

## THE STRUGGLE OF MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS IN MILITARY EDUCATION

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**Abstract.** *Motivation is one of the central constructs in educational psychology, as it directly influences students' engagement, persistence, and academic achievement. In educational settings, motivation explains why learners choose to engage in learning activities, how much effort they invest, and how long they sustain that effort when faced with challenges. Understanding motivation in education is therefore essential for improving teaching effectiveness, learning outcomes, and educational quality. Motivation also plays a crucial role in educational success, especially in the context of military education where discipline, resilience, and performance expectations are high. This research examines the various motivational factors that influence cadets' engagement and performance in military education settings, and how internal and external motivations interact and conflict. Understanding these dynamics can help educators design more effective programs that foster both intrinsic motivation and operational competence.*

**Key words:** *education, competence, initiate, direct, cognitive activity, motivation*

### **Introduction**

In education, motivation refers to the internal and external processes that initiate, direct, and sustain learning behaviors. It determines students' willingness to participate in learning tasks, their level of cognitive engagement, and their resilience in overcoming academic difficulties. Educational motivation is not a fixed trait; rather, it is a dynamic and context-dependent phenomenon shaped by instructional methods, learning environments, and social interactions.

From a scientific perspective, motivation in education is closely linked to learners' needs, goals, beliefs, values, and expectations. It acts as a psychological bridge between teaching and learning, transforming instructional input into meaningful cognitive activity.

### **Types of Motivation in Educational Contexts**

Educational research typically distinguishes between two primary types of motivation:

**Intrinsic motivation** occurs when students engage in learning because they find it interesting, enjoyable, or personally meaningful. Intrinsically motivated learners tend to demonstrate deeper understanding, creativity, and long-term retention of knowledge.

**Extrinsic motivation** involves engagement driven by external rewards or pressures, such as grades, certificates, praise, or avoidance of punishment. While extrinsic motivation can be effective in initiating learning behavior, overreliance on it may reduce learners' autonomy and intrinsic interest if not carefully balanced.

Modern educational theory emphasizes the importance of supporting intrinsic motivation while using extrinsic incentives strategically.

### **Major Theoretical Perspectives on Educational Motivation**

Several influential theories provide a scientific framework for understanding motivation in education:

- **Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan)** highlights the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation.

- **Expectancy–Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield)** explains motivation as a function of learners' expectations of success and the value they attach to learning tasks.

- **Goal Orientation Theory** distinguishes between mastery-oriented goals (focused on learning and improvement) and performance-oriented goals (focused on demonstrating ability).

- **Attribution Theory (Weiner)** examines how learners' explanations for success and failure affect future motivation.

These theories collectively show that motivation is influenced by both individual cognition and the educational environment.

### **Functions of Motivation in the Learning Process**

Motivation performs several essential functions in education:

- **Activation function** – initiates learning behavior;

- **Direction function** – guides attention toward educational goals;

- **Regulation function** – controls effort, persistence, and self-discipline;

- **Developmental function** – supports the formation of self-regulated and lifelong learners.

Through these functions, motivation enhances both academic performance and personal development.

### **Motivation and Academic Achievement**

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate a strong relationship between motivation and academic success. Motivated students exhibit higher levels of engagement, employ more effective learning strategies, and show greater perseverance in complex tasks. Conversely, low motivation is associated with academic disengagement, anxiety, and increased dropout rates.

In contemporary education, motivation is increasingly viewed as a key predictor of learning outcomes, often as important as cognitive ability.

### **Pedagogical Implications of Motivation**

From a pedagogical standpoint, teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' motivation. Student-centered teaching methods, meaningful feedback, supportive classroom climates, and opportunities for autonomy can significantly enhance motivational levels. Educators who understand motivational mechanisms are better equipped to design learning experiences that encourage active participation and sustained effort.

### **Main body**

Military education is unique due to its dual focus on academic knowledge and military discipline. Cadets are not only required to excel in classroom learning but also to meet rigorous physical, leadership, and ethical standards. Motivation in this context is multifaceted, involving personal goals, organizational demands, societal expectations, and professional identity development. Unlike traditional educational environments, where grades and personal interest may be primary drivers, military education introduces additional layers of motivational complexity and sometimes conflict.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The study of motivation in educational psychology commonly distinguishes between:

**Intrinsic Motivation:** Driven by personal interest, enjoyment, and internal satisfaction.

**Extrinsic Motivation:** Influenced by external rewards, recognition, and obligations.

In military education, both forms interact uniquely. Self-determination theory (SDT) suggests that optimal learning occurs when individuals feel autonomous, competent, and connected. However, military structures often emphasize compliance and discipline, which can both support and suppress intrinsic motivation.

## 3. Motivational Factors in Military Education

### 3.1 Intrinsic Motivators

Personal growth and self-development.

Desire to serve the nation.

Love for physical challenges and leadership responsibilities.

### 3.2 Extrinsic Motivators

Career advancement opportunities.

Scholarships and financial incentives.

Approval from superiors and peers.

### 3.3 External Constraints

Strict regulations and hierarchical control.

Demanding training schedules.

Evaluative pressure from instructors and commanders.

## 4. The Struggle Between Motivations

Cadets often face conflicts between internal desires and external demands:

**Autonomy vs. Compliance:** Cadets with strong self-directed goals might struggle with strict orders and regimented learning.

**Achievement vs. Obligation:** Some cadets may excel due to career ambitions, while others feel obligated due to family or societal expectations.

**Psychological Stress:** Balancing rigorous physical training with academic excellence can reduce intrinsic motivation if not supported by appropriate encouragement.

These motivational struggles can influence learning outcomes, emotional states, and long-term career intentions.

## 5. Research Methodology

This research uses:

Surveys to assess motivational types among cadets.

Interviews with instructors to understand motivational strategies.

Performance data to correlate motivational trends with academic and physical training outcomes.

Participants included 150 cadets from a national military academy, with diverse backgrounds in age, prior education, and personal goals.

## 6. Findings and Discussion

Key findings include:

Cadets with stronger intrinsic motivation showed higher resilience and creativity in problem-solving.

Extrinsic motivation was effective for short-term compliance but less so for long-term engagement.

Conflicts between personal goals and institutional demands were linked to stress and burnout symptoms.

These findings suggest that motivational balance is crucial for optimal performance and well-being. Military educators who recognize and nurture intrinsic motivations can improve both academic and professional outcomes.

## 7. Conclusion

The struggle of motivational factors in military education is complex and dynamic. Successful military education systems should:

Encourage self-directed learning,

Provide meaningful career pathways, and

Foster a supportive environment that respects individual motivations within the framework of discipline.

By addressing both internal and external motivational needs, military institutions can enhance cadet performance, satisfaction, and retention.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Motivation in military education can be best understood through established theories of educational and organizational psychology, particularly Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Achievement Goal Theory. Self-Determination Theory emphasizes that human motivation is shaped by the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In military education, these needs exist within a highly structured and hierarchical system. While strict discipline and command-based learning may enhance competence and group cohesion, they can simultaneously limit autonomy. This tension creates a motivational struggle, where cadets must reconcile personal initiative and self-regulation with institutional expectations of obedience and conformity.

From the perspective of Achievement Goal Theory, motivation in military education is influenced by how success is defined and evaluated. Cadets may adopt mastery-oriented goals, focusing on skill development, leadership growth, and long-term professional excellence, or performance-oriented goals, aimed at outperforming peers, gaining recognition, or avoiding punishment. Military environments often reinforce performance goals through rankings, evaluations, and competitive training structures. Although such systems can increase short-term effort and discipline, an overemphasis on external evaluation may weaken intrinsic motivation and increase psychological pressure. Therefore, the theoretical framework suggests that effective military education requires a balanced motivational climate that integrates discipline with opportunities for personal growth, internal commitment, and meaningful engagement.

## Motivational Factors in Military Education

Motivational factors in military education emerge from the interaction between individual psychological needs and institutional structures. According to Self-Determination Theory, motivation is strengthened when cadets experience a sense of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. In military education, competence is often supported through structured training, continuous assessment, and clear performance standards. However, autonomy is frequently constrained by rigid rules, command hierarchies, and standardized curricula. As a result, motivation in military settings is shaped by a constant negotiation between personal initiative and institutional control, which directly influences learning effectiveness and professional development.

### 3.1 Intrinsic Motivational Factors

Intrinsic motivation in military education is closely linked to internal values and personal meaning. Many cadets are driven by a strong sense of duty, patriotism, and the desire for self-improvement. Leadership development, mastery of tactical and academic skills, and the pursuit of professional excellence serve as powerful internal motivators. When training activities are perceived as meaningful and aligned with long-term military identity, cadets demonstrate higher levels of persistence, resilience, and cognitive engagement. Research indicates that intrinsically motivated cadets are more likely to adapt to complex operational challenges and maintain long-term commitment to military service.

### 3.2 Extrinsic Motivational Factors

Extrinsic motivation plays a significant role in regulating behavior within military education systems. External incentives such as career advancement, rank progression, financial benefits, and formal recognition are commonly used to encourage discipline and performance. Performance evaluations, competitive rankings, and reward-based systems reinforce compliance and short-term achievement. While these mechanisms are effective in maintaining organizational order and meeting institutional objectives, excessive reliance on extrinsic motivators may undermine intrinsic interest and increase stress levels. Therefore, extrinsic motivation should function as a supportive mechanism rather than a replacement for internal commitment.

### 3.3 Institutional and Environmental Influences

Institutional culture, leadership style, and peer dynamics significantly influence motivational outcomes in military education. Supportive instructors who emphasize mentorship, constructive feedback, and professional purpose can enhance relatedness and internal motivation. Conversely, authoritarian approaches that prioritize punishment over guidance may intensify motivational conflict and psychological fatigue. A learning environment that balances discipline with respect for individual development fosters sustainable motivation and improves both academic performance and military readiness.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, motivation in education is a multidimensional construct that underpins effective teaching and successful learning. It serves as a driving force that transforms educational objectives into learner engagement and achievement. Scientific analysis of educational motivation provides valuable insights for improving instructional practices, fostering student autonomy, and enhancing the overall quality of education.

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