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INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS SHAPING STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL MOTIVATION

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Abstract. *This article analyzes the internal and external factors shaping students' professional motivation from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Based on the theories of Maslow, Herzberg, Deci & Ryan, and McClelland, the psychological and social mechanisms of motivation are examined. The study was conducted among students of Gulistan State Pedagogical Institute using surveys, interviews, and observation methods. Results show that internal motivation (interest, talent, striving for success) has a more stable and effective impact on students' personal growth and career stability, while external factors (parental influence, societal expectations, financial incentives) play a significant role in the initial stages of career decision-making.*

Keywords*: professional motivation, internal factors, external factors, personal*

1. Introduction

The student period is a crucial stage in shaping career choices. During this time, internal motivation—such as personal interests, talents, and the desire for achievement—emerges as a primary driver of professional orientation. However, external factors—including parental influence, societal expectations, and financial incentives—also play a significant role in decision-making.

Theoretical frameworks explain this process from different perspectives. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs identifies internal drives as the foundation of self-actualization. Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory distinguishes between hygiene and motivational factors. Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory highlights autonomy, competence, and relatedness as the key components of motivation. McClelland's (1961) theory of needs shows that the need for achievement strongly drives personal development.

This article explores the internal and external factors shaping students' professional motivation based on both theoretical insights and empirical findings.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Foundations of Motivation

Several classical theories provide the conceptual basis for understanding students' professional motivation:

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943): Motivation develops progressively, where self-actualization, the highest level, can only be pursued once lower-level needs are satisfied. In the student context, self-actualization translates into pursuing a career aligned with personal interests and talents.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959): Motivation is shaped by hygiene factors (scholarship, study conditions, financial stability) and motivational factors (achievement, recognition, personal growth). Hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction, while motivational factors drive long-term personal development.

Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2000): Emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in sustaining intrinsic motivation. Students who feel autonomous and competent tend to show higher persistence in their career goals.

McClelland's Theory of Needs (1961): The needs for achievement, power, and affiliation determine career decisions and long-term motivation.

2.2. International Empirical Studies

Research across different countries shows the universal but context-sensitive role of motivation:

Nishimura (2017) conducted a longitudinal study in Japan and found that autonomy and social connectedness strongly influenced students' motivation. This study highlights the importance of cultural context in applying motivational theories.

Koyanagi et al. (2021) demonstrated that social capital, such as peer networks and mentor relationships, positively correlates with academic motivation among Japanese students.

Shirai et al. (2013) found that Japanese graduates' job search motivation was highly linked to self-efficacy and career attitudes, reinforcing the role of psychological confidence in motivation.

Sartore et al. (2023) developed an integrated cognitive-motivational model of Ikigai, showing how aligning personal purpose with career aspirations fosters resilience and long-term motivation.

2.3. Motivation in the Uzbek Context

In Uzbekistan, recent research emphasizes the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of student motivation:

Karimov (2023) reported that internal motivation—such as interest in the chosen field and the pursuit of personal growth—was more stable and enduring compared to external motivators like financial benefits or social expectations.

Iskandarov & Iskandarova (2022) highlighted that while external factors (parental influence, societal norms) significantly affect students' initial career choices, internal motivation ultimately determines persistence and long-term success.

Empirical studies in Uzbek higher education show that participation in extracurricular activities and volunteerism enhances intrinsic motivation and improves students' self-confidence in career decision-making.

2.4. Gaps in the Literature

While classical motivational theories provide a strong foundation, their application in the context of Uzbekistan remains underexplored. There is a limited number of studies addressing how cultural values, economic conditions, and social expectations shape the balance between internal and external motivation among Uzbek students. This study aims to contribute to closing this gap by integrating international insights, particularly from Japan, with empirical evidence from Uzbekistan.

3. Methodology

Research Context

Location: Gulistan State Pedagogical Institute.

Participants: 150 students (1st–4th year).

Methods

1. Survey:

25 Likert-scale questions.

Internal motivation: interest, talent, striving for achievement.

External motivation: parental influence, societal expectations, financial incentives.

2. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews with 30 students.

Questions focused on career choice motives and the role of internal vs. external influences.

3. Observation:

Participation in extracurricular activities (clubs, volunteering, academic circles).

Analysis Techniques

Quantitative: Chi-square test and Pearson correlation using SPSS.

Qualitative: Thematic discourse analysis.

Ethical Principles: Ensured anonymity and voluntary participation of respondents.

4. Results

4.1. Survey Results

Internal Motivation:

67% chose their career path based on interest and talent.

59% cited achievement and self-development as their main motives.

52% linked their career decisions to their personal values.

External Motivation:

22% reported parental or family influence.

31% highlighted societal expectations as a major factor.

28% identified financial incentives (scholarship, future salary) as crucial.

Statistical analysis revealed that internal motivation was stronger and more stable than external motivation ($\chi^2 = 14.3$; $p < 0.05$).

4.2. Interview Results

Internal Motivation:

Most students associated their career choice with long-standing interests and talents.

Many mentioned “fulfilling my dreams” as a key reason for their decision.

External Motivation:

Some admitted relying on parents’ advice or instructions.

Prestigious careers in society (e.g., teacher, doctor, IT specialist) were noted as external motivators.

Challenges:

Concerns about financial stability and future job security.

Lack of adequate support in chosen fields reported by some students.

Overall, interviews indicated that students initially relied on external factors but gradually shifted toward internal motivation as the dominant driver.

4.3. Observation Results

Socially Active Students (participating in clubs, volunteering, extracurricular activities):

Displayed greater confidence and determination in career decisions.

Connected their future profession with personal success and social relevance.

Less Active Students (limited involvement in extracurricular activities):

Showed more uncertainty and hesitation in career decision-making.

Exhibited lower levels of motivation overall.

Observations confirmed Deci & Ryan’s (2000) theory: autonomy and relatedness significantly enhance intrinsic motivation.

5. Discussion

The findings confirm theoretical assumptions:

1. Maslow’s theory: Students fulfilling internal needs achieve higher levels of motivation and personal growth.

2. Herzberg’s theory: While hygiene factors are necessary to maintain motivation, motivational factors such as success and recognition contribute more to development.

3. Deci & Ryan's theory: Autonomy and competence strongly increase intrinsic motivation.

4. McClelland's theory: Students with a high need for achievement demonstrate stronger and more determined motivation.

These findings have practical relevance for higher education in Uzbekistan: universities need to design strategies that foster internal motivation while constructively managing external influences.

6. Conclusion

This study shows that:

Internal motivation (interest, talent, striving for achievement) is the main driver of stable professional orientation.

External factors (parental influence, societal expectations, financial incentives) are crucial in the early stages but gradually give way to internal motivation.

Higher education institutions in Uzbekistan should implement programs that strengthen intrinsic motivation while constructively supporting external factors.

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