

**PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC
MOTIVATION IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL
REFORMS IN UZBEKISTAN**

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Abstract: The article addresses students' academic motivation as a crucial factor in ensuring educational quality within the modern higher education system of Uzbekistan. The study situates academic motivation within the broader context of national educational reforms, digital transformation, and integration into international educational standards. By analyzing classical and contemporary psychological theories, the paper identifies key motivational mechanisms influencing students' learning engagement and academic achievement. Special attention is paid to socio-psychological, cultural, and institutional factors shaping motivation. The article argues that understanding and enhancing academic motivation is essential for developing competitive human capital, improving higher education outcomes, and supporting Uzbekistan's sustainable socio-economic development in a globalized world.

Keywords: academic motivation, educational quality, higher education system, psychological mechanisms, students, digital education, socio-cultural context

The contemporary higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan is undergoing a period of profound reform driven by rapid processes of globalization, digital transformation, the accelerated integration of artificial intelligence into everyday life, and fundamental changes in the socio-cultural environment. The success of these reforms depends on the capacity of the higher education system to integrate modernization processes while preserving national and cultural traditions. In this context, the development of innovative pedagogical approaches and the training of competitive specialists capable of addressing the challenges of sustainable national development under conditions of global uncertainty represent particularly pressing tasks.

Within this framework, a deep understanding of the motivational characteristics of students and young people acquires special significance and poses both theoretical and practical challenges for psychology professionals, requiring the formulation and implementation of scientifically grounded solutions.

Therefore, profound reforms are being implemented in the field of education in Uzbekistan. Fundamental transformations are taking place at all levels of the education system, particularly in higher education. As emphasized by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, "In building the New Uzbekistan, the most important task is to educate our youth as comprehensively developed individuals on the basis of modern knowledge and experience, as well as national and universal values" [1]. In this regard, the study of students' academic motivation acquires particular relevance.

By the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-2909 dated April 20, 2017, "On Measures to Further Develop the Higher Education System," the task was set to fundamentally improve the higher education system, comprehensively revise the content of professional training in accordance with the country's priority socio-economic development objectives, and create the necessary conditions for preparing highly qualified specialists with higher education in line with international standards [2]. The effectiveness of these reforms is directly linked to the level of students' academic motivation.

In this context, scholars increasingly recognize students' academic motivation as a key factor determining the effectiveness of the educational process and the formation of competitive professionals. Accordingly, under current conditions, studying students' academic motivation

and identifying ways to enhance it becomes especially important. This is particularly relevant given the growing number of students entering higher education institutions, which intensifies the need to maintain a high level of academic motivation. As President Mirziyoyev has noted, “What matters to us is not merely the numbers, but above all the quality and effectiveness of education.”

The need to study students’ academic motivation is also associated with several contemporary trends:

- the rapid development of digital educational technologies and distance learning, which is transforming students’ attitudes toward the learning process;
- ongoing changes in the labor market and the emergence of new professions, which require students to engage in continuous learning and regularly update their knowledge and skills;
- increasing competition among young people, which intensifies motivation to achieve academic success;
- the process of integration into international educational standards, which places new demands on students.

The issue of students’ academic motivation has attracted the attention of numerous scholars in Uzbekistan and abroad. Among Uzbek researchers, E. G‘oziyev, V. Karimova, Akramova Feruza Akmalovna, F. Haydarov, X. Abdulkarimov, F. Alimova, B. Botirov, N. T. Norkulova, N. M. Agasiyeva, and R. M. Baxtiyorov have conducted scientific studies on the influence of the socio-psychological environment of higher education institutions, ethno-cultural and cognitive factors, as well as the role of family relationships in the formation of academic motivation. Scholars from CIS countries—including A. N. Leontiev, L. I. Bozhovich, T. O. Gordeeva, E. N. Osin, I. A. Furmanov, N. V. Chepeleva, I. S. Isaev, and M. S. Makulbekova—have also explored academic motivation in relation to the socio-psychological context of higher education.

European researchers have likewise carried out a number of studies that have contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of academic motivation and to the identification of methods for preventing and overcoming negative motivational states. British psychologist Neville Bennett investigated pedagogical styles that influence academic motivation. According to his findings, “Traditional and progressive teaching styles affect students’ motivation in different ways. Interactive, student-centered pedagogical approaches enhance intrinsic motivation among the majority of students” [7].

Swedish scholar Anders Jidesjö examined the relationship between academic motivation and curriculum design. In his view, “When the curriculum is meaningful and relevant to students’ lives, it significantly enhances their learning motivation. Learning materials that are embedded in contemporary contexts and connected to real-life situations foster students’ intrinsic motivation” [4].

French researchers Fabien Fenouillet and Alain Lieury compared the effectiveness of motivational strategies across different contexts. Their studies demonstrate that “The same motivational strategies may yield different outcomes in different cultural and social contexts. Therefore, cultural characteristics must be taken into account when applying motivational strategies” [5].

Dutch psychologist Monique Boekaerts investigated the relationship between self-regulation and motivation. According to her theoretical framework, “When students possess self-regulation skills, their academic motivation increases, facilitating deeper learning and more effective knowledge acquisition” [6].

The findings of researchers from Asian countries have also been widely published in scholarly sources. Chinese scholars Li Jin and Martin Cortazzi examined student motivation within the context of Confucian educational philosophy and the modern education system. They argue that “In Chinese culture, Confucian values such as the pursuit of knowledge, self-improvement, and social responsibility constitute key factors shaping students’ academic

motivation” [8]. Chinese researcher Yong Zhao explored the impact of globalization and international competition on academic motivation. According to his conclusions, “In China, family expectations, social pressure, and an environment of international competition represent major external factors influencing the formation of students’ motivation” [9].

American scholars Edward Deci and Richard Ryan developed Self-Determination Theory, which plays a crucial role in understanding the factors influencing academic motivation. According to their framework, “Intrinsic motivation develops when three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are satisfied” [3].

In her mindset theory, Carol Dweck advanced the idea that “students’ beliefs about intellectual abilities—whether they perceive them as innate and fixed (a fixed mindset) or as malleable and capable of development (a growth mindset)—have a powerful impact on their academic motivation” [10].

Research conducted by Martin Seligman and his colleagues demonstrates that “positive psychological characteristics such as optimism, hope, and perseverance (grit) constitute important factors that enhance students’ academic motivation” [11].

Psychologist Angela Duckworth has conducted in-depth research on the concept of grit. Her studies indicate that “grit is a trait characterized by sustained passion and perseverance toward long-term goals and resilience in the face of challenges, and it represents a key determinant of academic success” [12].

Based on the analysis of the theoretical material reviewed, we have developed recommendations aimed at enhancing the academic motivation of university students in Uzbekistan:

In the context of large-scale reforms in the higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan, digital transformation, and integration into the international educational space, the issue of enhancing students’ academic motivation acquires particular scientific and practical significance. Based on an analysis of contemporary psychological theories and empirical research, it is appropriate to formulate a set of recommendations aimed at the sustainable development of students’ learning motivation.

First and foremost, educational practice should focus on creating conditions that satisfy students’ basic psychological needs as identified by Self-Determination Theory—autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Increasing autonomy can be achieved by introducing elements of choice into the learning process (e.g., variability in assignments, project topics, and assessment formats), which fosters intrinsic motivation and personal responsibility for learning outcomes. Support for the need for competence is facilitated through clear and constructive feedback, the gradual increase in task complexity, and the recognition of students’ academic achievements.

A second important direction involves fostering a growth mindset among students. In situations where some learners demonstrate avoidance of failure and fear of making mistakes, it is essential to systematically promote the view that knowledge and abilities are malleable and can be developed. This requires a shift in pedagogical discourse—from emphasizing innate abilities to highlighting effort, learning strategies, and personal development. Such an orientation enhances academic persistence and the stability of motivation.

Of particular importance is the development of students’ self-regulation skills in learning activities, including goal setting, planning, monitoring, and reflective evaluation of outcomes. It is recommended that educational programs integrate elements of metacognitive instruction, training in learning strategies, and guided independent study. The development of self-regulation enables students to manage academic workload more effectively and reduces the risk of demotivation in digital and distance learning contexts.

Taking into account the national and cultural context of Uzbekistan, it is advisable to consider the role of family influence, social expectations, and collective values in shaping academic motivation. Support from significant adults, recognition of educational achievements,

and the social significance of professional success strengthen extrinsic motivation, which—under appropriate pedagogical support—can be transformed into intrinsic motivation.

Another important recommendation is to enhance the practical and real-life relevance of curricular content. Linking academic disciplines to real professional tasks, contemporary socio-economic challenges, and labor market demands increases the meaningfulness of learning and strengthens achievement motivation. This is particularly relevant in the context of increasing competition and the need to prepare flexible and adaptive specialists.

Finally, within institutional educational policies, universities are encouraged to create a psychologically supportive learning environment grounded in respectful interaction, the reduction of excessive stress, and the development of a positive academic climate. Such an environment promotes optimism, academic perseverance, and students' long-term engagement in the learning process.

In sum, the implementation of these recommendations can contribute to higher levels of academic motivation among students in Uzbekistan, improve the quality of higher education, and support the preparation of competitive professionals capable of functioning effectively under conditions of global uncertainty and dynamic socio-economic change.

Thus, investigating the characteristics of students' academic motivation and exploring ways to enhance it is of particular relevance in the contemporary context of Uzbekistan. Such research contributes to the preparation of highly qualified specialists equipped with modern knowledge and skills required at the new stage of national development, improves the quality of education in the country, and ultimately supports Uzbekistan's attainment of a *достойное* position within the global community.

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