PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

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Abstract. *This study investigates the psychological mechanisms underlying achievement motivation, the expectancy–value model, and locus of control, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of D. McClelland, J. Atkinson, and J. Rotter. The research analyzes an individual's tendency toward achievement, fear of failure, perceived probability of task success, and subjective value of outcomes. Particular attention is given to the regulatory role of internal and external locus of control, as well as the interaction between motivational processes and cognitive, affective, and volitional components. The findings demonstrate that achievement motivation is strongly linked to self-awareness, the need for autonomy, and an individual's social learning experiences.*

Keywords: *achievement motivation, locus of control, expectancy–value model, self-determination theory, intrinsic motivation, cognitive evaluation.*

Introduction

The rapid modernization processes currently observed in global education and science increasingly intensify the need for a deeper study of human psychology. Among the psychological factors influencing personality development, motivation, and indicators of success, locus of control occupies a special place. Scientific materials published by the American Psychological Association (APA) emphasize that individuals with an internal locus of control tend to associate their actions and outcomes with personal responsibility, which, in turn, has a significantly positive effect on their academic performance [1]. Research findings indicate that students with an internal locus of control interpret success as the result of their own efforts; therefore, they approach learning with a higher sense of responsibility.

Today, leading higher education institutions, research institutes, and psychological centers around the world are expanding studies on the influence of locus of control on students' learning motivation, responsibility, independent decision-making skills, and academic effectiveness. Observations conducted at universities in China, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe confirm the role of internal locus of control in enhancing academic engagement. For example, experimental studies conducted by psychologists at Stanford University revealed that students' internal locus of control significantly increased through psychological training programs [2]. These results demonstrate that the development of locus of control has not only psychological but also pedagogical significance in the educational process.

With regard to the degree of exploration of this issue, in Uzbekistan, scholars such as B.S. Abdullaeva, G.B. Amirova, X.K. Bekchanov, U.A. Butaeva, A.A. Fayzullayev, F.I. Haydarov, A.M. Jabborov, M.A. Jabborova, V.M. Karimova, Z.T. Nishonova, N.Z. Ismoilova, B.R. Qodirov, A.Q. Saitova, N.Sh.Yuldasheva, R.Z. Gaynutdinov, E.G.Gaziev, D. Shokirov, and others have investigated issues of motivation, personal responsibility, learning activity, and locus of control from various perspectives.

In the CIS countries, researchers such as K.A. Abulxanova, N.V. Annenkova, A.A. Bodalev, L.A. Golovey, D.A. Leontev, S.K. Nartova, V.V. Pryadein, Z.I. Ryabikina, H. Heckhausen, M.S. Yanitskiy, and V.D. Shadrikov examined the impact of locus of control on personal activity, self-regulation, motivation, initiative in learning, and related aspects. Their studies provide an important theoretical foundation for understanding the psychological nature of locus of control.

In foreign literature, researchers such as E. Baumel, C. Dweck, D.S. Gorman, A. Caspi, H.M. Lefcourt, R. Plomin, M. Seligman, J. Rotter, D. Watson, and others analyze locus of control as a universal psychological construct associated with achievement striving, decision-making style, adaptability, and social activity. In particular, in-depth theoretical models have been developed concerning the influence of internal and external locus of control on education, professional activity, motivational systems, and psychological well-being.

The concept of "locus of control" was first introduced by the American psychologist Julian J. Rotter within the framework of social learning theory [3]. Rotter's methodological innovation lay in his departure from instinct-based psychoanalytic and drive-based behaviorist approaches dominant at the time, instead viewing individuals as conscious agents. In explaining behavior, he emphasized not only external factors but also the individual's subjective interpretation of situations. According to Rotter, human behavior is shaped not by instinctual drives but by reinforcements and expectations formed in relation to them.

The four key components proposed by J. Rotter [3]—behavior potential, expectancy, reinforcement value, and psychological situation—explain the psychological mechanism underlying an individual's decision in a given situation. Behavior potential refers to the likelihood of a specific behavior occurring, while expectancy represents the subjective probability that this behavior will lead to a particular outcome. Reinforcement value determines the significance of the outcome for the individual, and the psychological situation reflects how the person interprets the situation, which is unique for each individual.

Rotter's concept introduced a new direction in understanding human behavior: behavior is determined by both biological and social factors, but the process of subjective perception plays a decisive role. Therefore, locus of control is considered an integrative psychological construct that directly influences not only an individual's motivational system but also learning activity, academic achievement, professional competencies, and psychological adaptation.

McClelland's theory of motivation is one of the key approaches that allows for a deeper understanding of employees' internal needs and the factors driving their behavior. This theory has significant practical value for managers in identifying employees' work motivations, assigning appropriate roles, and organizing effective work processes. By determining an employee's level of achievement motivation, it becomes possible to assign roles aligned with personal goals and professional accomplishments, thereby enhancing productivity. Moreover, creating a socio-psychological environment that supports achievement motivation significantly strengthens employees' overall work engagement and intrinsic motivation. Management practices based on McClelland's model, in general, contribute to organizational stability and competitiveness.

At the same time, the achievement-oriented motivation model has several limitations. First, individuals with high achievement motivation may expect similar levels of performance from others, which can negatively affect teamwork and managerial effectiveness. Second, empirical studies supporting achievement motivation theory do not always demonstrate consistent or stable statistical results, raising questions about the model's overall reliability. Third, training programs

aimed at developing achievement motivation often require substantial time, effort, and financial resources; therefore, their effectiveness and economic feasibility require continuous reassessment. Finally, the model does not fully capture the multifaceted nature of motivation, as human behavior is influenced not only by internal motives but also by situational factors, external incentives, and social conditions.

The core idea of McClelland's concept is to explain why some individuals strive for success more than others. The theory is based on two psychological mechanisms: the desire to achieve success and the motive to avoid failure. The relative dominance of these forces determines how individuals behave in specific situations. If the desire for success outweighs fear of failure, the individual is likely to engage in the task; conversely, if fear dominates, avoidance or withdrawal strategies may be chosen. From this perspective, the model is interpreted as an "approach–avoidance" mechanism.

Achievement motivation theory is often regarded as a personality-oriented approach, as this motive is typically manifested as a relatively stable internal characteristic. However, interpreting achievement striving solely as a personal trait does not provide a complete picture. Situational factors—such as task difficulty, probability of success, and reward value—also significantly influence decision-making. For example, when a task is highly attractive or the reward substantial, even individuals with low intrinsic motivation may choose to engage in it.

The theory also explains why individuals with high achievement motivation tend to select challenging and complex tasks. By choosing difficult tasks, such individuals seek to enhance the value of their achievements. In contrast, individuals with low motivation prefer easier tasks to minimize the risk of failure. For instance, a highly achievement-oriented employee may choose to redesign an entire marketing campaign to increase revenue, whereas a low-motivation employee may prefer to maintain traditional work methods.

Alongside McClelland's approach, Weiner's attribution theory (Weiner, 1985) plays a significant role in explaining motivation. This theory examines how individuals explain their successes and failures. Attributions are classified along two main dimensions:

- stable vs. unstable,
- internal vs. external.

Internal attributions relate to personal ability or effort, whereas external attributions are linked to task difficulty or chance. The combination of these factors determines whether outcomes are attributed to ability, effort, task complexity, or luck. Weiner's model provides an important conceptual framework for understanding how motivation and behavioral strategies are formed in subsequent stages.

The methodological foundation of this study is based on a set of modern psychological theories explaining motivational processes in human activity. The conceptual core of the research is primarily grounded in D. McClelland's achievement motivation theory, which allows for the analysis of achievement orientation, goal striving, and the psychological mechanisms of success attainment.

The methodological framework also incorporates J. Atkinson's expectancy–value model, according to which the probability of engaging in a particular activity is determined by the interaction of two factors: the likelihood of task success and the subjective value of the outcome. Thus, motivation relies not only on internal needs but also on cognitive evaluation processes.

Another key methodological approach employed in this study is J. Rotter's internal–external locus of control theory, which explains how individuals perceive their level of control

over life events and attribute responsibility to internal or external factors. This perspective enables a deeper analysis of the regulatory mechanisms underlying achievement motivation.

In addition, the study draws on the works of H. Murray, A. Bandura, as well as E. Deci and R. Ryan's Self-Determination Theory. This theory provides a systematic interpretation of the core sources of motivation—intrinsic interest, sense of competence, and need for autonomy. In particular, the formation of intrinsic motivation and its connection to self-development needs serves as an important methodological basis for the study.

Conclusion

This methodological platform is grounded in a person-centered approach, activity theory, and principles of motivational–cognitive integration in examining achievement striving. The processes of motivation formation, consolidation, and transformation were analyzed in relation to cognitive processes, self-awareness, and social experience.

To measure achievement motivation and identify its components, a complex of methods was employed. Experimental and diagnostic methods included questionnaires, psychological tests, surveys, and observation to examine the cognitive, affective, and volitional components of motivation. Psychometric assessment utilized internationally recognized instruments such as the McClelland Achievement Motivation Test, Atkinson's Risk Preference Scale, and Rotter's Internal–External Locus of Control Scale. These methods enabled a comprehensive assessment of motivational structure, achievement striving, risk propensity, and locus of control characteristics.

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