

## MOTIVATIONAL ORIENTATIONS AND THEIR CORRELATION WITH ACHIEVEMENT: A STUDY OF INDEPENDENT VS. SOCIALLY PRESSURED ADULT LEARNERS IN KERALA."

**Benjamin P Ittoop**

Research Scholar Alagappa University, Karaikkudi  
India

### ABSTRACT

The Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority (KSLMA) serves as a vital platform for lifelong learning, yet the psychological underpinnings of learner success remain largely unexplored. While educational outcomes are often measured by enrolment and pass rates, the "why" behind adult participation—whether driven by personal agency or external social pressure—is a critical factor in academic performance. This study explores how different motivational orientations influence the academic achievement of adult learners in the unique socio-cultural landscape of Kerala.

**Keywords:** Self-Determination Theory, Adult Education, KSLMA, Academic Achievement, Kerala

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of adult education in Kerala is unique, largely shaped by the proactive interventions of the Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority (KSLMA). While Kerala has consistently maintained the highest literacy rates in India, the transition from basic literacy to functional equivalency presents a complex psychological challenge for adult learners. At the heart of this challenge lies the concept of motivation—the internal or external force that drives a person to re-enter a classroom after years, or even decades, of absence. In the context of KSLMA, learners typically fall into two distinct motivational categories. On one hand are the Independent Learners, who exercise personal agency and seek education out of an intrinsic desire for self-improvement, cognitive growth, or social dignity. On the other hand are the Socially Pressured Learners, whose participation is often a result of extrinsic mandates—familial insistence, requirements for government welfare schemes, or social expectations within local communities. This study is grounded in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan, which suggests that the quality of learning is deeply tied to how "autonomous" a learner feels. When an adult learner feels forced into education (Controlled Motivation), they may lack the persistence required for academic success. Conversely, when the choice to learn is made of one's "free will" (Autonomous Motivation), the learner is likely to demonstrate higher levels of engagement, resilience, and academic achievement.

Despite the administrative success of KSLMA programs, there is a significant research gap regarding how these differing motivational orientations correlate with actual academic performance in the Kerala context. Understanding this relationship is crucial not only for psychological discourse but also for educational practitioners. If achievement is significantly

higher among independent learners, it suggests that KSLMA's strategy should shift from mere "enrollment drives" to fostering genuine learner interest and autonomy.

This research aims to analyze the correlation between these motivational orientations and the academic scores of adult learners, providing an empirical basis for enhancing the effectiveness of adult education programs in Kerala.

## 1.1.BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the context of Kerala's robust educational landscape, adult learning is often driven by two distinct catalysts: internal motivation (andragogical independence) and external social expectations (societal pressure). While the state boasts high literacy, the psychological drivers behind adult enrollment in higher education or vocational up skilling remain under-researched.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It provides the academic foundation for your study. For this specific topic, the review should be organized into three thematic pillars: the psychology of motivation (Self-Determination Theory), the nature of adult education, and the specific socio-educational context of Kerala.

### 2.1. Theoretical Framework: Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

The foundational work of **Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000)** remains the cornerstone of motivational research. Their Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that motivation exists on a continuum from *Amotivation* to *Extrinsic Motivation* and finally *Intrinsic Motivation*. According to their research, autonomous motivation (learning by choice) leads to better conceptual understanding and higher persistence compared to controlled motivation (learning due to pressure). This study uses SDT to categorize KSLMA learners into "Independent" and "Socially Pressured" groups.

### 2.2. Motivation and Academic Achievement in Adult Learners

Research by **Knowles (1980)** on *Andragogy* (the art and science of adult learning) emphasizes that adults are self-directed and their motivation to learn is often triggered by a desire to solve real-life problems. **Vallerand et al. (1992)** developed the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) and found that students with higher intrinsic motivation scores consistently outperformed those driven by external rewards or social compliance.

In the context of adult literacy, **Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2000)** argued that for marginalized learners, a "culturally responsive" motivational framework is essential to prevent dropout, suggesting that social pressure can often be a double-edged sword—initially bringing learners to class but failing to sustain them.

### 2.3. The Kerala Literacy Context and KSLMA

The "Kerala Model" of development has been extensively documented by scholars like **Drèze and Sen (1995)**, who highlighted the state's success in social sectors. However, recent critical reviews of the **Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority (KSLMA)** by local researchers (e.g.,

George, 2010; Kumar, 2018) suggest that while the "mass campaign" approach successfully eradicated total illiteracy, the transition to *Equivalency Programs* faces challenges. These studies note that adult learners in Kerala are often influenced by the "Kudumbashree" network or local Panchayat mandates. There is a noted gap in literature regarding how these social "pushes" affect the actual academic performance of the learners compared to those who enroll purely for personal enlightenment.

#### 2.4. Correlation between Choice and Learning Outcomes

Studies in the field of educational psychology (e.g., Pintrich, 2003) have shown a strong positive correlation between **Learner Agency** and academic achievement. Research indicates that when a learner perceives their participation as a "free choice," they develop higher **Self-Efficacy**, which in turn acts as a mediator for higher exam scores. Conversely, "socially pressured" enrollment often leads to "Surface Learning"—where the student does the bare minimum to pass without deeply engaging with the material.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this research is to examine the relationship between motivational orientations (Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic) and academic achievement. Specifically, it seeks to compare the performance levels of "Independent Learners" (those driven by personal interest and autonomy) and "Socially Pressured Learners" (those enrolled due to familial, social, or institutional mandates).

### 4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

A descriptive-correlational research design will be employed. The study will involve a sample of 25 adult learners currently enrolled in KSLMA equivalency programs in [Insert District Name]. Data will be collected using a Malayalam-adapted version of the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), to categorize motivational profiles. Academic achievement will be assessed using the standardized scores obtained in the KSLMA term-end evaluations.

To maintain academic rigor for your publication, the questionnaire should be divided into two parts: Part A for demographic/situational data (to categorize the learners) and Part B for measuring motivation levels using a Likert scale.

Since your study is based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the questions are designed to distinguish between Intrinsic Motivation (Independent) and Extrinsic Regulation (Socially Pressured).

### 5. FINDINGS

Here's a structured questionnaire you can use for your study: "Motivational Orientations and Their Correlation with Achievement: A Study of Independent vs. Socially Pressured Adult Learners in Kerala."

It is divided into clear sections and uses a 5-point Likert scale for most items.

**Instructions:** Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

### 5.1. Independent (Intrinsic) Motivation

1. I am interested in learning and knowing new things
2. I need to be able to write and read by myself in daily life
3. I feel proud of myself when I understand a difficult lesson
4. Studying helps in my personal growth.
5. I am motivated to study without pressure from others.

### 5.2. Socially Pressured (Extrinsic) Motivation

1. I joined the equivalency course because my family/relatives forced me.
2. I am motivated to study because I am compared to other people.
3. The pressure to get a job/income leads to studying.
4. I have to study to get a good position in society.
5. The fear of what others will think motivates me to study

(5-point Likert Scale)

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

Sl NO.	Name	Gender	Self-Motivation (25)	Pressured learning (25)	Total Mark (50)
1	Prabihta	Female	25	24	
2	Sufiyan	Male	25	16	
3	Sumesh	Male	20	11	
4	Sainaba	Female	25	18	
5	Padmavati	Female	22	18	
6	Mufeeda	Female	24	10	
7	Faseela	Female	24	16	
8	Masnsoor	Male	24	18	
9	Labitha	Female	25	13	
10	Shereena	Female	23	15	
11	Beena	Female	25	14	
12	Vijitha	Female	23	16	
13	Anil kumar	Male	25	13	
14	Prajitha	Female	24	10	
15	Sheena	Female	21	17	
16	Shalitha	Female	20	15	
17	Preetha	Female	24	11	
18	Dhanya	Female	25	09	
19	Sudhakumari	Female	24	12	

20	Saranya	Female	25	17	
21	Sumathi	Female	25	14	
22	Lijitha	Female	19	16	
23	Afstah	Female	25	09	
24	Vima	Female	25	10	
25	Praseetha	Female	25	12	

## 6. INTERPRETATION

- As self-motivation increases, pressured learning slightly decreases
- But the relationship is too weak to be significant

The analysis of data collected from adult learners in Kerala revealed a weak negative correlation ( $r \approx -0.15$ ) between self-motivation and socially pressured learning. This indicates that there is a slight tendency for learners who are more intrinsically motivated to experience lower levels of external or social pressure. However, the strength of this relationship is very low, suggesting that the two variables are largely independent of each other.

A negative correlation generally implies an inverse relationship—meaning that as one variable increases, the other decreases. In this context, it suggests that individuals who engage in learning out of personal interest, internal satisfaction, and self-driven goals may be somewhat less influenced by expectations from family, society, or external rewards. These learners tend to rely more on their own internal drive rather than external validation.

However, the correlation coefficient ( $-0.15$ ) falls within the range of a very weak relationship, indicating that the decrease in social pressure with increased self-motivation is minimal and not substantial. This means that self-motivation does not strongly predict or reduce socially pressured learning among the participants.

### 6.1 Conceptual Understanding

The findings suggest that intrinsic motivation and extrinsic pressure are not mutually exclusive. Adult learners can simultaneously:

- Be highly self-motivated
- Experience social or familial pressure

This coexistence may be particularly relevant in the socio-cultural context of Kerala, where:

- Education is highly valued
- Family expectations and societal norms play a significant role

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that there exists a weak negative relationship between self-motivation and socially pressured learning among adult learners in Kerala. Although the direction of the relationship suggests that higher intrinsic motivation is associated with slightly lower social pressure, the strength of this relationship is minimal. Therefore, self-motivation does not significantly reduce or eliminate socially pressured learning.

The findings clearly indicate that independent (intrinsic) motivation and socially pressured (extrinsic) motivation function largely as separate constructs. Adult learners are capable of maintaining their personal interest and self-driven goals even while experiencing expectations from family or society. This highlights that both forms of motivation can coexist without strongly influencing each other.

Based on the overall trend in the data, it can be concluded that self-motivation is relatively stronger among adult learners. This suggests that most participants engage in learning due to personal interest, self-development, and internal satisfaction rather than purely external pressures.

Despite high levels of intrinsic motivation, social and familial expectations continue to play a role in adult learning. Cultural factors in Kerala—such as the importance placed on education, employment, and social status—may contribute to the persistence of socially pressured learning.

## 8. REFERENCES

### 8.1. Foundational Theories of Motivation

- Edward L. Deci, & Richard M. Ryan (2000).  
*The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior.*  
Psychological Inquiry, 11(4), 227–268.  
Explains intrinsic vs extrinsic motivation and supports the idea that both can coexist.
- Edward L. Deci, & Richard M. Ryan (1985).  
*Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior.*  
New York: Plenum.  
Core theory explaining autonomy and internal motivation.

### 8.2. Intrinsic vs Extrinsic Motivation in Education

- Johnmarshall Reeve (2012).  
*A self-determination theory perspective on student engagement.*  
Handbook of Research on Student Engagement.  
Shows how intrinsic motivation works independently of external pressures.
- Barry J. Zimmerman (2000).  
*Self-efficacy: An essential motive to learn.*  
Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25(1), 82–91.  
Supports role of self-driven learning in achievement.

### 8.3. Adult Learning & Motivation

- Malcolm Knowles (1984).  
*The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species.*  
Houston: Gulf Publishing.  
States adult learners are typically self-directed and intrinsically motivated.
- Stephen D. Brookfield (1986).  
*Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning.*  
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.  
Highlights internal motivation despite external pressures.

### 8.4. Social Pressure & Academic Motivation

- Jennifer Crocker, & Lora E. Park (2004).  
*The costly pursuit of self-esteem.*

Psychological Bulletin, 130(3), 392–414.

Discusses social expectations and pressure.

8. Andrew J. Elliot, & Harackiewicz Judith M (1996).

*Approach and avoidance achievement goals and intrinsic motivation.*

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70(3), 461–475.

Shows how external pressures don't always reduce intrinsic motivation.

### **8.5.Supporting Weak/Independent Relationships**

9. Teresa M. Amabile (1996).

*Creativity in Context.*

Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Suggests intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can operate separately.