ability to work so they could feel proud"

The key reason for analyzing the goals is to have a clear view of the importance of the right goals on enhancing the motivation and the need to achieve.

5. Conclusion

The studying of goals gives an answer to the goals relation with the academic motivation during adolescence. Even if is called a transition part of giving up the childhood and directing to adulthood, this age is decisive in the adolescents' route directed to the right education and right academic achievement.

Recent researches of Mansfield (2009., pp. 286-298), Pintrich (2000., pp. 544-555), present that taking in consideration the relationships between achievement and social goals, develops an understanding about adolescents' motivation for educators and researchers.

Even through performance goals are associated with both negative and positive dimensions such as levels of aspirations for achievement, engaged in academic task, intrinsic motivation and attainment (Wolters, 2004., pp. 236-250), as positives, and the negative outcomes such as anxiety and avoidance which slow up the intrinsic motivation (Wolters, 2004). These dimensions are important about which route the energy and the inspiration during the adolescence will be taking.

Inspiring the right motivation means having a positive self-concept and also doing well in all the academic settings. To have a healthy adolescent, both physically and psychologically, means to develop inside them the right motivation and the desire of achieving. Adolescents are a crucial part of the country's future. Motivating them properly in academic setting, means to develop inside them, the right goals; the mastery and the performance goals. It means a high academic achievement and furthermore, development of understanding not only for individuals but also for the whole society.

According to the researcher Elliot (1999) in which the performance goals are identified as grade goals, the study demonstrates the desire of the students to be competent and able to achieve, rather than be compared, measuring their engagement and school performance.

There is also an interesting finding according to future goals. Wigfield (1994) argues that younger students do not have a well-developed sense of purposes and future goals.

This study showed (83%) that even junior students perceived future goals correctly, as the nowadays requirements of development need them to be.

Finally understanding the goals variety and complexity, enable to educators and the whole society, how the right goals influence the worth-having desire of achievement through the education challenges.

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