

A Portfolio of Motivation and Priorities

Introductory Psychology 101

Introduction:

My topic of interest is motivation and priorities among high school students. I am going to study the different factors that motivate teenagers and determine if there is a strong correlation between motivation and the amount of extracurriculars that those students are involved in. This is interesting to me because my level of motivation and that of those around me is often very different, so I would like to further understand why we differ. Evaluating the number of extracurricular activities students are involved in will help me determine whether having to prioritize actually contributes to a higher motivation level among teenagers. In addition, I will evaluate seniors as a separate subcategory to delve into how motivation in high school has determined how they chose their respective future colleges. There are many questions about this topic that I would like to answer over the course of this study. My initial thought is that motivation and priorities are greatly determined by environmental influences, but that biological factors also play a role in how and how much teenagers are motivated. I believe this to be true because of my personal experience with motivation and priorities as well as through viewing and interacting with people who have different backgrounds than I do.

Nature Domain:

Despite the numerous similarities between human beings around the world, there are variables in each person's biology that impacts their behavior. These differences in biopsychology are an influential factor in the motivation levels of teenagers around the world, and accounting for those differences is an important factor in determining why motivations levels differ.

The first of these biological differences is in neurotransmitters, which are chemicals that alter activity in neurons. In terms of motivation, dopamine and serotonin are influential because they are chemicals that alter how people feel depending on how much of that chemical is released. Serotonin impacts mood, sleep, impulsivity, aggression, and appetite control, which are massively influential in terms of motivation and determining which tasks should be completed and in what order. Dopamine impacts learning, attention, and movement, and when adolescents are leaving childhood, the amount of dopamine that is released is dramatically reduced. This reduction causes behavior changes, and it will be interesting to see if older teenagers are more influenced by this lack of dopamine than younger teenagers are. In addition to the release of chemicals, neuron firing will most likely be influential in the motivation levels of teenagers in this study. When a thought is consistently felt, the neuron firing becomes more consistent, causing the paths to be more direct and less neurons to be used, thus causing the process to be easier than the first time the thought occurred. This is important in motivation levels, because consistent negative thoughts would become more efficient, and would be more easily felt, which would reduce the motivation levels of that teenager.

There are also structures in the brain that I predict can impact the motivation levels and impulsivity of teenagers. One of these structures is the forebrain, which controls memory, logic, and self-awareness. If there was damage or underdevelopment to this area, it would make sense that those skills would be impaired. Another structure is the limbic system, which includes the amygdala and the hippocampus, which are important in emotional behaviors and distinguishing between rewarding and punishing stimuli. Confusing those stimuli would be detrimental to the motivation levels of teenagers, because positive reinforcement could be confused as being negative, and vice versa. Damage or underdevelopment of those structures would impact the motivation levels of students because their brains would be confused regarding helpful and

unhelpful actions. To find out if there was something wrong with those structures, brain scans would be helpful. Examples of scans that could find damage include Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) techniques, Positron Emission Tomography (PET), and Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) machines. The most helpful would be fMRI techniques because it provides images of the structure and function of the brain, which would be useful in determining the causes of certain behavioral actions. Unfortunately, I will not have access to these machines, so I will not have access to this information, and will have to assume that there are no significant damages to the parts of the brain in these subjects.

Another part of the brain that is crucial to motivation levels and would impact people in this study differently is the frontal lobe. Responsible for reasoning and planning, the frontal lobe is not fully developed in teenagers, and thus would cause reasoning and planning levels to be more impaired than an adult's ability to reason or plan. I predict that younger teenagers would have more difficulty reasoning and planning than older teenagers, because the older teenagers would have a more developed frontal lobe. This would impact motivation because future consequences would not be relevant when planning and reasoning is impaired.

Pieces of the endocrine system, including the Pineal gland, are influential in actions such as sleep, which impact motivation levels as well. A lack of sleep would reduce the motivation levels in most teenagers, and since the Pineal gland is highly involved with sleep cycles, an impaired Pineal gland would greatly impact motivation levels and impulsive actions among teens. Sleep is crucial in decision making, and it is a well known fact that teenagers are almost always sleep deprived, causing decision making to be impacted. The amount of sleep that teenagers get each night will most likely correlate with the decisions that they make on a daily basis, including those that impact their futures and would need strong motivation in order to carry out. I predict in this study that those teenagers that sleep very little each night also have difficulty remaining motivated for their futures.

Similar to impacted sleep, if nightmares are prevalent or a subject continually dreams about failure, their motivation levels could be impacted to the point where those dreams come true. Since these dreams happen unconsciously, the person has no control over them, and if these bad dreams are recurring, it could be difficult to focus on anything other than those dreams. Other dreams, such as daydreams, could impact teenager's motivation levels, because if they slip into a daydream about failure, it could become a thought that consumes their entire being, and their motivation level drops because of the obsession with failure. I will account for these differences by asking questions about dreams and whether they are generally positive or negative in order to see if there is a correlation between negative daydreams and a lack of motivation.

The senses also will play a part in determining the motivation levels of various teenagers. Impaired senses such as the vestibular sense or the other senses could influence the motivation levels of teenagers. If balance is impacted with the vestibular sense, playing sports or even walking down hallways would be difficult, and thus the motivation to come to school could be lost because of the difficulty level. Other sense could also be impaired, such as vision or hearing, which would make it difficult to focus and learn material in school, lowering motivation levels because of the difficulty in understanding material in certain situations. Although I do not anticipate severe impairments in my study, small issues such as impacted vision will be accounted for in the study.

In addition to physical issues, many teenagers have problems with their perception of the world and of themselves. Although one person's perception is not always reality, it is their reality, and what that person perceives in a situation instantly becomes their reality. Body image

issues are prevalent among teenagers, especially females, so if a girl's perception of herself is that she is ugly, that would deeply impact her motivation to meet new people or experience new situations. In addition, if a teenager's perception is that they are bad at school or could never get into a decent college, that will impact their motivation levels in the present, which could eventually make those perceptions come true. This will be a huge part of the study, because people's perceptions of the situations around them highly influence how they react and motivate themselves for the future. I will have questions that ask about teenager's perceptions of themselves as well as the world around them, and I will interpret those in the context of the motivation levels they also report.

An important piece of this study is drug and alcohol use and how that results in and impacts the motivation levels of teenagers. With a lack of motivation comes impulsive decisions, which could include using drugs and alcohol, which can both slow down the central nervous system and can be addictive. It will be interesting to see whether there is a correlation between drug users or alcohol drinkers and low motivation levels. In addition, it will be interesting to see whether the drug/alcohol use began because of a lack of motivation or if the drug/alcohol use itself caused the lack of motivation. This will be interesting to determine based on the subjects and whether the correlation is also between ages, such that older students are heavier drug/alcohol users and younger students are not.

In addition, there are studies that have linked lesions on the subthalamic nucleus (STN) to impulsive action. One study looked into animals with STN lesions and their impact on choosing a small reward immediately as opposed to a larger reward later. The subjects with the STN lesions generally chose to wait for the larger reward. This study was also interested in food restriction and amphetamine use regarding impulsive action. Food restriction and amphetamine use increased the impulsive action in the animals with STN lesions in comparison to the control subjects but decreased impulsive action in delayed response tests. The differences in the tests produced opposite behaviors. The difference is between 'impulsive action' and 'impulsive choice' where the two different tests evoke two different psychological processes. These differences could also be explained through the timing of the tasks, which would impact the impulse control of the subjects. This study relates to motivation because motivation levels are highly connected to impulsive behavior. For example, impulsive behaviors that could negatively impact a person's future may be taken because that person lacks the motivation to refrain from those behaviors. A specific example is seen in how some teenagers neglect their homework in favor of spending time with friends, while other people diligently work on their school work. Spending time with friends is an impulsive action, whereas considering the consequences and deciding to do homework is a decision based on motivation. Moreover, while it is unlikely that a subject in this study has a STN lesion, this article proves that there are numerous biological factors that can impact behavior (Uslaner et al, 2006).

Nurture Domain:

While there are many similarities in many aspects of human development, the environment and influences of each individual person strongly impacts their motivation levels. Childhood development and role models can impact an adolescent's motivation for school, work, or other activities.

When children are first born, their initial temperament and emotions become clear. Whether they are feisty, fearful, flexible, or mixed will greatly influence their relations with their parents or primary caregiver, and thus begins the framework for their motivation levels. For example, if a child's temperament is feisty and both parents' temperaments are fearful, the child

might be discouraged from running around or playing in the manner that they would like to. The child's parents might constantly be reprimanding the child and asking them to settle down, which could create a divide between the child and the parents, as the parents are constantly squandering the child's motivation. As the child grows and searches for new adventures, the fearful parents might continue to diminish the child's sense of creativity. Later in his/her life the child could associate parental figures with a lack of fun activities, which might cause the child to resent the parents and disregard their communication with the child. This strained relationship between parents and children can be harmful to the motivation levels of children as they continue through their lives. These differences are not something that should be accounted for or disregarded, as they are the subject of the study. I will be asking questions in a survey regarding the relationship between parents and children to determine if there is a correlation between parental relations and an adolescent's motivation levels. I predict that there will be a strong correlation between high motivation levels and continued parental support.

This parental support, however, is not merely based upon the emotional needs of children and whether they are being met. The physical needs of children also contribute to the motivation levels of children and most likely continue to impact those children as they become adolescents. For example, in regards to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, there are four bottom layers of the pyramid that represent the "deficiency needs" that a human must receive in order to concentrate on the more complex upper level. These deficiency needs include biological and physical needs, safety needs, love needs, and esteem needs. Once basic needs such as food and water are met, needs such as security and stability can be addressed, followed by needs such as intimacy and achievement. The upper levels with needs such as achievement and prestige cannot be addressed until parental figures address basic needs such as warmth or security. The motivation for prestige or accomplishment would be strongly diminished if the individual is focused more on staying warm in the winter or finding dinner. The study will focus on these needs and ask participants questions regarding their home lives and whether the basic needs have been met throughout their lives. Differences between participants will be especially useful to the conclusion of this study, as it should be clear whether there is a correlation between a lack of basic needs and a lack of motivation.

In addition to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, there are stages of development that can impact a child's present and future motivation levels. For example, Jean Piaget's theory regarding development states that children first are in the Sensorimotor stage, where the child responds to different sensory stimuli and first begins to develop their schema. The schema that they begin developing aligns with Erik Erikson's first stage, where the child learns who they are able to trust. These stages set the framework for the child's relationship with his or her parents, and whether that relationship is going to be involved and supportive or distant. Since I am predicting that a child's relationship with their parents will greatly influence their motivation levels, these stages of development and how that relationship begins is very important. Additionally, as children grow and continue to develop, the stages of development continue to influence their actions. For example, according to Sigmund Freud's stages of development, children grow through the oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital levels. If a child were to never graduate from a specific level, they might be motivated to only focus on that stage. If children were to remain in the anal stage, for example, their motivation would be regarding the functions of elimination, as opposed to the actions that are considered normal for their age. Their motivation for school work or other activities might be lowered because they never fully developed past that anal stage. I will account for these differences in stages of development and

current stages by asking questions that would be indicative of different levels, to determine whether there is a correlation between the stages of development, motivation, and the connection to the person's parents.

In addition, there are implications regarding motivation in connection to Clare Graves' eight levels of consciousness. For example, people that have their center of gravity at the red, Power God level, their motivation stems from their own ambition for personal success and power. In contrast, people who have their center of gravity at the blue, Order level are driven by an obedience to authority, so their motivation comes from following the rules that are set forth in society. The additional levels also have implications as to the levels of motivation that people experience on a daily basis. All of these stages of development state theories regarding the way that children develop, but they all agree that remaining on the lower levels make it more difficult to spiritually grow as a person. By remaining on the lower levels, it makes sense that also the motivation levels of these people would be reduced. There will also be a difference in the levels of consciousness of the surveyed students based on the line that they are asked about. For example, people's development is at different levels regarding school and athletics. There will be a difference in the person's actions and thoughts regarding where they are, the learned behaviors in those areas, and how long they have been participating in that activity. I will account for these differences by acknowledging that people are at different stages for different activities. For school and a student's motivation levels in school, I will focus on the academic and social behavior lines, so that I can determine whether there is a correlation between a high level on each line and a high motivation for academic work.

As children grow older and learn different actions through observational learning, their role models influence their actions. If a student's role model as a middle schooler is a senior who never does his homework, that middle school student is going to progress through high school with a low motivation level for doing homework. On the contrary, if a middle schooler's role model includes honor roll students, that young student might see the opportunities the older student receives, and might strive for honor roll as they progress through high school. By viewing role models and the actions they are taking, motivation levels may severely drop or might increase, depending on the actions those role models are demonstrating. I will account for these differences in observational learning by asking questions about the types of role models that people observed when they were younger. These differences will be interesting and important to this study, as learning where people's motivation comes from is vital to understanding this subject.

Other types of learning and reinforcement can influence how a child's motivation levels develop. For example, classical conditioning is a process by which a person associates two actions or items, even though they are not normally associated. If a child were to associate two unlike things, their motivation for one of those items would be dependent on the other item. This could either strengthen the motivation of these children, because they connect these items, or it could become detrimental to their motivation levels. More prominently, however, is the possibility that operant conditioning will greatly impact the motivation levels of children, especially regarding school. When a student studies hard and they receive a high mark, the reward sticks in their brain and they are trained to associate working hard with a good grade. In the future, this could make that person study harder, which would be associated with a higher motivation for that high grade as a reward. The operant conditioning portion of motivation of one of the most prevalent pieces of this study, because there are some students that crave the reward of the high grade, where others are not as motivated by this reward. I will focus on these

conditioning processes throughout this study, as it will be highly influential regarding each student's motivation levels. Questions will probe the surveyors regarding whether they feel motivated by earning high grades, parental approval, teacher praise, or some other reason, if they even are motivated at all.

Additionally, the reflexes that a child develops over time will influence their motivation levels and could also be influenced by motivation levels. As a child grows older, their reactions and reflexes regarding different situations will vary. For example, if a teacher hands back a test with a low score to a student, that student's reflex could be to throw the paper on the floor and run out of the room. In contrast, another student might receive the same grade and bottle that anger to fuel their motivation to study for the next test. The reflexes that each student demonstrates will influence their motivation levels and the actions that they take. In addition, reflexes can also be influenced by motivation levels. For example, if a teacher provides an extra credit opportunity, a highly motivated student might sit up straighter and listen more intently, just because of their reflexes. However, a student with low motivation levels might sigh or roll their eyes as a response to the opportunity or to the other student. These reflexes are important to the study of motivation and will be helpful in determining whether there is a correlation to highly motivated people and reflexes that are developed at a young age. To evaluate this part of the study, it would be helpful to view and question students when they are presented with an opportunity where their reflexes might demonstrate their motivation levels.

In addition to initial reflexes, the ability to remember actions, words, and concepts easily relates to motivation as well. The process of encoding, storing, and retrieving information seems simple to many people, but if a child were unable to form, store, or recover their memories, their motivation for learning or other activities would be highly diminished. On the contrary, for children with exceptional memories, school might be easy, and it would be simple for students to complete homework rapidly and completely. Differences in the ability to remember would impact how long a student needs to study, how much they retain after class, and how well they eventually perform on an exam. The differences in memory will be hard to account for, but it will be interesting to see how long students study, how much they retain from a class, and how well they perform on tests, and whether that has an impact on their overall motivation level.

Additionally, as children grow into adolescents, there is both physical and moral development that can impact their motivation levels. Specifically, for adolescent girls, the physical changes that occur during puberty are enough to reduce the motivation levels for attending school, let alone performing well or joining other activities. For adolescent boys, however, the physical changes during puberty make them stronger and more confident, thus increasing their motivation levels for school, athletics, and other activities. During this time, there is also an increase in children's moral development. People begin to learn whether they value school, athletics, or other activities more than free time or time with friends. Adolescents are able to choose their religion, political and world views, and are able to act upon those opinions with more motivation, because they strongly believe in those opinions. I will account for the differences in this study by asking questions about how adolescent's morals have developed over high school. I will see if there is a correlation between older adolescents and a strong motivation regarding more highly developed morals, as well as middle schoolers and less developed morals, and thus less motivation. I will also see whether the physical changes that occur during puberty have impacted adolescents as much as is often predicted, or whether most students have taken the changes in stride.

In addition to all of the differences listed above, there have been studies determining whether race, gender, and age level correlate to higher work ethic and motivation. The study was conducted with Asian American middle schoolers and Anglo American middle schoolers regarding the study of mathematics. The study found that the Asian Americans had a stronger desire to succeed and perform well in their mathematics classes and that Asian American parents were more involved and interested in their children's success in mathematics. In comparison to the Anglo American students, the Asian American students displayed more pride in their school work and significantly more interest in the study of mathematics. Additionally, the females in the study had more positive perceptions of their skill and work in these mathematics classes. The results of this study are very interesting and seem to hold true with the predictions that parental involvement with children's academics improves the children's pride in their work. Also, the fact that the Asian American children performed better in mathematics classes and also held more pride in their work points to a cultural desire to succeed in Asian American students (Huang et al, 1993).

Social Domain:

While there are many similarities that can impact my data, differences in social psychology will most impact my data and change the outcome of the study. Social psychology includes information about relationships with other people and how that changes a person's behavior.

Motivation is greatly impacted by the social psychology realm, especially in regards to conformity and obedience. In regards to academic work, students can be motivated by conformity or obedience, which is an interesting social construct that could skew the data. For conformity, students could be motivated to do their homework or perform well on tests because their social group requires students perform well in school. In order to conform to their social group, the person would be motivated to work hard. The same goes for obedience. A student might have a parent or outside source that requires they do well in school, so they must obey that person and become motivated for school. These will impact my study because both conformity and obedience are related to motivation and people can be impacted by both, one, or neither of these. I will account for these differences by asking questions about people's friend groups, parents, and other peers in order to determine whether their motivation is intrinsic or is impacted by conformity to others or obedience to authority.

Another environmental factor that will impact my study is the presence of "In and Out Groups" which are especially prevalent in high school. This will impact my study because different groups have different motivation levels and gain their motivation from different places. Many people belong to a specific "in group" and do not belong to an "out group" and other people many belong to the opposite groups. I will account for this in my study by asking questions about the kinds of groups that people feel they belong to and whether they feel like motivation plays a part in why they chose their groups or if their motivation is impacted by their group. These questions will be about motivation, the type of group that they feel like they are a part of, and whether they feel their motivation would be different if they had joined a different group.

Similar to the presence of "in and out groups" are the group dynamics present throughout high school as well as cognitive dissonance. This will impact my study because groups can easily sway singular members within the group, especially in terms of motivation. A student might be motivated to do their homework but their group changed their mind and pushed them to do something else with their time. Their motivation was intrinsic and then was changed by an

extrinsic source because of the group dynamics. I will account for this by asking questions about whether students have had their motivation changed or mocked by other students in their group. I will also ask questions about whether their motivation levels have decreased in response to the group dynamics or whether they still have that motivation.

In addition to the group dynamics, the presence of prejudice and gender roles greatly impacts motivation levels, especially in teenagers. Prejudice includes the self-fulfilling prophecy theory, where a prediction causes itself to become true. This will impact my study because people's "prophecies" can impact their actions and their motivation levels. In addition to prejudices are gender roles, which also impact people's intrinsic motivations based upon extrinsic factors. Gender roles are based upon society's expectations of each sex, which can greatly impact how much motivation people have in their daily life. Typical gender roles state that women are beautiful and not much else, while men are strong and smart. This can impact a person's motivation levels because society has told them to act a certain way and only be motivated by certain things. I will account for this in my study by asking questions about prejudices and gender roles to get a sense of whether they have impacted the people in my study. It is likely they have been impacted and they might not know it, so I will be careful in choosing my questions so the subjects have to delve deeper into their own past.

Perhaps the most influential factors to a person's motivation is the person's primary, secondary, peer, and reference groups, as well as the social roles of those groups. These primary, secondary, and other groups influence a person's values and what they feel is most important in their life, which impacts what they have the strongest motivation to do, whether it be school work or partying. This will have an impact on my study because those groups differ from person to person and so their environments will be very different. In addition to these groups, social roles greatly impact a person's motivation levels in certain situations. Social roles are the patterns of behavior that are expected of people in various social positions, whether that person is a student, teacher, parent, or other. This will impact my study because people often have different motivation levels when they are in different situations, and other people in different social roles may not always accept or understand that. I will account for the differences in terms of the peer groups and the social roles through asking questions regarding different friend groups. For example, I will ask about how the subjects feel their reference groups and other groups have influenced their motivation levels for certain actions over the years. In terms of social roles, I will ask questions regarding people in other social roles so see whether the subjects feel they have been influenced by those people or whether those people have misunderstood their actions and motivations over the years.

Altruism is one of the actions that is most impacted by motivation levels, and thus will be greatly impacted in this study. Altruism is the selfless actions that people take in order to help or better the lives of other people. This relates to my study because motivation can be both impacted by altruism and also can impact whether people act altruistically. This will impact the results of my study because people have different motivations for acting altruistically, and where the motivation comes from will also differ from person to person. I will account for this in my study by asking whether people's altruistic nature comes from inner motivation or whether it is influenced by extrinsic motivations such as awards or public recognition.

Additionally, another part of my study is the impact of personality on motivation levels and vice versa. Just like with altruism, a person's personality can impact their motivation levels and their motivation levels can have an impact on their personality. People's motivation can come from their parents or peers influences, or it can be ingrained in their personality, or mostly

likely comes from both. This will impact my study because personality is ingrained a person and impacts everything about their actions. I will account for these differences by delving further into the subjects pasts in order to determine whether they feel motivated because of their personality or whether their personality is impacted by their motivation levels for certain actions.

In addition, abnormal psychology influences the motivation levels of certain people because of their differences and often “outsider” status in society. Often, people with abnormal psychological disorders have high motivation levels for different actions than “normal” people would. For example, an autistic child might have a high motivation level for music or math while other children his age are motivated by other things. I will account for these differences by determining whether there is an abnormal psychological disorder that the person has (as long as they are willing to disclose) and whether they feel motivated by different things than a person who does not have an abnormal psychological disorder.

One of the most influential factors on motivation is the systems theory, which seeks to determine where the motivation comes from, whether from family or country. This theory looks at different circles in a person’s life and seeks to understand from where the person gains their values and ideas about the world. This impacts my study because people gain their motivation from several different places and people, and the results of this study will be dependent on learning where people most gain their motivation from. I will account for these differences by further delving into the systems theory and asking questions that will determine where intrinsic motivation comes from and how a person’s peers impact that motivation. Specifically, I will be looking at whether a person’s lack of motivation is because of their own intrinsic thoughts or because of the environment around them.

Although less than other factors, the fundamental attribution error can impact motivation levels throughout different ages. This error occurs when observers analyze other people’s behaviors and underestimate the impact of the situation and overestimate the impact of personal disposition. This will impact my study because this error has to do with people’s perceptions of others, which can easily impact motivation levels regarding academics as well as other social actions. I will account for these errors by asking questions regarding people’s motivation levels and whether they feel they have been misunderstood or impacted by people’s opinions of them.

Another factor that will impact my study is attractiveness, especially the mere exposure effect. This will impact my study because people can consider success or a relationship with someone their goal, and their motivation will be solely based around those goals. Attractiveness plays a part in this because different people find different goals more attractive than others, whether that be a person or their personal success. The mere exposure effect plays a role in this because the more someone is exposed to a person or an idea, the more they find that idea desirable or attractive. I will account for this in my study by asking questions about attractiveness in terms of relationships and how whether motivation plays a role in relationships.

Another social factor that impacts motivation is rewards systems, whether monetary or social rewards are presented. There have been numerous studies on the impact of rewards and incentives on children and adolescents, but one specifically looked at the difference between monetary rewards and positive social rewards, such as a smile. The study found that the monetary reward had a stronger impact on improving responses than did the social incentives. This shows something interesting about society in how monetary rewards are societally valued higher than a personal connection with someone. Although there are surely people who would respond better to the personal incentive, society has trained most people to respond more

positively to secondary rewards, such as the money that was presented as an award (Kohls et al, 2009).

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Varying Studies on Motivation in Social and Academic Contexts

Introduction

Motivation is arguably one of the most influential and prominent aspects of society, as every action taken in the world begins with motivation. I find this topic interesting because I am surrounded by people in school who have differing levels of motivation for academics, athletics, and other social behaviors. Throughout my life, I have always been highly motivated, but have often worked with less motivated people. This is why I find researching where motivation comes from and how it impacts other aspects of an adolescent's life so useful. Over the past several years there have been many studies regarding social and academic motivation in adolescents and young people. This paper will review various studies on motivation, and will consider the factors that affect motivation and the achievements that result from differing levels of motivation in both social and academic situations.

Literature Review

A study regarding the motivations for sex in adolescents provided information regarding frameworks of experience and motivation. With little to no sex education in Indonesia, the conductors of this survey wanted to determine how teenagers view sex so they they may be better educated in the future. Information was gathered using a self-completed questionnaire by students aged 14-20 in schools in Indonesia regarding intentions towards sexual abstinence, risk perception, and perceived behavioral control. The study found that past experiences with sexual intercourse most define how adolescents perceive their future relationship with sex. The framework that was put together regarding sex influences how these adolescents are likely to react to information or questions about sex. This study is helpful to me because the motivation for sex, or lack thereof, based on past experiences is one that can be easily generalized. For example, with academic motivation, if students are not proud of their achievements, it is unlikely that they will strive for high grades and recognition. I will use this information in my study when I ask questions of students from different backgrounds. It will be interesting to see whether past experiences can be remembered enough to prove that frameworks of memory impact motivation levels for present occurrences (Leerlooijer et al, 2014).

A study covering young adults' feelings of school belonging provided insight regarding adolescents and academic motivation. This longitudinal study was conducted using students in 9th grade who were then asked to participate in the study over the next four years of high school. The students were selected from different ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses to determine whether there are correlations between school belonging, academic motivation, and these factors. Information was collected from the students using a questionnaire with questions about the student's sense of belonging at their school, using a 5-point response scale. This same 5-point scale was also used for how much students value school and their opinions on their school work. Additionally, information was gathered about the student's academic achievement through their grades and GPAs. They concluded that school belonging over time differed between the genders,

such that females sense of belonging went down over the course of high school, where male's sense of belonging remained the same. They used this information to determine whether there was a correlation between school belonging and academic achievement and motivation. It was found that there was no correlation between school belonging and academic achievement, but that there was a connection to academic motivation. Higher feelings of school belonging caused students to feel more academically motivated, but often had no difference on academic achievement. This study helps me to understand how school belonging connects to academic motivation but not to academic achievement. This is interesting to me because I feel that there should be a connection between academic motivation and academic achievement. I might try to recreate this study in part in order to determine if there are differences here on the east coast, as opposed to in Los Angeles (Gillen-O'Neel et al, 2013).

A study regarding perspectives and social connections in adolescents provided information about the psychological aspects to perfectionism. The study was conducted to determine the differences in personalities that may cause perfectionists to having differing abilities in social perspective taking and social agency, as well as whether levels of perfectionism impact social connections. Two difference perfectionist types were evaluated in this study. Adaptive perfectionists have high standards but low self-criticism, while maladaptive perfectionists have high standards and high self-criticism. Using a questionnaire with a 7-point evaluation system, the conductors of the study evaluated standards, self-esteem, perspective taking, and social agency. The study concluded that perfectionists were more motivated to connect with others around them, as seen in a strong social agency. Additionally, the study concluded that the ability to judge a situation from another person's point of view, social perspective taking, was stronger in these perfectionists. Overall, it was found that individuals who maintain high standards but do not overly criticize themselves generally have higher levels of positive mental health. This study is helpful to me because it introduced terms such as social agency and social perspective taking that will be useful in analyzing the data from my study. Also, this study broadened by thoughts about motivation, as I was originally thinking about motivation from an academic standpoint, but this study focused on the motivations to connect with other people, which is an important part of motivation. I might use this study as a reference point for my study as I try to include social motivation in my study (Gilman et al, 2014).

A study of sport-related motivation revealed differences between male and female motivation factors. The study sought to evaluate the spectrum of sport-related motivation through motivational factors, gender, and individual vs. team sports. Results were collected using an empirical survey of 17-19 year old students regarding appearance, social consciousness and adaptation, healthy diet, sport and sport habits, and addictions. These dimensions were divided into four motivational factors: competition and success-oriented motivation, physical fitness, external accommodation motivational factor, and hedonistic motivational factor. The study found that there was a difference between male and female motivation factors, as males were focused on external factors and competition, while females were focused on internal factors and the opinions of others. There was also a difference between adolescents who chose team sports as

opposed to individual sports. Those participants that chose team games over individual sports more highly valued victory over others and cooperation. Participants who chose individual sports were more focused on the competition of the contest and winning at all costs. The study concluded that both internal and external motivation are critical for sport motivation for both genders, although there were differences in the levels that each gender required. Additionally, it was found that sport motivation was often developed at an early age and greatly influences personality development. This study will help me in conducting my study because it gives me a background to sport motivation and how it can be included in a questionnaire about motivation. Also, there is a list of items about external motivation such as teamwork, parents' opinions, coach's opinion, and others that will be useful when I develop my study and determine which external motivations most impact how adolescents are motivated (Bollók et al, 2011).

A study regarding the reading motivation of adolescent boys provided information regarding academic achievement later on. The purpose of the study was to determine what sort of relationship exists between achievement scores and reading motivation. They also sought to determine whether who report higher reading motivation levels have greater gains in achievement over time. The study found that boys who reported high reading motivation also reported high standardized test scores across multiple content areas. Information was collected over three years at an all boys high school using a questionnaire regarding literacy and reading habits. Additionally, information was gathered about the same student's academic achievement with the help of the school principal. The study used information from several standardized tests, including various ACT tests as well as the student's PSAT results. The study concluded by acknowledging the limitations of only testing boys at this one particular Catholic high school but also mentioning that it is likely these trends also carry over to females and other areas around the country. This study is useful to me because it looks at another aspect of motivation, as opposed to being academically motivated for school work. Instead, the students are motivated for reading and the skills gained from that reading transfer to higher academic achievement. In my study, I might include other possible sources of motivation, like athletics or other extracurriculars that might impact academic motivations (Bozack et al, 2013).

A study covering students' academic motivation provided information into the differences between students behavior regarding one specific class. This study analyzed the relationship between student's self-efficacy perceptions, strategies used in the course, as well as their academic motivation to learn the material. The study defined self-efficacy as an individual's level of self-confidence in their abilities to manage certain tasks. Information was collected using questionnaires regarding self-regulation, self-efficacy, and motivation for the specific biology program that the students were enrolled in. As expected, the study found that a higher self-efficacy was linked to higher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as well as meta-cognitive strategies. Essentially, it was found that more confident students were more motivated, and students use specific strategies were both more motivated and then more confident in the long run. This study is useful to me because it essentially proves what my initial hypothesis was in regards to motivation was correct, in that confidence is highly linked to intrinsic and extrinsic

motivation. In this study, there was also an inclusion of a list of questions that were used to determine the levels of motivation, which would be helpful in determining which questions I will ask on my questionnaire. Also, there was a description of the Motivational Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, which includes a lot of useful questions that I might include in my study (Aydin, 2015).

A study regarding the support of teachers in the academics of middle schoolers revealed much about motivation. The purpose of the study was to investigate the ways that teachers support their students and how that impacts the student's motivation levels. The study used five teachers from social studies, science and language arts departments. Each student in the study was interviewed, as were the teachers and assistant principal regarding academic motivation. All the interviews were then converted to transcripts and organized. The study concluded that there was an important connection between academic motivation and teacher-student relationships. The study found that teachers felt they had to care for their students and demonstrate interest in their lives in order to facilitate motivation in their students. The study also concluded that teacher expectations of students and having those teachers demonstrate those expectations were vital for student motivation. There were also differences in the instructional practices of the teachers that resulted in different motivation levels of the students. The study concluded by saying that the roles of teachers in developing middle schooler's academic motivations was immense. This study is going to be useful for me because I will be asking questions about teacher encouragement and relationships and whether students feel they have impacted them. Also, this study included the full list of questions that were asked of students, teachers, and the assistant principal, which will be helpful when I am developing questions for my survey and study (Kiefer et al, 2014).

A study in classrooms attempted to predict academic success from academic motivation and learning approaches. The purpose of the study was to determine whether academic achievement and success could be predicted by academic motivation and learning approaches. For the study, they used the study process questionnaire, the student's GPAs, and an academic motivation scale to determine whether there were any significant correlations. The study concluded that there was no relationship at all between academic success and learning approaches. Also, it was found that there was no significant relationship between academic success and academic motivation. However, it was found that academic motivation and learning approaches explain academic success when paired together. This study is helpful to me because it is something unexpected, as I would expect that there would be more of a correlation between academic success and motivation, among other things. I will be trying to recreate parts of this study in my own study because I would like to see for myself whether there truly is no correlation between the academic motivation, learning styles, and academic success (Çetin, Predicting Academic Success From Academic Motivation and Learning Approaches in Classroom Teaching Students, 2015).

A study of self-regulated learning and academic motivation provided insight into the level of academic achievement in college. The study sought to determine whether there was a

connection between GPA, academic motivation, and academic self-regulation learning using early childhood education major college students. Data was gathered using the “academic motivation scale” and the “academic self-regulated learning scale” that were formerly developed. The study found that there was no correlation between GPA, academic motivation, and academic self-regulation and academic motivation. The only correlation that was found was between goal setting and GPA, and it is believed that goal setting is an important determinant of student’s academic achievement. However, it was found that motivation and self-regulated learning were connected to each other, but overall did not predict the GPAs of the students. The GPAs of the students were very close to each other, so it is believed that the motivation and self-regulated learning probably did not impact the GPAs because of the specific academic program that was chosen. This part of this study will be particularly helpful in determining whether there is a correlation between academic motivation and GPAs in my study, and whether this study was merely flawed, or if there was actually no correlation. I will be trying to recreate parts of this study to determine whether the same results could be found in this part of the country, with high school students as opposed to college students. There will most likely be more diversity in the GPAs of students in high school, so it will be easier to see if there is a correlation (Çetin, Academic Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning in Predicting Academic Achievement in College, 2015).

A study into the prevalence of procrastination among high school students revealed differences in motivation levels in terms of achievement. The study set out to determine if there was a relationship between academic self-regulation and achievement motivation in high school students. The conductors of the study used a learning strategies questionnaire and an achievement motivation test to determine information about procrastination and academic motivation. The study found that there was no relationship between gender and educational neglect and that the lack of motivation for academic work comes from other sources not based on gender. An important point from this study is that self-regulation of school work and other activities is the key to remaining motivated and completing tasks. This study is interesting and useful to me because it outlines multiple parts of academics that could easily be forgotten. For example, negligence of school work, self-regulation of learning, preparation for exams, preparation for assignments, and preparation of final papers are individual pieces to academics that will be helpful to me when I narrow down the types of assignments I am inquiring about on my survey. I will also be using a lot of the same terms regarding procrastination and academic negligence when conducting my own survey (Ebadi et al, 2015).

Conclusion

In order to further understand motivation more completely, it is necessary to repeat several of the studies mentioned above. Many of the studies were very specific and focused too much on a specific school or department, which could have impacted the results of the study. For example, one of the studies mentioned focused on adolescent boys in a single Catholic high school. This field is too small and could have impacted the results of the study by restricting the diversity in the data. By repeating that study in part and including others parts of other studies at

Moultonborough Academy, there will be an inclusion of both genders, many religions, and other factors that might further impact the legitimacy of the study. In addition, many of the studies were conducted in large schools in urban areas on the west coast, so it will be interesting to see whether the studies differ when they are conducted in a rural area on the east coast in a much smaller school. Specifically, I believe that the sports motivation studies will differ when conducted in my study because this school is much smaller and more people are involved in sports and other activities. Motivation among high school students is especially important because it develops how student's lives will progress throughout the rest of their lives. Motivation is important to research because every single action that is taken is the result of motivation, and it is important to determine where motivation comes from in order to further understand actions around the world.

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Experiment:

This study was used to determine whether there was a correlation between numerous data sets regarding motivation in high school students. The experiment was conducted using a survey regarding student's habits and motivation in high school. I found that the correlation between motivation and GPA was .38, it was -.61 between motivation and marijuana use, and .42 for parental college and motivation, which shows what influences motivation and what is most influenced by motivation. For the future, this study should be further planned and changed so the answers to the questions come from a diverse audience as opposed to merely the students who felt motivated enough to take the survey.

Introduction:

The research question that I was aiming to gain information about has to do with motivation and priorities and how motivation is impacted. Specifically, what motivates high school students and which factors (family, peers, nature, etc.) most influence them to pursue such actions? I was trying to discover whether there was a correlation between numerous factors that students in high school come across and to what degree different factors influence those behaviors. For example, I was attempting to determine whether there was a correlation between a student's parents attending and graduating college and the student's GPA or motivations. Although there may be a causation relationship between some of these data points, I am merely interested in determining whether there is a strong correlation between the data points. I thought that there might be a strong correlation between some of the data points, just based upon my prior knowledge and experience as a high school student.

Methods:

I began my study by creating a questionnaire using Google Forms that I was going to use to determine basic information like age as well as deeper questions like whether the person felt supported by their parents. Before beginning the study, students were to read the consent paragraph, which stated that their information would be kept private throughout the process, and then answer a question giving consent to participate. If they did not give consent to participate, they were not used in the study. The first 11 questions on the survey dealt with basic information like age, gender, living situations, alcohol and drug use, and college plans, which was used as a background survey in order to compare with the more difficult questions that came in the second part of the survey. The only materials that were needed for my survey was a computer and access to the Google Forms link to my survey. Questions were made entirely by me with some influence from other studies that used questionnaires to ask questions about motivation to high school students. The basic questions asked about age, gender, GPA, and who they live with (mother, father, guardian). I also asked about how many of their parents graduated from college (0, 1, or 2) and how many days per week they use marijuana and drink alcohol (0-7). Other questions that were used for correlations were using a Likert scale, asking how motivated they consider themselves in relation to their peers and how often they are supported by their parents (1-5 scale). Other questions about community service, television time and others were used in the survey but not used in the correlation chart.

The independent variable in this survey is the influence of family, peers, nature, and the person's environment that were able to influence the dependent variable, which is their

motivation. I predicted that the influences of peers would be most influential on student's motivation, while family influences also greatly impact a student's motivation in high school.

The target audience for this study was male and female high school students between ages 14 and 19. My goal was to receive at least 30 responses to my survey, so I would have enough responses to determine the correlations between the data. I asked the school librarian for assistance and he used the Schoology software we have at school to put the survey out to students at the school, which I hoped would give me at least 30 responses. I was able to reduce experimenter bias by asking questions that were not biased or judgemental, so people felt they were able to answer honestly without being judged. I also included in the consent paragraph that the answers would not be shared with anyone, so people should either answer honestly or not answer the questions at all. Also in this paragraph was the promise that the answers would remain anonymous, so not even I could determine who had answered the survey.

There were several data points that I was interested in studying and determining whether there was a correlation between. These included GPA and motivation, GPA and parental support, motivation and alcohol use, motivation and marijuana use, parental college and motivation, age and parental support, and GPA and parental college. For parental college I used numbers to determine whether zero, one, or two of the students parents graduated from college. For parental support and motivation I used a 1-5 Likert scale that was used to determine the correlations.

Results:

I received 45 responses, but many of the responses did not include their GPA so I chose to omit those answers. Even still, I received over 30 viable responses, which consisted mostly of students who were on schoology at the time and

were willing to take my survey. I was able to conclude from this study that there were a few data sets that were statistically significant, which means that their correlation was strong. The first and most obvious of these correlations was between motivation and GPA (.38), which had a correlation that was considered strong. This is to be expected because students with a high GPA are typically

GPA and Motivation Correlation	0.38373433
GPA and Parental Support Correlation	0.13809676
Motivation and Alcohol Use	-0.1650296
Motivation and Marijuana Use	-0.6106074
Parental College and Motivation	0.41846667
Age and Parental Support	-0.2886099
GPA and Parental College	0.26284025

more motivated. However, the correlation was not as strong as it could have been, which shows that motivation and GPA are impacted by other outside factors as well. Another correlation is between motivation and marijuana use (-.61), which is the strongest correlation that was found in my survey. The parental college and motivation correlation was the second strongest in the survey (.42), which makes sense because students probably feel more motivated to do well in school when their parents set the example of attending higher education.

Conclusion:

Unfortunately, because I opened the survey to anyone who was willing to take it, the answers that I received were quite one-sided. There were very few students who had low GPAs and decided to take the survey, which possibly skewed the results. Additionally, there were very few students who drink alcohol or used marijuana, so the results could have been a lot different if more people who use those had answered the questions. This makes me think that my experiment was partially successful because I gained a lot of useful information, but also not successful because the results were skewed by students who have high GPAs and do not drink alcohol or

use marijuana. This could be fixed in the future by using a school list and a randomly chosen number to choose who would take the survey to make sure it is random.

A modification that I would use to further improve this study would be to randomly choose who was going to answer the survey, which would hopefully make there be more variation in the answers. By randomly choosing who would answer the study, I might have lower GPAs, differences in home life, and different drug and alcohol uses involved in the survey.

There were no ethical dilemmas in this study because the questions in the survey were basic and not digging towards emotional or painful experiences. There was also no reason to debrief the participants because they were merely answering survey questions, which would not harm their psyche. This study is generalizable when it comes to many top students in a school with similar demographics.

Reflection:

Throughout this experience I have learned a lot about psychological studies and experiments. I have realized just how much effort and time it takes to create a psychological study and run it successfully, as there are a lot of steps and issues that can get in the way. It took a long time to research other people's information about motivation and compile it in a way that was useful for my own research, and I had no idea that there were so many steps to take in this process. It was interesting to read people's studies and realize that it took them months or even years and that they condensed all the information into an easy-to-read document. This experience has also taught me that completing surveys themselves and conducting research is a complicated process. For me, my survey was biased because the people who chose to take the time to take the survey were very high achieving students, many of whom do not drink alcohol or use marijuana, which impacted my study greatly. I learned that it is very important to diversify when it comes to who is taking the study, or else the responses will be skewed and one-sided. I learned that this carries over to experiments world wide, as most studies are conducted randomly so that the results are truly representative of the population instead of just a portion of the population. I have a new respect for researchers because they spend a long time on their work and I underestimated that time that it took to create such a project.

I have learned a lot about my topic throughout the past year, especially when it comes to the many studies and other surveys that I read. Additionally, I learned a lot about motivation from the connections I made during note-taking in class as well as when I was doing the Jonestown project, as much of this related to motivation and what motivates people in the long run. I have learned that motivation is not something that can be pinpointed, and there are numerous factors that go into someone's motivation that are built over the years. Environmental factors as well as nature and peer influence greatly impact a person's motivation, especially in Moultonborough, but I am sure that if I went to a different part of the world or even state, there would be different motivation levels and different answers to many of my survey questions. My biggest take-away from this project is that I now know how long it takes to create a project of this capacity. I am guessing that in college I will write papers of this length often, but prior to this project I had never attempted a paper of this length. I never knew how long it would take to write a 20+ page paper regarding a psychological subject, but I am really glad that I was able to experience this in high school so that I am further prepared for college. This was an interesting project and I am glad that my critical thinking about this subject can be displayed in such a manner.