

**THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATION IN STUDENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

**IMPORTÂNCIA DA MOTIVAÇÃO NOS ESTUDANTES PARA UMA FORMAÇÃO
PROFISSIONAL BEM-SUCEDIDA**

***LA IMPORTANCIA DE LA MOTIVACIÓN EN LOS ESTUDIANTES PARA UNA
FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL EXITOSA***



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ABSTRACT: The study aimed to investigate the formation of achievement and failure-avoidance motivations among professional education students, aiming to understand how these motivations influence academic success and personal development. Achievement motivation, focused on the desire to achieve success, was compared with failure-avoidance motivation, where actions are directed toward attempting to prevent mistakes. The research used methods such as data surveys, correlation analyses, and personality diagnostics to identify motivational factors and their relationship with anxiety levels. The results show that achievement motivation intensifies in the final years of study, particularly between the third and fourth years, due to increased involvement in specialized subjects and more defined professional trajectories. Additionally, students with high motivation levels frequently experience elevated anxiety, suggesting a complex relationship between motivation and psychological well-being.

KEYWORDS: Motivation. Achieving success. Avoiding failure. Anxiety. Professional education activity.

RESUMO: O objetivo do estudo foi investigar a formação das motivações de realização e de evitação do fracasso entre estudantes da educação profissional, buscando compreender como essas motivações influenciam o sucesso acadêmico e o desenvolvimento pessoal. A motivação de realização, voltada para o desejo de alcançar o sucesso, foi comparada com a motivação de se evitar o fracasso, na qual as ações são direcionadas para a tentativa de prevenir erros. A pesquisa utilizou métodos como levantamentos de dados, análises de correlação e diagnósticos de personalidade para identificar os fatores motivacionais e sua relação com os níveis de ansiedade. Os resultados mostram que a motivação de realização se intensifica nos últimos anos de estudo, especialmente entre o terceiro e o quarto ano, devido ao maior envolvimento em disciplinas especializadas e trajetórias profissionais mais definidas. Além disso, estudantes com altos níveis de motivação frequentemente experimentam ansiedade elevada, sugerindo uma relação complexa entre motivação e bem-estar psicológico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Motivação. Alcançar o sucesso. Evitar o fracasso. Ansiedade. Atividade de formação profissional.

RESUMEN: El objetivo del estudio fue investigar la formación de las motivaciones de logro y de evitación del fracaso entre los estudiantes de educación profesional, buscando comprender cómo estas motivaciones influyen en el éxito académico y en el desarrollo personal. La motivación de logro, orientada al deseo de alcanzar el éxito, se comparó con la motivación de evitar el fracaso, en la que las acciones se dirigen a la tentativa de prevenir errores. La investigación utilizó métodos como encuestas de datos, análisis de correlación y diagnósticos de personalidad para identificar los factores motivacionales y su relación con los niveles de ansiedad. Los resultados muestran que la motivación de logro se intensifica en los últimos años de estudio, especialmente entre el tercer y el cuarto año, debido al mayor involucramiento en asignaturas especializadas y trayectorias profesionales más definidas. Además, los estudiantes con altos niveles de motivación experimentan frecuentemente una ansiedad elevada, lo que sugiere una relación compleja entre motivación y bienestar psicológico.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Motivación. Alcanzar el éxito. Evitar el fracaso. Ansiedad. Actividad de formación profesional.

Introduction

Life goals vary among individuals. Most people strive for success, seek to realize their potential, and exert their utmost effort to achieve their objectives. Scholars have investigated the factors driving personal success, questioning whether it stems from luck or hard work. However, researchers have a consensus regarding one critical factor that anticipates the inevitable changes in life: motivation.

Life operates on a principle of trade-offs, where achieving desired outcomes often necessitates personal sacrifices. This concept finds broad applicability across various fields of human activity.

This dynamic is particularly relevant for students undergoing professional training, whose motivation directs their entire development. During the learning process, students encounter tasks that drive them to either seek success or avoid failure. The interaction between these types of motivation shapes individual motives, which evolve into personal motivation. Developing an appropriate level of motivation is crucial during this life stage, as students prepare to act as specialists in their chosen fields.

The scientific literature on motivation presents significant diversity and breadth. The two primary types of motivation are widely recognized as driving forces in students' lives. The balance between these motivations can significantly influence academic performance. Research indicates that as students progress in their educational journey, especially in higher education, this balance shifts. Moreover, studies show that motivation increases as students delve deeper into areas of specialization, such as the transition from the third to the fourth year of professional training, which places greater emphasis on specific subjects. This perspective is supported by authors like D. McClelland and H. Heckhausen (Wigfield; Eccles, 2002). Complementing this theory, Atkinson and Feather (1996) asserted that motivation is influenced by the desire to achieve success and the desire to avoid failure.

Practical experience demonstrates that individuals with sufficient motivation tend to strive toward their goals, whereas those with insufficient levels often seek to avoid failure. The latter case is associated with an internal mindset marked by a reluctance to invest resources in achieving desired outcomes.

Exploring various perspectives on achievement motivation, McClelland considered motivation a necessity, defining achievement motivation as the desire to attain results in competitive contexts (Rehman; Haider, 2013). Atkinson, in turn, identified achievement motivation as a fundamental driver for goal realization (Atkinson; Feather, 1966). Pavelkova

(1997) highlighted that favorable conditions for self-development foster achievement motivation, while Kostromina argued that external factors, such as the likelihood of success and task relevance, influence motivation alongside internal elements (Kostromina; Dvornikova, 2016).

In the context of learning motivation, the role of teachers also warrants attention, as they influence students' motivational sphere by participating in decision-making processes. Factors such as goal setting, events, and the importance attributed to tasks also affect motivation, albeit indirectly.

Conversely, high levels of motivation to avoid failure may inhibit creativity and risk-taking, limiting students' engagement in their studies. Thus, understanding the balance between these motivational forces and identifying factors that positively or negatively influence them is essential for developing educational strategies that foster improved learning outcomes.

The present study aims to identify the factors impacting students' motivation development in professional training and propose ways to optimize them, promoting appropriate incentives for a high-quality educational process.

Methods

The study employed the following research methods: data collection from students and teachers, analysis and synthesis of relevant literature, correlation analysis using C.E. Spearman's numerical method, and personality diagnosis utilizing the methodology developed by T. Ehlers.

The research was conducted at the Gubkin Russian State University of Oil and Gas (Moscow, Russia). The first survey sought to categorize students into high, medium, and low efficacy groups. Initially, interviews were conducted with university faculty, followed by a request for students to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning process. The research focused on third- and fourth-year undergraduate students, as this stage of university education involves a deeper engagement with specialized disciplines.

A study was conducted using T. Ehlers' methodology to assess achievement motivation to test the hypothesis that high motivation levels are associated with increased anxiety. This study involved 67 students from the Russian university.

Subsequently, students' anxiety levels were evaluated using the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale. The results were analyzed and confirmed through Spearman's correlation method.

Results

The results of the anxiety level test indicated that more than half of the students (60%) exhibited high levels of anxiety. Among the 47 students (70%) with high and very high levels of achievement motivation, 37 (79%) were identified as having elevated anxiety levels. The professional educational activities of students are designed to foster their development and equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary for their growth (Kanaeva, 2010). Younger students often perceive the need to learn not as an intrinsic value but as a means to achieve a goal. Therefore, it is essential to cultivate their motivation to attain this objective.

Contemporary science distinguishes between achievement motivation and motivation to avoid failure. Achievement motivation is understood as the desire to achieve results by overcoming difficulties. This type of drive was initially identified by Murray (1938). Conversely, the need to avoid failure relates to actions aimed not at achieving the goal itself but at preventing potential frustrations, often linked to dependence on the opinions of others (Heckhausen, 2001).

The results revealed certain inconsistencies: the percentage of highly effective students, compared to those with medium and low effectiveness as determined by the dean's office, was 22%, 57%, and 21%, respectively. In contrast, students' self-assessment of their academic performance yielded proportions of 35%, 65%, and 0%, respectively.

These significant discrepancies in evaluations indicate that students face challenges in objectively assessing their actions. To accurately identify the specific factors driving students toward success, the achievement motivation diagnostic methodology developed by Ehlers was employed. This methodology involves responding to a set of closed-ended questions ("yes" or "no"). Based on the responses, individuals are classified into one of four levels of achievement motivation: low, medium, high, or very high. The technique is also applied to assess the motivation to avoid failure.

A comparison between third- and fourth-year students revealed significant differences. Among fourth-year students, the proportion with high and very high levels of achievement motivation was higher than among third-year students. Conversely, the percentage of students with low levels of motivation to avoid failure was up to 10% in both years. The research findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Results of the First Motivation Assessment

Motivation level	3rd year (AM)	4th year (AM)	3rd year (FAM)	4th year (FAM)
Low	8.1%	3.0%	11.0%	7.0%
Medium	51.0%	26.6%	40.0%	31.2%
High	27.4%	46.6%	32.0%	42.8%
Very high	13.5%	23.8%	17.0%	19%

Observation: AM refers to achievement motivation, and FAM refers to motivation to avoid failure
Source: Prepared by the authors

The increase in encouragement among students during the transition from the third to the fourth year can be explained by the growing influence of internal attitudes and the diminishing influence of external attitudes. This is a period when an individual's orientation becomes solidified, and each student defines their primary objective and the strategy to achieve it. In this context, intrinsic motivation should be understood as the desire to acquire knowledge, while extrinsic motivation is predominantly driven by the desire to obtain rewards associated with that knowledge.

Academic success and a student's level of development are directly dependent on their activity: the more intensely a student dedicates themselves to their studies, the greater the likelihood of achieving their goals. This phenomenon partly explains the increase in the number of motivated students during the transition to the fourth year, as academic demands intensify, particularly with the requirement to complete a graduation dissertation.

The predominant factor in forming motivation is the prevalence of one type of motivation over the other: the motivation to achieve success or the motivation to avoid failure. Individuals with predominant achievement motivation set their goals, focusing on attaining the desired result without the fear of failure. Conversely, individuals motivated by the desire to avoid failure focus on evading mistakes, even when the possibility of reaching their goals remains. For these individuals, goals are aligned with their internal needs, and their motives may combine objectives, attitudes, and personal aspirations (Tkach; Tkach, 2019).

Motivation is largely influenced by the pleasure an individual derives from the process to which they are committed. Initially, this pleasure may be modest, but over time, early positive results fuel the individual's aspirations to achieve their goals, becoming a significant driving force. However, an excessive level of motivation can lead to negative emotions, thereby hindering the learning process.

From a mental health perspective, it is pertinent to investigate the relationship between motivation and anxiety among students. It is hypothesized that the two are directly proportional:

the higher the motivation, the greater the anxiety, and vice versa. The results of the second assessment are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Results of the Second Assessment

Level of motivation for achievement	Percentage of students
Very high	9%
High	61%
Medium	27%
Low	3%

Observation: The analysis reveals a positive correlation of $r_s=0.447$ $r_s = 0.447$ with $p \leq 0.01$ $p \leq 0.01$

Source: Prepared by the authors

It can be concluded that the hypothesis of a direct relationship between motivation levels and anxiety was confirmed. In this context, students with very high levels of achievement motivation tend to exhibit greater emotional lability compared to those with moderate levels (Biktina, 2021). Therefore, it is essential for highly motivated students to realistically assess their abilities and respond with composure to negative outcomes, as these may still present learning opportunities.

Furthermore, the level of anxiety is shaped by how encouragement is fostered, which necessitates that educators adopt appropriate strategies to stimulate student motivation. The development of such motivation is also influenced by how the material is presented and the engaging nature of the content. An individualized approach is critical in the learning process, and groups that embrace this teaching principle tend to foster an environment more conducive to student development (Bobryshov; Saenko, 2016).

An interesting reflection on this topic involves considering the impact of the educational environment as a whole. As J. Sincero wrote, "Our environment shapes everything about us, from our eating habits to our financial situation and appearance."

Specialists with profound knowledge and creative thinking have the potential to transform the world; therefore, their education must be carefully planned. To achieve this, it is vital to establish an educational environment that supports the development of each student, guiding them toward their goals. Moreover, instead of creating entirely new teaching models, efforts should focus on evaluating and optimizing existing ones (McClelland, 1963).

For instance, in the future, master classes may become an effective tool for stimulating student motivation and fostering their determination to achieve their objectives (Bashlaeva, 2019). For more effective development, it is crucial to investigate the origins of student

motivation, how they strive to reach their goals, and the strategies they employ to do so (Glynn; Aultman; Owens, 2005). Future studies on this topic should consider all factors influencing the development of motivation and the changes it undergoes over time.

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