

Do Self-determined Forms Of Motivation Lead To Better Affective Educational Outcomes? A Structural Equation Model Analysing A Dental Student Sample.



C Orsini¹, V Binnie²

¹Medical School, University of Glasgow, UK.

²Dental School, University of Glasgow, UK.



UNIVERSIDAD
SAN SEBASTIAN



Background and Purpose

Motivation is of key importance in educating student clinicians.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)¹ investigates the roles of autonomous and controlled behaviours, studying motivation based on different quality types, and not solely based on amount and as a unitary construct.²

These quality types are autonomous motivation, controlled motivation, and amotivation.³ Evidence from other educational contexts suggests that autonomous motivation leads to positive academic consequences, at the behavioural, cognitive and affective level.^{2,4} By contrast, controlled motivation and amotivation are associated with low competence and poor well-being.^{5,6}

Therefore, we developed a motivational model aiming to examine how self-determined motivation affects affective outcomes, through study motives, in dental education.

Methodology

This is a correlational cross-sectional study.

Data on Academic Motivation, Deep and Surface Study Motives, Academic Self-concept, and Positive Emotions, were collected from 783 dental students in one dental school in Santiago-Chile.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to test a hypothesised model in which higher Self-determination Index scores (SDI, relative level of self-determined and autonomous motivation) would positively affect Deep study motives, which would positively affect academic self-concept and positive emotions, and in which higher SDI scores would negatively affect surface study motives, which in turn would negatively affect academic self-concept and Positive emotions.

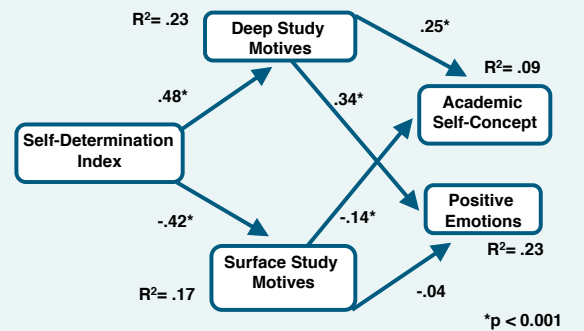
Results

The model fitted well the data, $X^2=4.372$, $df=2$, $p=0.112$, $CFI=.997$, $GFI=.998$, $RMSEA=0.039$, $SRMR=0.0157$.

SEM results supported the hypothesised model; all regression weights reflected the expected directions and were significant (except Surface study motives \Rightarrow Positive emotions, non-significant).

Self-determined forms of motivation showed positive association with affective outcomes (Academic self-concept/ Positive Emotions) through Deep study motives and negative association to them through Surface study motives.

The Model



Conclusions

Our findings suggest that it is not sufficient to be motivated to derive positive affective outcomes. The key need is for motivation in a self-determined fashion.

Further research should continue studying motivation in health professions education, as it may serve as a solid base from which adaptation-promoting interventions may be designed, which may lead students to engage in academic activities in a self-determined way.

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Contact Information:

cesar.orsini@gmail.com

@OrsiniCesar

researchgate.net/profile/Cesar_Orsini