MOTIVATION IN EDUCATION AT A TIME OF GLOBAL CHANGE

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ADVANCES IN MOTIVATION AND ACHIEVEMENT VOLUME 20

MOTIVATION IN EDUCATION AT A TIME OF GLOBAL CHANGE: THEORY, RESEARCH, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

EDITED BY

ELEFTHERIA N. GONIDA

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

MARINA S. LEMOS

University of Porto, Portugal



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ABOUT THE EDITORS

Eleftheria N. Gonida, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology and Human Development in the School of Psychology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Her research focuses on the development of motivation, avoidance behaviors in school settings, self-regulated learning, and parental involvement in students' school life and has been published in international and national journals and edited volumes. She has been a Fulbright visiting professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and a visiting scholar at Stanford University. Dr Gonida has been actively involved as coordinator in the Erasmus program (now Erasmus +, the EU program to support education, training, youth and sport) for the last 20 years and is currently the Chair of the European Educational Programmes Committee at the Aristotle University.

Marina S. Lemos, PhD, is an Associate Professor with Habilitation of Educational Psychology and Development in the Department of Psychology at the Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto (FPCEUP), Portugal. Her research examines students' academic and social motivation, with a particular focus on students' motivation goals, and how they influence engagement, achievement, and school adjustment. Research has also focused on motivation for health behavior and treatment adhesion. Research methods, namely in-depth and contextualized approaches to motivation, are also a focus of interest. Marina S. Lemos is director of the Master degree in "Themes of Psychology" at FPCEUP. She founded and is the coordinator of the "Initiation to scientific research program for first cycle students" at FPCEUP. She has served as EARLI SIG Motivation and Emotion coordinator (2013–2016).

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Nathalie Aelterman Department of Movement and Sports

Sciences, and Department of Developmental, Personality and Social Psychology, Ghent

University, Belgium

Jeffrey R. Albrecht Combined Program in Education &

Psychology, University of Michigan, USA

Benjamin Brock Department of Psychological Studies in

Education, Temple University, USA

Ruth Butler Seymour Fox School of Education, Hebrew

University of Jerusalem, Israel

Marli Dunn Department of Psychology, Santa Clara

University, USA

Joanna K. Garner The Center for Educational Partnerships, Old

Dominion University, USA

Jessica R. Gladstone Department of Human Development and

Quantitative Methodology, University of

Maryland, USA

Eleftheria N. Gonida School of Psychology, Aristotle University of

Thessaloniki. Greece

Leen Haerens Department of Movement and Sports

Sciences, Ghent University, Belgium

Gerda Hagenauer Institute of Educational Sciences, University

of Bern, Switzerland

Judith M. Harackiewicz Department of Psychology, University of

Wisconsin-Madison, USA

Tina Hascher Department of Research in School and

Instruction, Institute of Educational Research, University of Bern, Switzerland

Cameron A. Hecht Department of Psychology, University of

Wisconsin-Madison, USA

Lerkkanen

Department of Psychological Studies in Avi Kaplan

Education, College of Education, Temple

University, USA

Stuart A. Karabenick Combined Program in Education &

Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann

Arbor, USA

Marina S. Lemos Faculty of Psychology and Education,

University of Porto, Portugal

Department of Teacher Education, University Marja-Kristiina

> of Jyväskylä, Finland, and Centre for Learning Environment and Behavioural Research in Education. University of

Stavanger, Norway

Department of Research in School and Kaja Marcin

> Instruction, Institute of Educational Research, University of Bern, Switzerland

Julia Morinaj Department of Research in School and

> Instruction. Institute of Educational Research, University of Bern, Switzerland

Susan Bobbitt Nolen College of Education, University of

Washington, Seattle, USA

Eija Pakarinen Department of Teacher Education, University

> of Jyväskylä, Finland, and Department of Psychology, New York University Abu

Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Stacy J. Priniski Department of Psychology, University of

Wisconsin-Madison, USA

Neha Sharma Department of Psychology, Santa Clara

University, USA

Bart Soenens Department of Developmental, Personality

and Social Psychology, Ghent University,

Belgium

Claudia C. Sutter-

Department of Educational and Human Brandenberger

Sciences, College of Community Innovation and Education, University of Central Florida,

USA

Maarten Vansteenkiste Department of Developmental, Personality

and Social Psychology, Ghent University,

Belgium

List of Contributors xi

Marja Vauras Department of Teacher Education, University

of Turku, Finland

Simone Volet School of Education, Murdoch University,

Australia, and Department of Teacher Education, University of Turku, Finland

Tim Urdan Department of Psychology, Santa Clara

University, USA

Allan Wigfield Department of Human Development and

Quantitative Methodology, University of

Maryland, USA

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Eleftheria N. Gonida and Marina S. Lemos

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MOTIVATION IN EDUCATION AT A TIME OF GLOBAL CHANGE: THEORY, RESEARCH, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Eleftheria N. Gonida and Marina S. Lemos

ABSTRACT

The increased complexity of educational processes at times of global change calls for new research and theoretical inquiry to address how changes such as economic, social and political disruption, financial recession, international migration, and new and rapid technological advancements affect education, schools, and student learning and adjustment. Specifically for motivation in education, the fundamental assumption is that, on the one hand, change and challenge have a significant impact on students' and educators' motivation to learn and achieve and, on the other hand, motivation can have a significant impact on students' and educators' capacity to cope with change and challenge effectively. This chapter introduces the reader to the present volume in the Advances in Motivation and Achievement Series which is dedicated to the role of motivation at times of change and uncertainty.

Keywords: Achievement motivation; context; global change; learning; motivation in education; uncertainty

Economic, social and political disruption, financial recession, international migration, as well as new and rapid technological advancements have produced major changes throughout the world regarding availability and access to knowledge, human communication, social relationships, learning, and education. The term "liquid modernity" (Bauman, 2002) nicely reflects the condition of constant mobility and change in all aspects of human life within contemporary society.

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As socioeconomic, sociodemographic, and sociocultural conditions are constantly changing in parallel with scientific and technological rapid progress, learning environments are also evolving. The increased complexity of educational processes calls for new research and theoretical inquiry to address how these global changes affect education, schools, and student learning and adjustment. This volume is dedicated to the role of motivation in that process.

Several years ago, Berliner (2002) argued about the complexity of educational phenomena due to "the power of contexts, the ubiquity of interactions, and the problem of 'decade by findings' interactions" (p. 18). Specifically, Berliner (2002) points out that all humans involved in schools (i.e., students, teachers, school principals, parents) are embedded in complex and changing networks of myriad interactions and have "variable power" to affect each other and be affected by everyday small- or large-scale life events and social phenomena. This idea results in limited generalizability and shorter shelf life for research evidence in the field of education, making it more difficult for educational scientists to support school and classrooms. Consequently, in addition to many other reasons behind the complexity of educational and learning processes, educational researchers should be alert to the complexity of educational phenomena as a result of continuous changes.

Issues involving the impact of societal and economic changes have been studied within the field of developmental psychology, especially with regard to transitions and positive youth development. For example, Greenfield (2009, 2016, 2018) has introduced an interdisciplinary theory of social change and human development as a unified framework in order to better understand children and youth development and adaptation around the world. Schoon (2007) examined young peoples' adaptation to changing contexts and the role of individual agency in shaping educational and occupational transitions. She found that, at least in the British society, social changes and the associated increasing uncertainties in economic and social developments have a differential impact on young people. There are those who are able to benefit from them and those who are at risk for social exclusion and poor academic outcomes, most of them coming from disadvantaged socioeconomic status and lacking access to educational and work opportunities. This differential impact implies that human agency and individual educational and developmental trajectories should be conceptualized within contexts and not outside of them. Further, in their recent special section, Schoon and Mortimer (2017) focused on the consequences of the "Great Recession" (i.e., the recent economic recession in Europe and USA, see Bell & Blanchflower, 2011) for young people's self-perceptions, values, orientations, and socioemotional outcomes. Implications included prolonged and precarious transitions from dependent childhood and adolescence to independent adulthood due to limited employment and life opportunities, declined self-perceptions such as self-confidence and self-worth, lower level of subjective well-being, and declined trust in institutions but increased support and concern for others. The abovementioned findings were more salient for young adults (18-25 years), a critical period for successful transition to adulthood as well as for adult identity

(e.g., Arnett, 2000; Schoon & Silbereisen, 2017), even for those attending college or university.

Due to its essential role in the learning process, motivation theory and research are examined to address change. In particular, in the field of education, sociocognitive theories of motivation have emphasized the role of context in learning outcomes and educational attainment acknowledging that learning (and education, in general) occurs within contexts. Research in the field has consistently indicated large contextual effects on achievement motivation, so that research conducted in different contexts or different time periods may challenge previous scientific work. The issue of social changes and its potential effects on student motivation become even more difficult to be studied and better understood when global worldwide changes occur and transform the context itself. Specifically for motivation in education, the fundamental assumption is that, on the one hand, change and challenge have a significant impact on students' and educators' motivation to learn and achieve and, on the other hand, motivation can have a significant impact on students' and educators' capacity to cope with change and challenge effectively.

For example, global changes such as migration and technological advancement alter learning environments (e.g., classroom heterogeneity and instructional methods) that in turn affect student achievement motivation. Socioeconomic downturns are associated with the rise in youth unemployment and job insecurity which in turn are associated with decline in self-confidence and lower value of academic learning to bring positive change in their life (e.g., see Schoon & Bynner, 2017). However, change and challenge do not impact all students or teachers in a uniform way. Challenging contexts may have different implications for students (and teachers) who are motivated to approach novel situations as opportunities to learn, improve or have new choices compared to students (and teachers) who are motivated to avoid such situations because they consider them as threatening to their competence or very demanding to deal with (Weiss, Freund, & Wiese, 2012). In the same vein, agentic striving from ages 18 to 31 years, such as maintaining high aspirations, having clear career goals, and searching intensively for a job, despite the declining economic and employment prospects during the recent severe financial crisis, was associated with better socioeconomic outcomes and adaptation (Vuolo, Staff, & Mortimer,

In other words, change, challenge, and/or uncertainty may be perceived either as an opportunity or a risk. Perceptions of events or situations are often stronger predictors of outcomes than the events themselves. For example, perceived economic pressure is a more powerful predictor of mental health than the objective financial situation per se (Asebedo & Wilmarth, 2017). For some populations though, such as immigrant, minority and refugee students, those living in poverty, and poor achievers, change and uncertainty may be particularly difficult and risk is more likely to take precedence over opportunity due to their increased vulnerability. As mentioned previously, however, not all immigrant, minority and refugee students, or students living in poverty are equally vulnerable (e.g., Motti-Stefanidi, 2018; Raver, Blair, & Willoughby, 2013; Vuolo et al.,

2012). An important query for motivation theory in the field of education is twofold: (1) to identify which, how, and when motivational factors function as strengths under conditions of rapid and extensive change, challenge, and uncertainty, and (2) how and when the changing contexts in which children, adolescents, and youth live (i.e., family and school context) constitute protective factors for optimal learning, adaptation, and well-being.

The present volume reflects upon several themes of motivation at a time when seemingly apparent certainties, such as the "irreversible" good living conditions, appear to be challenged by phenomena such as unemployment, rapid transformations of the labor market, technological advancements affecting human communication, education, and life habits, population mobility for several reasons, or political instability and democratic citizenship under dispute. As already referred, inevitably, these phenomena both influence personal motivation (e.g., goals, aspirations, future plans, competence beliefs, values, needs) and challenge motivational models and paradigms that aim to capture the relationships between societal changes and personal motivation and incorporate them into models of learning and achievement. Thus, the volume addresses the association of global changes and social transformations with the conceptual models and theories of motivation in education and attempts a critical understanding of the role of current motivational theories during unsettling times. It also features several challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in coping with change and in adapting to these transformations either as individuals or as contexts for others.

Further, the volume offers ideas for the potential implications of motivational theory and research for educational practice in times of continuous change and uncertainty. Despite the gap between research and practice, teachers and policy-makers would be expected to "want to know what the research says before making an important [practice-related] decision" (Whitehurst, 2003, p. 12, see also Lemons, Fuchs, Gilbert, & Fuchs, 2014, p. 243). All volume contributors offer insights about the educational implications of their theory and research recognizing, however, that their work has been conducted in a particular time and place. These practical implications need to be communicated to schools, families, and communities. Collaboration and partnership networks between researchers (universities, institutes), schools, and communities, in addition to education and preservice and in-service training for teachers, school and educational psychologists, and parents (see Hatzichristou, Adamopoulou, & Lampropoulou, 2014), should be promoted so that school and community members become more aware of the role of motivation in academic learning, achievement, school adaptation, and well-being. Moreover, these networks will let educators be armed with evidence-based instructional and motivational practices in a changing world (see Lemons et al., 2014), as those recommended by the volume authors. Only these collaboration pathways will allow building motivationally adaptive learning environments, supportive teacher-student relationships, positive peer relationships, and acknowledgment of student needs and adversities. Most importantly, educators and parents should become aware of the role of societal change that all the above constitute dynamic processes and that their work is in competition with the constant societal change.

OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT VOLUME

A number of questions related to how motivational theory and research can contribute to our response to the challenges that students, teachers, parents, school communities, and educational policy-makers currently face need to be answered. For example, what different motivational theories have to say about motivation and achievement in times of change and uncertainty and what are their implications for coping with the challenges the changing world poses on students, teachers, parents, classrooms, and schools? Motivation in education, including all different facets within alternative theoretical frameworks, is influenced by personal, social, and cultural factors. Specifically for unsettling and challenging times, how do individual (e.g., gender, identity, motivational beliefs) and contextual factors (e.g., family, school, broader socioeconomic, and political conditions) influence student (de)motivation to learn and succeed or induce classrooms and schools as (de)motivating contexts? Further, although learning environments are constantly changing in relation to non-static sociocultural contexts (or at least should be seen as constantly changing), there are specific historical periods that are characterized by more intense, rapid, and worldwide life-changing challenges like the one we currently experience. What are the most salient current challenges motivational theory and research can contribute to? For example, how can motivational theory and evidence contribute to the increasing classroom heterogeneity, to the ongoing technological advancement or to school alienation?

Accordingly, the volume has been organized along three axes which constitute the three parts of it: (1) current motivational theories at a time of global change and uncertainty, (2) motivation at a time of global change: individual and contextual factors, and (3) motivation and current challenges at a time of global change and uncertainty. Given the different theoretical perspectives in the field and the diverse lenses for translating research evidence into practice, the present volume (No. 20) in the Advances in Motivation and Achievement Series was designed to open up a dialogue of voices, viewpoints, and methodologies about our shared concerns on how to support achievement motivation in challenging times as a means for children, adolescent, and youth successful academic trajectories and positive adaptation to school. Toward this direction, we invited contributors representing different theoretical perspectives (e.g., expectancyvalue theory (EVT), self-determination theory, personal investment theory, identity, relevance), conducting research on diverse topics of achievement motivation (e.g., student motivational beliefs, teacher motivational beliefs and practices, collaborative learning, new technologies and motivation, school alienation, etc.) and with different populations (e.g., elementary, middle or high school students, college students, immigrant students, low family income students, teachers, parents), and focusing on individual and contextual factors (e.g., identity, perceived competence, gender, school and family, political discourse) to cope with different current challenges (e.g., migration, poverty, classroom heterogeneity, technological advancement).

All contributors of this volume come from the 15th International Conference on Motivation which took place in Thessaloniki, Greece in 2016 and focused on the dynamic interaction between challenging contexts and motivated persons. The conference was organized by the EARLI SIG8 "Motivation and Emotion" and the School of Psychology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The volume has 11 chapters distributed in the three parts referred previously. Both theoretical and research-based chapters are included, whereas senior and young researchers in the field are represented. A further strength of Volume 20 is its international scope. Contributors came from six countries (Australia, Belgium, Finland, Israel, Switzerland, and the United States of America) with guest editors representing two more countries (Greece and Portugal). It should be noted that several chapters could fit in more than one part of the volume but the main focus of the chapter, at least to our view, was used as the criterion for their inclusion in a particular part of the volume. A short description of each of the 11 chapters follows.

Part I: Current Motivational Theories at a Time of Global Change and Uncertainty

We begin with the chapter by Wigfield and Gladstone titled "What Does Expectancy-Value Theory Have to Say about Motivation and Achievement in Times of Change and Uncertainty?"). After describing expectancies and values as the EVT key motivational constructs and their development and associations with performance and choice, the authors discuss how children's expectancies and values can "buffer" (or fail to buffer) the impact of dealing with change and uncertainty in schools. Specifically, positive expectancies and values for different school subjects are more likely to function as buffers against change and uncertainty, whereas negative expectancies and values for different school subjects over the school years do not only fail to do so, but are more likely to result in increased vulnerability to challenging circumstances. The authors argue that these processes are related to students' identification with school, their understanding or skepticism about the value of education to bring significant changes in their life, their learning behaviors, as well as their intentions and persistence to complete secondary school and pursue a university degree or drop out. Wigfield and Gladstone also discuss major socializers, such as parents and teachers, as buffers in children's responses to change and uncertainty giving special emphasis on immigrant and minority children. They show that, first, both socializers can foster positive growth in children's motivation and, second, that even brief motivation interventions can be successful with respect to supporting children stay positively motivated in school.

In the next chapter titled "Relevant Education in a Changing World: Expanding Value for the Motivation Sciences", Albrecht and Karabenick discuss the significance of relevant education in our changing world and argue about the need to expand the conceptualization of subjective task value beliefs as proposed in expectancy-value theory. After clarifying the meaning and different components of relevance as well as its relation to task value, the authors

introduce a sociocultural perspective on educational relevance appraisals. Changes in the sociocultural contexts within which relevance appraisals are framed, both at a local and a global level, affect the issues that students consider to be relevant to their educational experiences and the values they attribute to school, studies, and educational opportunities. To exemplify conceptual value and relevance, Albrecht and Karabenick provide examples of how major societal changes in the past but also recent global events may impact the social construction of educational relevance and constrain students' beliefs about the value and purpose of education itself. They also discuss relevance-based implications for practice and provide specific recommendations for educators to make their teaching relevant to their students.

Whereas the focus of the two previous chapters was on student motivational beliefs in relation to change and uncertainty, in "Seeking Stability in Stormy Educational Times: A Need-based Perspective on (De)motivating Teaching Grounded in Self-determination Theory", Vansteenkiste, Aelterman, Haerens, and Soenens focus on teaching motivational practices. The authors argue that teachers can still optimally motivate their students despite the complexity of societal, technological, and economic challenges that affect education and schools and introduce a need-based coherent perspective on (de)motivating teaching grounded on self-determination theory. They contend that, rather than isolated specific motivational practices, such a conceptual rationale will provide teachers with a flexible strategy that allows for adjustments to diversity, uncertainty, and change. Specifically, they present the teaching wheel (circumplex model) which consists of four broader areas of teaching (de)motivating practices (i.e., autonomy supportive, controlling, structuring, and chaotic practices) and is described along two overarching dimensions (teacher need support and teacher directiveness). The chapter points to the possibility that changing and unstable circumstances may be perceived and dealt with differently as a function of psychological need satisfaction. Although uncertainty and change are potentially need-threatening, the teaching wheel can be used as a guide, first, by the teachers in their interactions with students in order to support student autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and second, by school principals in their need-supportive leadership style to enhance teachers' resilience in coping with change and instability.

In "Understanding Long-term Effects of Motivation Interventions in a Changing World," Hecht, Priniski, and Harackiewicz focus on motivation interventions in a changing world, and specifically, on understanding the mechanisms underlying the long-term effects motivation interventions may have. The authors introduce a comprehensive framework to better understand how and why interventions that target motivational processes in education may produce effects years after implementation. They distinguish three types of processes through which interventions may produce long-term consequences: recursive processes, non-recursive chains of effects, and latent intrapersonal effects. A variety of mechanisms of change that lead to downstream effects are presented as particularly pertinent in today's complex, dynamic, and uncertain educational contexts. After describing three types of motivational interventions that evidence long-

term effects on educational outcomes (values affirmation, utility value, and social belonging), the authors discuss the implications for effective intervention design in terms of potential long-term effects so that students will be able to cope not only with current challenges and uncertainties, but also with new challenges that will arise in the distant future.

Part II: Motivation at a Time of Global Change: Individual and Contextual Factors

Kaplan, Garner, and Brock in their chapter "Identity and Motivation in a Changing World: A Complex Dynamic Systems Perspective" introduce a complex dynamic systems (CDSs) perspective for motivational processes, named the Dynamic Systems Model of Role Identity (DSMRI, Kaplan & Garner, 2017) as a better conceptualization of the identity motivational system. Building mainly on personal investment theory (Maehr & Braskamp, 1986), the authors describe role identity as a CDS comprising four interdependent motivational elements (ontological and epistemological beliefs, purpose and goals, self-perceptions and self-definitions, and perceived action possibilities) which emerge within the particular context and reciprocally influence each other to manifest in emergent motivated action. They also use the abovementioned DSMRI components to describe the nature of an adaptive identity motivation system in a changing and uncertain environment. They present relevant research and interventions and argue that complexity assumptions provide a more realistic framework for identity and motivation that would result in robust and resilient functioning and growth in the face of change, ambiguity, and unpredictability.

In the next chapter titled "Gender, Motivation, and Society: New and Continuing Challenges", Butler discusses gender and motivation in the context of the new and continuing societal challenges. After differentiating boys' and girls' achievement motivational beliefs and orientations (i.e., beliefs about competence, self-evaluative attributions and strategies, achievement goal orientations), the author describes males and females in terms of general motivational orientations such as "prove and protect" and "doubt and try to do better," respectively (Butler, 2014). According to the author, this general orientation constitutes the main vulnerability for male and female students since boys more than girls prioritize proving over acquiring competence whereas girls more than boys worry that they are not able enough. Butler considers the development of female and male motivational beliefs and orientations as the result of sociocultural factors such as parents, teachers, peers, social class, and ethnicity and points out educational implications to mitigate the maladaptive motivational orientations of boys and girls. Specifically, she discusses the creation of masteryoriented learning environments and the promotion of incremental beliefs as buffers to maladaptive concerns about the ability for both girls and boys. However, she sets off the alarm bell about recent essentialism views in scientific circles as well as socially and religiously conservative values regarding gender differences as significant challenges to educators and their attempts to promote optimal motivation for learning for the students in the future.