

# Factors Influencing Academic Motivation among UOS Medical Students

Khalid Sawalha, Mai Al Ali, Ahmad Sawalha, Hu Ko, Ikram Abdelli, Salwa El Shawish and Amal Hussien  
*College of Medicine, University of Sharjah, Sharjah 27272, United Arab Emirates*

**Abstract:** Motivation has been found to play a major role in determining student performance in the academic process. The aim of this study is to identify the intrinsic & extrinsic motivational factors among medical students in the University of Sharjah. A Cross Sectional Study was conducted among university students of medical colleges in the period between February 2011 and March 2011. A total of 452 students (337 females and 115 males) were selected using the Quota sampling method equally between each college. A self-administered questionnaire consisting of 13 demographic questions, an agreement scale of 32 questions about the motivational factors and an open ended question asking students about what the university can do to help motivate them were developed. The most common intrinsic factors chosen by students were grade expectation (94%), interest in material (92%) and leading an honorable life (88%). While on the other hand the most common extrinsic factors were upcoming exams (88%), family expectations (88%) and praise (82%). The most common factors were similar between all students regardless of their major, gender, or performance. However, differences were visible in other factors such as in high performing students; rewards scored a 71.4% while low performing students scored it at 50%. It also shows that females consider praise as an important factor (86%) on the contrary males gave it a 72%. While the most common intrinsic factors showed to be grades, interest in material and leading an honorable life, the most common extrinsic factors on the other hand were upcoming exams, family expectations and praise.

**Key words:** Academic motivation, motivational factors, College of Medicine, University of Sharjah.

## 1. Introduction

Motivation is the driving force that influences a person's behaviors, and performances. According to Brewer & Burgess (2005) [1], motivation is proven to be a major aspect of learning. Ryan & Deci (2000) [2] divided motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation makes a person do something because they see it as interesting and enjoyable and extrinsic factors are those external influences that guide individuals to do or not do something [2, 3]. Understanding of what motivates students will enhance their performance and successfulness [4]. These students will build the future health system in the UAE and other countries and paying attention to what makes them better learners now is vital in planning for the health care later.

## 2. Materials and Methods

In order to assess the academic environment in

Medical College of Sharjah University, a descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted investigating the motivational factors among medical students. Sample was divided into three groups based on their study major. A self-administered questionnaire consisting of 13 demographic questions, an agreement scale of 32 questions about the motivational factors was developed adapting a validated available questionnaire [5-7]. Also, an open ended question asking students about what the university can do to help motivate them was added.

### 2.1 Analysis

SPSS 19 was used to enter and analyse the data. Means and Percentages were used to conduct data analysis while independent-sample T and Chi-square tests were used to find correlations between values. Pie charts and bar charts were used to present results of this study. Agreement of the participant to any of the 32 motivational factors was given a value of

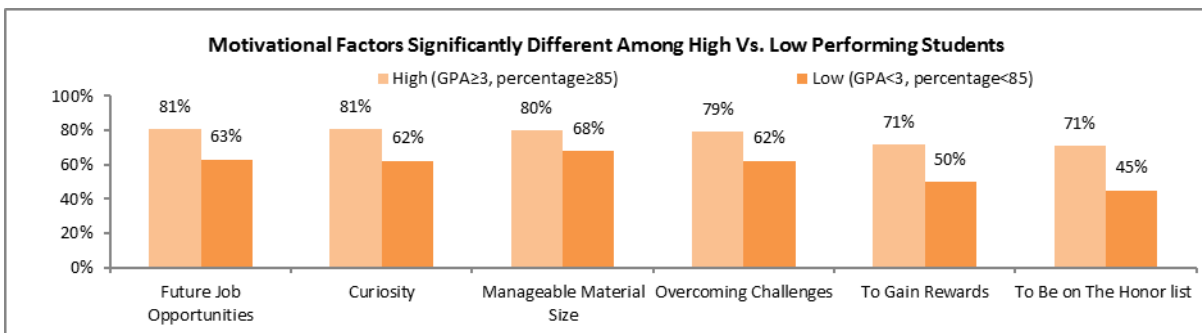
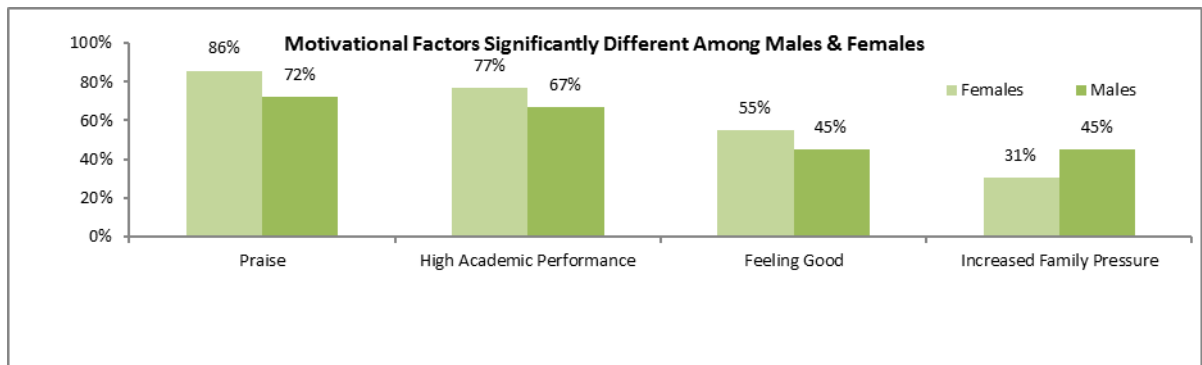
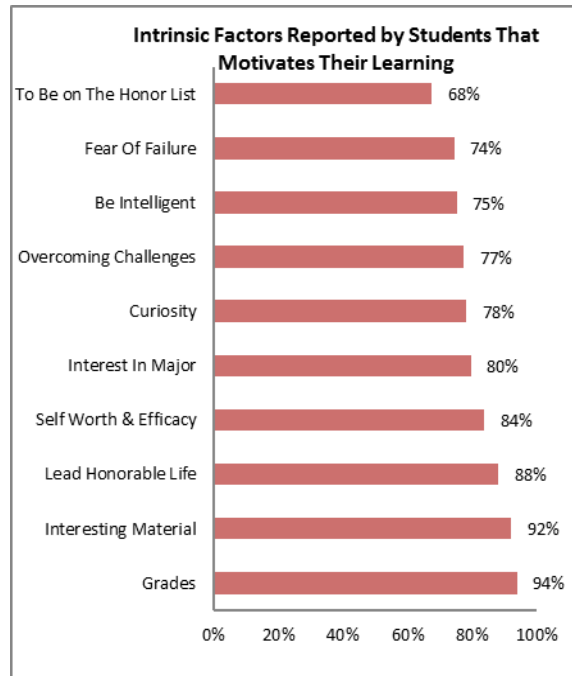
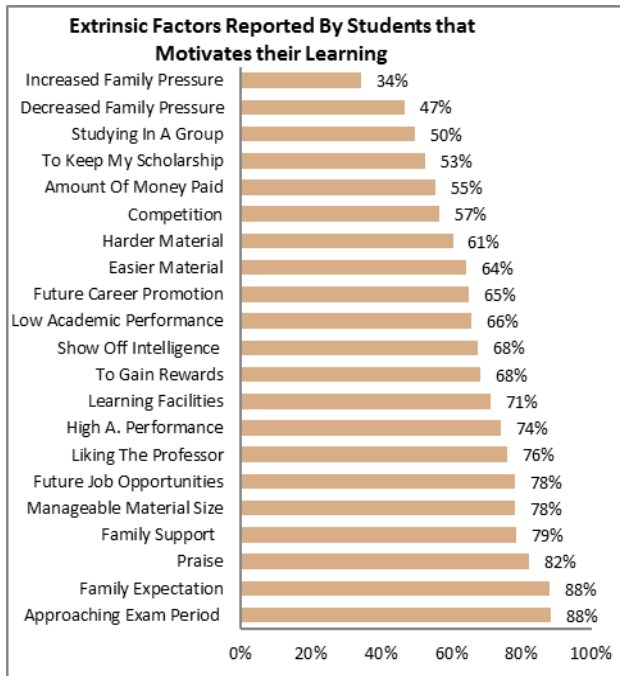
1, to make a score of 32 to each case.

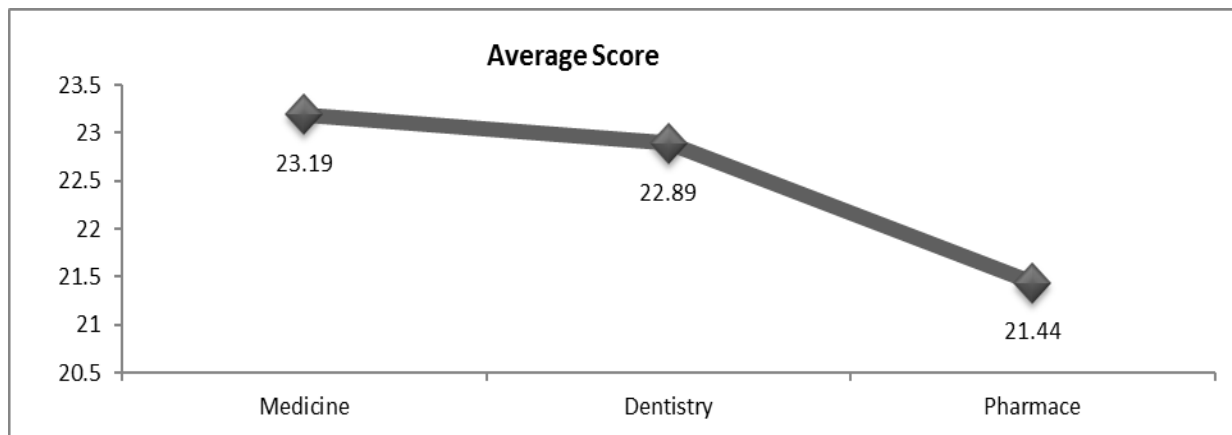
### 3. Results and Discussion

A total of 452 students participated in the study; 74.6% ( $n = 337$ ) were females and 25.4% ( $n = 115$ ) were males. The age ranges between 17 and 26 years; the mean was 21.7% of the students' mothers worked

in a medical field, and 13.5% of fathers. Approaching exam period and Grades are the most extrinsic and intrinsic factors that motivate student learning. The average score of the motivational factors among total sample was 22.5 and shows the average score among colleges.

There were correlations between the score and the





following: academic performance (significance value 0.04), self-reported motivation (0.046) & colleges (0.007).

The most preferred motivational factors in our results were similar to what was reported by Castiglia, B. (2006) [5]. According to our study, the most common intrinsic factor chosen by students was grade expectation because it is the foremost indicator of success. The second was interest in material which encourages them to study it and the third was leading an honorable life to fulfill spiritual satisfaction [8, 9]. The most common extrinsic factor was upcoming exams; since assessment drives learning. The second was family expectations, in order not to disappoint them. And the third was praise which recognizes their efforts and encourages them to work harder. According to the score, both students who are higher performing and consider themselves motivated have more motivational factors. Moreover, colleges also have an effect; students in Medicine & Dentistry had a higher score since the passing grade is out of 70 compared to 60 in Pharmacy. The choice of motivational factors influences students' performance; students who want to make it onto the honor list will be more motivated to study and thus have better grades. Gender plays a role in preference of certain motivational factors; praise motivated females more since they are more sensitive to people's words. Family played a diverse role in motivation; their support and expectations were a positive influence on students; however their pressure was a negative factor. And 12% reported that their

major was chosen by their parents.

#### 4. Limitations

There are two limitations in this study: 1—The motivational factors were limited to 32; 2—Self reporting of student grades may lead to inaccurate data.

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study shows that the most common intrinsic factors chosen by students were grade expectation, interest in material and leading an honorable life while the most common extrinsic factors were upcoming exams, family expectations and praise. The most common factors were similar between all students regardless of their major, gender, or performance. However, differences were visible in other factors.

According to students, the university can increase extracurricular activities, change teaching methods, increase individual student advising, and reduce tuition fees and give scholarships and provide more practical training and competition to motivate its students.

We recommend that future studies be conducted in this area by comparing two different medical colleges to study in detail the effect of extrinsic motivational factors.

#### References

- [1] Brewer, E. W., and Burgess, D. N. 2005. "Professor's Role in Motivating Students to Attend Class." *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education* 42 (March): 23-47.
- [2] Ryan, R. M., and Deci, E. L. 2000. "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions."

- Contemp. Educ. Psychol.* 25 (1): 54-67.
- [3] Clayton, K., Blumberg, F., and Auld, D. P. 2010. "The Relationship between Motivation, Learning Strategies and Choice of Environment whether Traditional or Including an Online Component." *British Journal of Educational Technology* 41 (3): 349-64.
- [4] Oxford, R. L., and Green, J. M. 1996. "Language Learning Histories: Learners and Teachers Helping Each Other Understand Learning Styles and Strategies." *TESOL Journal* 3: 20-3.
- [5] Castiglia, B. 2006. "Factors Driving Student Motivation." *Journal of Business Education* 7.
- [6] Nilsen, H. 2009. "Influence on Student Academic Behavior through Motivation, Self-efficacy and Value-Expectation: An Action Research Project to Improve Learning." *Issues in Informing Science and Information Technology* 6: 545-56.
- [7] Ardeńska, A., Tomik, R., Berber, S., Düz, B., Çivak, B., Çalışkan, U., and Ogrodnik, J. 2016. "A Comparison of Physical Education Students' Motivation Using Polish and Turkish Versions of the Academic Motivation Scale." *J. Hum. Kinet.* 54: 207-18. doi: 10.1515/hukin-2016-0046.
- [8] Walker, C., Greene, B., and Mansell, R. 2006. "Identification with Academics, Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation, and Self-efficacy as Predictors of Cognitive Engagement." *Learning and Individual Differences* 16 (1): 1-12.
- [9] Bernaus, M., and Gardner, R. C. 2008. "Teacher Motivation Strategies, Student Perceptions, Student Motivation, and English Achievement." *The Modern Language Journal* 92: 387-401.