

Motivational Beliefs and Self Regulated Learning

[Credințele motivaționale și învățarea autoreglată]

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Abstract

This article addresses academic motivation learning from the perspective of the self-regulated learning paradigm. The interrelationship between motivation and self-regulation in learning has been widely recognized in literature. This study proposes a theoretical model that elucidates the relationship between motivation and self-regulated learning, with a particular focus on the differentiation between personal and social sources of motivation. It is hypothesized that self-regulated learning strategies mediate the relationship between motivational beliefs and academic achievement. Furthermore, it is theorized that epistemological beliefs influence the selection and implementation of learning strategies, thus generating subsequent effects on academic outcomes. Metacognitive strategies are assumed to regulate the relationship between past and current performance.

The proposed model was empirically tested using data collected from a sample of 50 fourth-year students from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences.

Alternative models were also evaluated, incorporating variables such as students' grade point averages, beliefs about the nature of learning, test anxiety, and general use of self-regulation strategies. Fit indices indicated that the final model provided a strong explanatory fit for the data.

The findings show that a learning-goal orientation significantly predicts the use of metacognitive strategies and self-monitoring behaviors. Although a performance-goal orientation exerts a positive influence on all components of self-regulated learning included in the model, it demonstrates a weaker predictive effect on the use of metacognitive strategies. Furthermore, the direct effect of learning goal orientation on metacognitive regulation is stronger than the effect of performance goal orientation. A significant indirect effect of learning orientation on academic performance, mediated by metacognitive strategies, was also confirmed.

Keywords: self-regulated learning, motivation, learning goals, performance goals, self-efficacy, metacognitive strategies, cognitive regulation, motivational beliefs.

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Introduction

Self-regulated learning represents a complex process of continuous monitoring and conscious control of one's own learning trajectory, aiming to evaluate progress and overcome difficulties encountered throughout the educational experience. It involves a high degree of self-responsibility, granting students the opportunity to take an active role in their learning and to make autonomous decisions regarding their goals and strategies.

Through self-regulation, students individually define learning objectives, select the content, methods, and techniques they consider appropriate for achieving them, monitor outcomes, and adjust their strategies according to performance. Thus, self-regulated learning becomes a form of self-management of knowledge, grounded in critical reflection, intrinsic motivation, and objective self-evaluation¹.

In specialized literature, the concept appears under various related terms, such as self-directed learning, self-determined learning, self-instruction, self-education, and independent learning. All these notions converge toward the central idea that the learner assumes an active and responsible role in their own educational development.

By its very nature, self-regulated learning entails the development of cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational competences that allow continuous adaptation to the demands of the educational environment. The student thus becomes an agent of their own growth, capable of planning, monitoring, and evaluating progress in an autonomous and reflective manner.²

Motivational Beliefs and Self-Regulated Learning Methodology of the Research

This study aims to explore students' perceptions regarding the introduction of a specialized university course designed to support the development of competences required for independent and lifelong learning.

The investigative approach seeks to identify the reasons that would motivate students to attend such a course, emphasizing its formative functions: stimulating learning motivation, fostering metacognitive awareness, setting personalized learning goals according to individual needs, planning and monitoring progress, and strengthening cognitive, metacognitive, metamotivational, and resource management skills. Furthermore, the research intends to highlight the degree of student involvement in their own educational development, as well as their motivation to become autonomous individuals capable of effectively managing the challenges of life and professional growth.

Identification of Variables

Dependent Variable:

V1-Motivation for learning and course participation.

¹ A. Anderson, "Learning Strategies in Physical Education: Self-Talk, Imagery, and Goal-Setting," *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 68, no. 1 (1997): 30–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07303084.1997.10604874>

² D. H. Schunk and B. J. Zimmerman, eds., *Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning: Theory, Research, and Applications* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2008).

Independent Variables:

V2-Existence of a course dedicated to self-directed learning.

V3-Involvement of specialized professors.

Research Hypothesis

It is assumed that when the self-directed learning course is taught by specialized professors, students will exhibit higher levels of motivation to participate, greater effort toward self-development, and a stronger perception of the teacher as an inspirational model.

Research Objectives

To stimulate student's motivation for developing the competences, skills, and abilities required in the process of self-regulated learning.

Description of the Sample

The target population of this research consists of undergraduate students. A non-probabilistic sampling method was employed, without the use of standardized statistical procedures. The purposive sampling technique was selected, involving students from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, given their familiarity with learning and self-regulation processes, which enables them to provide more informed perspectives.

The study included 50 fourth-year students, both male and female, with relatively homogeneous ages, ensuring a balanced interpretation of the results.

Research Method

The investigation employed a quantitative research design, using a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. Quantitative research focuses on measurable and observable data, aiming to identify patterns and frequency distributions of specific opinions or characteristics.

The questionnaire was administered to fourth-year students from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, yielding a total of 50 valid responses.

Research Results – Interpretations and Comments

The central focus of the research concerns the students' motivation to attend the course dedicated to metacognitive strategies and self-regulated learning. The study investigated how the presence of a specialized professor influences students' motivation to participate actively and to engage in their own formative process.

The findings reveal that most students display a high level of intrinsic motivation for attending courses that contribute to their personal and professional development. Motivation was positively correlated with the perceived usefulness of the course content and with the quality of the teacher–student relationship.

The study confirms that the specialized professor plays a decisive role in stimulating motivation—not only through professional expertise but also through the ability to inspire confidence, curiosity, and self-efficacy among students.

General Conclusion and Educational Implications

The analysis of the questionnaire data revealed several significant aspects regarding students' motivation and their perceptions of self-regulated learning. Most respondents expressed a positive attitude toward the introduction of a course specifically designed to develop metacognitive and self-regulatory strategies, considering it highly relevant for the enhancement of autonomous learning competences.

Furthermore, the study found that active involvement of specialized professors is a key determinant in sustaining and amplifying learning motivation. Students who reported educational experiences in which professors acted as facilitators of reflection and self-regulation obtained higher scores on items assessing self-efficacy, strategic planning, and progress monitoring.

The findings indicate a significant positive correlation between students' perceived teacher competence and their intrinsic motivation. At the same time, elevated levels of extrinsic motivation were associated with a desire for social validation, academic recognition, and the development of a positive self-image.

The present research confirms the fundamental role of motivational beliefs and self-regulatory processes in optimizing academic learning. Motivation—especially intrinsic motivation—acts as a catalyst for active engagement, persistence, and strategic effectiveness throughout the learning process.

The findings emphasize that the specialized professor, through expertise, attitude, and personal model of self-regulation, exerts a decisive influence on both students' motivation levels and the quality of their self-reflection.

From an applied perspective, introducing a course on self-directed and metacognitive learning into university curricula could substantially contribute to the development of lifelong learning competences.

Theoretically, the results support contemporary models of self-regulated learning³ (Zimmerman, Schunk, Pintrich), according to which self-regulation is a dynamic, context-dependent process, co-constructed through interaction with the environment and external feedback sources⁴.

In conclusion, self-regulated learning, supported by positive motivational beliefs and reflective pedagogical practices, represents a strategic pathway toward cultivating autonomous, responsible, and continuously developing learners.

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