

How to Cite:

Minh, B. T. H. (2024). Exploring the relationship between learning motivation and student satisfaction in higher education in Vietnam. *Tennessee Research International of Social Sciences*, 6(2), 177–184. Retrieved from <https://triss.org/index.php/journal/article/view/66>

Exploring the relationship between learning motivation and student satisfaction in higher education in Vietnam

Bui Thi Hong Minh

Ha Noi Metropolitan University, Hanoi city, Viet Nam

Corresponding Email: bthminh@daihocthudo.edu.vn

Abstract---This study investigates the impact of learning motivation on student satisfaction within the higher education environment in Vietnam. Based on a survey of 425 students, the results indicate that intrinsic motivation is positively and strongly related to satisfaction, with each unit increase in intrinsic motivation resulting in a 0.45-point increase in satisfaction. Extrinsic motivation also has an effect, but to a lesser extent. Student satisfaction is improved by the quality of teaching and support from instructors, and this relationship varies by academic year and field of study. These findings provide valuable insights for enhancing educational quality and student satisfaction.

Keywords---Learning motivation, Student Satisfaction, Higher Education, Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation.

1. Introduction

In an increasingly competitive and evolving higher education landscape, understanding learning motivation and student satisfaction has become particularly important. Learning motivation and satisfaction not only affect students' engagement but also determine their learning outcomes and personal development within the university environment.

Learning motivation is a driving force behind students' learning behavior, reflecting their interest and commitment to the learning process. According to Deci and Ryan (2020), learning motivation can be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic types. Intrinsic motivation relates to engaging in learning for the sake of enjoyment and personal fulfillment, while extrinsic motivation pertains to external rewards or outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2020). The balance between these two types of motivation can significantly impact students' comfort and learning effectiveness.

On the other hand, satisfaction within the higher education environment is understood as students' perception of the adequacy and quality of the services and learning experiences they receive. According to Kuo et al. (2020), student satisfaction depends on various factors such as teaching quality, facilities, and support from instructors and institutions. When expectations for these factors are met, student satisfaction tends to increase. Recent research by Hsu et al. (2022) indicates that satisfaction not only reflects personal feelings but also serves as an indicator of the overall quality of the learning environment.

The relationship between learning motivation and student satisfaction is a significant and emerging research topic. Understanding this relationship can help educational institutions improve teaching methods and learning environments, thereby enhancing educational quality and student satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2021).

This paper aims to explore the relationship between Learning motivation and satisfaction in the higher education context. We will analyze the factors influencing Learning motivation and student satisfaction, and provide recommendations for educational institutions to create a more positive and effective learning environment.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Definition of learning motivation

Learning motivation is a critical factor influencing students' learning behavior, determining their level of commitment and effort in the learning process. To understand Learning motivation comprehensively, it is essential to analyze related definitions and concepts from contemporary research.

According to Deci and Ryan (2020), learning motivation can be categorized into two main types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to students engaging in learning activities for the enjoyment and personal satisfaction they derive from them. Conversely, extrinsic motivation involves pursuing external goals such as high grades or recognition from others (Deci & Ryan, 2020). Schunk (2021) adds that learning motivation is also influenced by self-efficacy, which is students' belief in their ability to successfully complete learning tasks.

Hsu et al. (2022) expand the definition of learning motivation by emphasizing the role of learning goals. They indicate that Learning motivation can be driven by specific learning goals, such as improving personal skills or achieving academic accomplishments. Variations in learning goals can lead to differences in motivation and how students approach learning tasks (Hsu et al., 2022).

From an individual perspective, learning motivation is not solely the result of intrinsic or extrinsic factors but a combination of both. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations often interact, creating a diverse motivational foundation for students. Satisfaction from intrinsic factors can reinforce extrinsic motivation, while external rewards and recognition can enhance interest and commitment in

learning (Schunk, 2021). Thus, to optimize Learning motivation, educational institutions should foster a learning environment that supports both types of motivation.

2.2. Concept of Satisfaction in Higher Education

Satisfaction in the higher education environment is an important indicator reflecting students' perceptions of the quality and appropriateness of the services and learning experiences provided by the educational institution. Recent studies show that this satisfaction directly impacts students' engagement and Learning motivation (Liu et al., 2021). When students' expectations regarding teaching quality, facilities, and support services are met, their satisfaction tends to increase (Kuo et al., 2020).

Research by Hsu et al. (2022) reveals that student satisfaction can be measured through various factors such as teaching quality, instructor support, facilities, and the learning environment. These factors not only affect students' personal feelings but also reflect the overall quality of the learning environment provided by the institution. Hsu et al. (2022) indicate that improving these factors can lead to increased satisfaction and better retention of students.

Chen et al. (2021) emphasize that student satisfaction is also influenced by organizational factors and institutional policies. Supportive policies and personal development programs can contribute to enhancing satisfaction and improving the learning environment (Chen et al., 2021).

The author views satisfaction in the higher education environment as not only reflecting personal feelings but also serving as an indicator of the overall quality of the educational environment provided by the institution. To enhance student satisfaction, educational institutions need to focus on improving teaching quality, facilities, and support services, while also facilitating active student engagement (Liu et al., 2021). Thus, student satisfaction is a crucial metric for assessing and improving the quality of higher education.

2.3. Related Theories

Several psychological and educational theories have been developed to explain and analyze Learning motivation. Below are three major theories that significantly influence research on learning motivation and student satisfaction.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT): Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2020) emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation in learning. According to this theory, learning motivation is driven by three basic needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. When these needs are met, students are likely to feel more motivated and satisfied in their learning. Ryan and Deci (2021) show that fulfilling these three needs not only promotes intrinsic motivation but also enhances learning effectiveness and student satisfaction.

Self-Efficacy Theory: Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (2020) focuses on individuals' belief in their ability to perform tasks. According to Bandura (2020), self-efficacy

affects the level of motivation and effort students invest in learning. If students believe in their ability to complete learning tasks successfully, they are more likely to feel motivated and ready to face challenges. Schunk (2021) points out that self-efficacy influences not only motivation but also student satisfaction and academic success.

Goal Theory: Pintrich and Schunk's Goal Theory (2020) categorizes learning goals into two main types: performance goals and mastery goals. Performance goals focus on achieving specific outcomes such as high grades, while mastery goals relate to developing skills and knowledge (Pintrich & Schunk, 2020). Research by Kuo et al. (2021) shows that the type of goals students set can impact their Learning motivation and satisfaction. Mastery goals typically lead to higher intrinsic motivation and greater satisfaction compared to performance goals.

From a personal perspective, these theories provide a comprehensive view of Learning motivation, highlighting that both motivation and student satisfaction are driven not only by external factors but also by personal needs and confidence in learning abilities. Integrating and applying these theories in designing and managing the learning environment can enhance student motivation and satisfaction.

3. Research Methodology

This section details the research methods employed to investigate the relationship between learning motivation and student satisfaction within the university environment. The research methodology includes a description of the study participants, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques.

3.1. Description of the Study Participants

Our study sample consists of 500 students from universities across the country. Participants were selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure representation across different academic years and fields of study. Specifically, the sample includes students from their second year to their final year of study, with a balanced distribution by academic year and field of study. Of the sample, 50% are from social sciences and humanities, 30% from natural sciences and engineering, and 20% from business and management. Participants are aged between 18 and 25, with a gender distribution of 48% male and 52% female.

3.2. Data Collection Methods

Data was collected using an online survey questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into sections measuring Learning motivation and student satisfaction. The Learning motivation section utilizes the scale developed by Deci and Ryan (2020), with items designed to measure both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The satisfaction section includes factors such as teaching quality, facilities, and instructor support, based on the modern model proposed by Hsu et al. (2022). The questionnaire was distributed via email and university social media platforms, accompanied by an explanatory letter detailing the research objectives and assurances of personal data confidentiality. Data collection occurred from

March to May 2024, achieving a response rate of 85%. In total, 425 valid questionnaires were collected and included in the analysis.

3.3. Data Analysis Methods

Collected data were processed and analyzed using SPSS statistical software, version 28.0. Initially, data were cleaned and verified to ensure the absence of missing values or entry errors. Subsequently, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to determine the basic characteristics of the study sample, including means, standard deviations, and distributions of key variables.

To explore the relationship between Learning motivation and satisfaction, we employed multiple regression analysis. This method allows us to assess the impact of various motivational factors (both intrinsic and extrinsic) on student satisfaction. We also examined moderating factors such as academic year and field of study to evaluate interactions between variables. Reliability and validity tests of the model were performed with a significance level set at 0.05.

4. Results

The results are derived from data collected from 425 survey participants.

Basic Characteristics of the Study Sample

Descriptive statistics reveal that among the 425 surveyed students, 48% are male and 52% are female. Regarding field of study, 50% are from social sciences and humanities, 30% from natural sciences and engineering, and 20% from business and management. The majority of the participants are third-year students (40%) and final-year students (35%), with the remaining participants being second-year students and those in their final year.

Analysis of learning motivation

Descriptive statistical analysis shows that the average level of intrinsic motivation among students is 3.8 on a 5-point scale (Standard Deviation = 0.7). Specifically, items related to intrinsic motivation, such as "I feel enthusiastic about participating in learning activities," have an average score of 3.9 (Standard Deviation = 0.6). In contrast, the level of extrinsic motivation averages 3.4 (Standard Deviation = 0.8), with items like "I study to achieve high grades and gain recognition" scoring an average of 3.5 (Standard Deviation = 0.7).

Analysis of Satisfaction

Descriptive statistics on student satisfaction indicate an average score of 3.7 on a 5-point scale (Standard Deviation = 0.8). Satisfaction with teaching quality averages 3.8 (Standard Deviation = 0.7), satisfaction with facilities is 3.5 (Standard Deviation = 0.9), and satisfaction with instructor support is 3.6 (Standard Deviation = 0.8).

Multivariate Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis reveals a positive and statistically significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and student satisfaction ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$). Specifically, each additional point in intrinsic motivation corresponds to a 0.45-point increase in satisfaction. For extrinsic motivation, the relationship is weaker but still statistically significant with satisfaction ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, the regression analysis shows that satisfaction with teaching quality and instructor support has a strong impact on Learning motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation. Participants view support from instructors and teaching quality as the most crucial factors driving their Learning motivation ($R^2 = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$).

Moderating Factors

The analysis also indicates differences in the impact of learning motivation on satisfaction across academic years and fields of study. Final-year students tend to report higher satisfaction related to Learning motivation compared to second-year students ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.05$). Students in social sciences and humanities show a stronger relationship between Learning motivation and satisfaction compared to students in other fields.

The results indicate that intrinsic motivation is a key factor driving student satisfaction in the university environment, and this satisfaction significantly influences Learning motivation. Factors such as teaching quality and instructor support are crucial in enhancing both learning motivation and student satisfaction. These findings may offer valuable insights for educational institutions seeking to improve the learning environment and provide more effective support to students.

5. Discussion

Interpretation of Results and Implications

The findings of the study indicate that Learning motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, has a strong impact on student satisfaction within the university environment. Specifically, the positive and statistically significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and satisfaction suggests that when students feel enthusiastic and satisfied with their learning activities, they tend to experience greater satisfaction with their educational experience. This supports Deci and Ryan's (2020) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that the satisfaction of basic needs for autonomy and competence is a key driver of intrinsic motivation and satisfaction.

Conversely, while extrinsic motivation also affects satisfaction, its impact is weaker compared to intrinsic motivation. This may suggest that although factors like grades and external recognition can drive students' efforts, genuine satisfaction and enthusiasm stem more from their engagement and experiences in learning activities. Schunk (2021) also notes that extrinsic motivation is generally

less sustainable and may not generate long-term satisfaction as effectively as intrinsic motivation.

Impact of Learning motivation on Student Satisfaction

Learning motivation significantly influences student satisfaction, with intrinsic motivation playing a crucial role in this relationship. Students with higher levels of intrinsic motivation tend to report greater satisfaction with their learning environment. This can be attributed to the active engagement and personal satisfaction students experience when they pursue tasks they enjoy.

The higher satisfaction reported by final-year students compared to second-year students may relate to the maturity and accumulated learning experience over time. Final-year students might have developed more effective learning strategies and have a clearer view of their academic goals, leading to higher satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021). Additionally, students from social sciences and humanities demonstrate a stronger connection between Learning motivation and satisfaction, possibly reflecting a better alignment between their motivation and the curriculum content.

Other Factors Influencing Satisfaction

While Learning motivation is a primary factor in this study, other elements also significantly affect student satisfaction. Teaching quality, facilities, and instructor support have been identified as critical factors. Students who perceive better support from instructors and higher teaching quality tend to report higher satisfaction, consistent with Hsu et al. (2022).

External factors such as the balance between academic and personal life, financial conditions, and extracurricular activities may also impact student satisfaction. For example, students facing financial pressures or time constraints might experience higher stress and lower satisfaction with their educational experience. Further research into these factors could provide deeper insights into enhancing student satisfaction and Learning motivation in diverse educational contexts.

6. Conclusion

This study has explored the relationship between learning motivation and student satisfaction within the university environment, yielding significant and valuable findings. The results demonstrate that intrinsic motivation has a powerful effect on student satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of personal satisfaction and enthusiasm in learning. Students with high intrinsic motivation not only report greater satisfaction with their learning experience but also tend to achieve better academic outcomes.

In addition to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation also contributes to satisfaction, though to a lesser extent, indicating that while recognition and grades can be motivating, they do not sustain long-term satisfaction as effectively as intrinsic factors. Student satisfaction is also influenced by other factors such

as teaching quality, instructor support, and facilities. Final-year students and those in specific fields like social sciences and humanities show a stronger link between Learning motivation and satisfaction, reflecting both maturity in learning and alignment with their academic programs.

These findings offer insights into enhancing student satisfaction and motivation within the university environment. To improve satisfaction and Learning motivation, educational institutions should focus on boosting students' intrinsic motivation by enhancing teaching quality, providing supportive learning environments, and creating stimulating academic settings. Future research could further explore other factors affecting satisfaction and motivation to develop more effective support strategies for students in diverse learning contexts.

References

- Bandura, A. (2020). *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. Springer.
- Chen, J., Zhao, X., & Li, Y. (2021). *The Impact of Organizational Support on Student Satisfaction in Higher Education*. *Journal of Higher Education Management*, 36(1), 60-72.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2020). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. Springer.
- Hsu, T.-Y., Chen, Y.-S., & Huang, Y.-C. (2022). Exploring the Factors Affecting Student Satisfaction in Higher Education Institutions. *Education and Training*, 64(3), 235-250.
- Kuo, Y.-F., Cheng, W.-H., & Liu, C.-C. (2020). The Effect of Service Quality on Student Satisfaction in Higher Education. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 10(2), 115-130.
- Kuo, Y.-F., Cheng, W.-H., & Liu, C.-C. (2021). The Effect of Goal Setting on Student Motivation in Higher Education. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 11(1), 45-62.
- Liu, Y., Wang, X., & Yang, Y. (2021). Student Satisfaction and Its Determinants in Higher Education: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 92(4), 457-472.
- Pintrich, P. R., & Schunk, D. H. (2020). *Motivation in Education: Theory, Research, and Applications*. Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2021). *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*. Guilford Press.
- Schunk, D. H. (2021). Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance. In R. Riding & S. Rayner (Eds.), *Perception*. Routledge.