

УЧЕБНАЯ МОТИВАЦИЯ И ВЛИЯНИЕ ПЕРЕХОДА НА ДИСТАНТ ГЛАЗАМИ СТУДЕНТОВ ВУЗОВ

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Аннотация

Распространение дистанционного обучения не только открывает новые возможности как для студентов, так и для поставщиков образовательных услуг, но и стимулирует рост научного интереса к изучению факторов, оказывающих влияние на учебную мотивацию при работе в различных образовательных средах и форматах. Вызванный пандемией коронавируса переход российских университетов на дистанционное обучение весной 2020 г. предоставил возможности для изучения влияния различных внутренних и внешних факторов на учебную мотивацию студентов-очников, оказавшихся в ситуации дистанционного обучения. Авторами был проведен опрос студентов ($N = 274$) трех российских вузов (БГУ, ИГУ в г. Иркутске, БГУ им. Д. Банзарова в г. Улан-Удэ), который преследовал следующие цели: составление рейтинга факторов, влияющих на учебную мотивацию; оценка изменения количества времени, затрачиваемого на учебу, и уровня ее трудоемкости после перехода на дистанционное обучение; оценка студентами изменений в их мотивации в новых условиях организации обучения. Результаты опроса показали следующее: респонденты оценивают внутренние мотивационные факторы (в частности, возможность получить новые знания и умения) как более значимые для них, чем внешние; тем не менее учебная мотивация находится в большой зависимости от таких внешних факторов, как личность преподавателя и отношения, складывающиеся у него со студентами. К факторам с высоким позитивным влиянием относятся возможность получения новых знаний и умений, осознание роли образования в будущем успехе, материальные стимулы, а к факторам с высоким негативным влиянием — отсутствие времени и подходящей обстановки для учебы. Значительное число респондентов отметили, что после перехода на дистант возросла как сложность обучения, так и количество времени, которое они тратили на учебу. По мнению большинства опрошенных, их мотивация снизилась, что также может указывать на несомненную роль внешних факторов, в частности академической обстановки и общения, в учебной мотивации. Результаты исследования позволяют взглянуть на учебную мотивацию с позиции студентов и могут быть использованы при принятии решений относительно формата и содержания как дистанционных, так и очных курсов.

ACADEMIC MOTIVATION AND THE IMPACT OF DISTANCE LEARNING DURING LOCKDOWN: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

High academic motivation is regarded as a key to a student's good academic performance and, consequently, a successful future. The

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Keywords

Academic motivation; intrinsic factors; extrinsic factors; student survey; lockdown; online learning; remote learning

Problem

Successful academic performance depends on multiple factors, and motivation is widely recognized as one of its cornerstones by researchers and educators alike [1; 2, p. 671]. Most motivation theories were initially developed to help employers motivate their employees in the workplace, and were then adapted for other situations, including the academic environment. These theories could be roughly put into two groups: content and process theories: those trying to answer the question of the origins of motivation are called process theories, while the theories discussing motivating factors are known as content theories.

The first group includes Vroom's Expectancy theory [3]. According to H.V. Vroom, $\text{motivation} = \text{expectancy} * \text{instrumentality} * \text{valence}$, where expectancy is what employees expect to get from their own efforts, instrumentality is the belief that if employees perform well, they will receive a valued outcome, and valence is understood as the value of the expected result. In this formula, motivation gets higher when expectancy or valence gets higher. The Equity theory [4] uses the concepts of incomes, outcomes, and comparison with others. People compare their rewards (e.g. salary, extra

spread of online learning not only provided new opportunities for students and educators, but also stimulated interest in the factors that affect academic motivation for this model of education. The situation of spring 2020, when Russian universities switched to remote learning, provided an opportunity to research the relative value of motivation-influencing factors for the students who normally study offline, but unexpectedly found themselves in a new study environment. In early July, 2020, the authors conducted an opinion survey of students ($N = 274$) from three Russian universities with the following goals: creating a rating of factors that influence academic motivation, obtaining the respondents' opinions regarding the amount of time spent on studying and its difficulty during lockdown, monitoring changes in motivation after the transition to remote learning. The obtained data show that most respondents rated intrinsic factors as being most important for their academic motivation, however, such extrinsic factors as teachers and their relations with students also make a considerable impact on motivation. Academic motivation is positively affected by the perceived value of new knowledge and skills, by understanding the role of education for future success, and also by material/money incentives. The most prominent negative factors are a lack of time and absence of a good study environment. Most respondents stated that transition to remote learning made studying harder and more time-consuming. The lockdown is shown to have had a negative effect on motivation for most students, which indicates that extrinsic factors, primarily, the study environment and the smoothness of communication, play a vital role in academic motivation. These results help to gain a better understanding of academic motivation from the students' perspective, and could be taken into consideration by educators and administrators when making decisions on the study format and the design of offline and online courses.

payments, feedback from their boss) with the rewards of other people from the same group. If a person then decides that their rewards are unfair, their motivation goes down.

The second group of motivation theories includes Maslow's theory [5]. It is based on a hierarchy of needs that are satisfied in the following order: basic, psychological, self-fulfillment needs. If the needs of the first level are not satisfied, a person will not be motivated to satisfy the needs of next level. A.H. Maslow thought that human motivation is based on the process of seeking fulfillment and changes through personal growth.

Another popular approach is known as the Two factors theory [6], whose authors distinguish between two groups of factors: hygiene factors include relationships, work conditions, remuneration, security, and others. The absence of hygiene factors will cause employees to work less hard. The second group of motivating factors includes achievement, recognition, the nature of the work itself, responsibility, and some others. The presence of these factors motivates employees to work harder.

In his Theory of need for achievement [7], D.C. McClelland identified three needs that motivate people's actions: a need for achieve-

ment, a need for power and a need for affiliation. The higher these needs are, the more motivated a person is.

Our research of academic motivation of university students is based on the Self-determination theory, which distinguishes between two kinds of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic [8]. Intrinsic motivation drives people to do something because they find it interesting, while extrinsic motivation is based on either getting a reward or avoiding punishment [9, p. 334].

Although the theory was initially developed for the workplace environment, it was also applied to the world of academic achievement, where students were shown to be normally affected by both types of motivation at the same time [10, p. 114–115]. K. Williams and C. Williams proved that intrinsic factors of academic motivation include involvement, curiosity, challenge, social interactions, future expectations, probability of finding a job after graduation, while extrinsic factors include compliance, recognition, avoidance, peer group, attitude towards the teacher, grades, and others [11, p. 3].

The influence of teachers was named a crucial extrinsic factor of academic motivation [12, p. 210–219]. Students demonstrate a higher level of persistence and effort when working with a teacher they like. Positive performance feedback from a teacher positively affects students' motivation [ibid., p. 214]. The extrinsic factor of parental influence has also been shown to have a considerable effect on the academic motivation of children. A number of studies indicate [13; 14] that there is a connection between academic motivation and various parenting styles.

The prevailing type of motivation affects the academic performance of students: it has been shown that students who are intrinsically motivated had better results during tests than those who were extrinsically motivated [15]. Studies prove that there is no difference between students of different degree courses [16, p. 1203], but the high importance of intrinsic factors has been identified for successful online education, where self-regulation plays a crucial part [17, p. 86], as students have to monitor their own cognition, motivation and behavior by themselves.

After the universities turned to online classes during quarantine, one of the key questions was how it would affect the students' academic motivation. Some earlier research of e-learning showed that students of online courses were more intrinsically motivated than the students of offline classes [18, p. 423; 19, p. 429]. Arguments to the contrary are presented by Sergei Rukshin, a professor of Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, St. Petersburg, and

a member of a Social Council at the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, who specifically discussed the situation during the lockdown [20]. In his opinion, one problem of remote learning is that only highly motivated people can use it efficiently (which is consistent with the above-mentioned research), another problem is a lack of social interaction, competitiveness and comparison with peers during online classes. S. Rukshin also argues that online courses should be viewed as only the supporting and not the main platform for studying.

Aims

In the current paper we aim to examine students' opinion on the intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing academic motivation, and what the transition to remote learning during lockdown in spring 2020 revealed about the relative value of these factors. During lockdown, students were still part of the same university, program and group, had the same subjects and professors, but their study environment and communication practices changed considerably. Our research, therefore, addressed two broad research questions:

1. Which factors, according to the students, influence their motivation to study?
2. How did the students' academic motivation change during the lockdown?

Hypotheses

We constructed and tested 5 hypotheses: 1) external factors were expected to have a bigger effect on academic motivation than internal factors; 2) helicopter parenting was expected to influence students' motivation; 3) teachers were expected to play a vital role in students' motivation; 4) students' motivation was expected to be lower during lockdown; 5) remote learning during lockdown was expected to affect the studying process negatively.

Method

We surveyed students ($N = 274$), most of them from three universities: Baikal State University, Irkutsk State University, Banzarov Buryat State University. Two universities are located in the city of Irkutsk, Russia. The third one is located in Ulan-Ude, the Buryat Republic, Russia.

The average age of participants was 20.11 years, 76 (26.8 %) participants were first-year students, 61 (21.5 %) — second-year students, 60 (21.1 %) — third-year students, 54 (19 %) — fourth-year students, nine (3.2 %) participants were fifth-year students, 12 (4.2 %) were enrolled in Master's programs, and 12 (4.2 %) respondents had graduated.

The participants represented a range of specialties: 75 (27 %) were future linguists, 44 (16 %) — teachers, 38 (14 %) — specialists in tourism, 24 (9 %) — in business, finance or economy, 23 (8 %) — historians and specialists in social sciences, 17 (6 %) — psychologists, 13 (5 %) respondents studied music, while 11(4 %) respondents were future lawyers. Besides, 243 (85.6 %) participants had state-funded places at university, while 41 (14.4 %) were fee-paying students.

Respondents completed the survey compiled by the authors on the basis of the constructed hypotheses (survey questions are presented in Appendix 1) via the Internet without any help from the researchers. The survey lasted from July 1st to July 14th, 2020. It consisted of ten questions: eight close-ended and one open-ended. In addition, students were asked to range different motivating factors on a scale of 1 to 8 depending on their value.

Limitations

The first limitation of current research is that we relied on the respondents' own answers, which were inevitably subjective. Besides, it was the students' choice whether to take part in the survey or not, so presumably only the interested people chose to participate. Thirdly, 85.6 % of participants had state-sponsored places at universities; to get such a place, a student should be competitive, motivated and have good or very good grades at high school, which probably affected their views on motiva-

tion. Finally, it should be remembered that most respondents were from only three universities, two of which are in the same city (Irkutsk).

Results

The respondents were asked to rate motivating factors (a full list of factors can be found in Appendix 1) from 1 to 8, where 8 is a very important factor, and 1 is not important at all. Factors with average rates from 6 to 8 are viewed as those with a high influence on motivation, factors with average rates from 3 to 6 are factors with a medium influence, finally, factors with average rates from 1 to 3 are low-value.

Mean average rates of factors are presented in Figure 1. The factor with the highest average rate was 'future knowledge and skills' (6.07 of 8), which belongs to intrinsic motivation. The other factor with high motivation influence is 'understanding that it is important for my future life/career' (5.92 of 8). Although its average rate is lower than 6.0, the median value of this factor is 7.0, meaning that at least 50 % of all respondents ranged this factor at 7 or higher. The most unpopular factor was 'my parents/boss'. Its average rate was 2.5 of 8, the median value was 2, and the modal value — 1, so most of the respondents gave this factor the lowest value. In addition, the standard deviation of this factor is 1.88, and it is the lowest among all the rated factors.

For most factors, median values were almost the same as average rates. For these

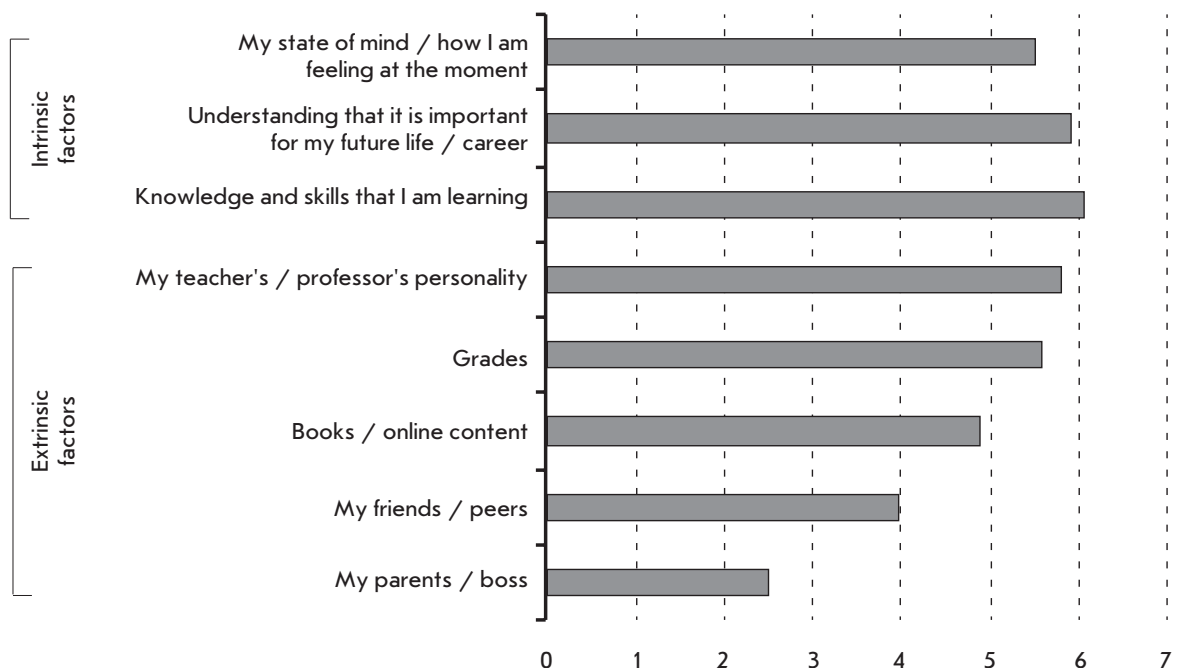


Fig. 1. Mean average values of factors influencing academic motivation

factors, the difference between median and average rates was no more than 0.5, which testifies to the reliability of data. However, there were two factors for which the difference was around 1: for 'future knowledge and skills' the difference was 0.934, and for 'understanding that it is important for my future life / career' — 1.077. Thus, for these factors the gap between the students who rated them as not important and those who thought that they were very important was the greatest. Participants who thought that the factors 'future knowledge and skills' and 'understanding that it is important for my future life / career' were not important, rated all other factors as unimportant too. The share of students who rated all factors as unimportant was 18.2 %.

We also asked respondents why they were learning foreign languages. The answers of Linguistics and EFL majors are not included here, thus, the total number of responses is 214 (Figure 2). Most often students learn foreign languages for their 'future life and career' (34 %), and 'for travelling and communication' (28 %). Both of these factors are intrinsic. It's also important to note that the factor 'I need to pass an exam at school', which is extrinsic, was chosen by only 18 % of all respondents.

Thus, the motivation for learning foreign languages follows the overall pattern of academic motivation.

Teachers were indicated as an important source of motivation by most participants: 33 % of all respondents thought that teachers always inspire them to study, 43.7 % of respondents chose 'sometimes', while 23.2 % noted that teachers are hardly ever or never a source of motivation for them. Almost the same proportions can be seen in every age group, so the age did not affect the rating of this factor. Besides, a lack of respect from the teacher was mentioned as one of the factors that decrease academic motivation, it was chosen by 46.8 % of all respondents. Answering the open-ended question about the factors that can increase their academic motivation (which could be also interpreted as a probing question on the obstacles and negative factors), students mention teachers in 20.4 % of cases, which is the highest result among all factors. Respondents stated that respectful relations with teachers can increase their motivation (e.g. of answers 'more respectful and kinder attitude', 'adequate teachers who assess not attendance but knowledge'). Besides, 15.3 % of respondents noted that returning to offline classes would improve their motivation. At the same time, 12.4% of respondents mentioned that money or other material incentives could positively affect their academic motivation (e.g. 'better scholarship', 'getting a possibility to study abroad'), while 14.4 % of all respondents indicated that chang-

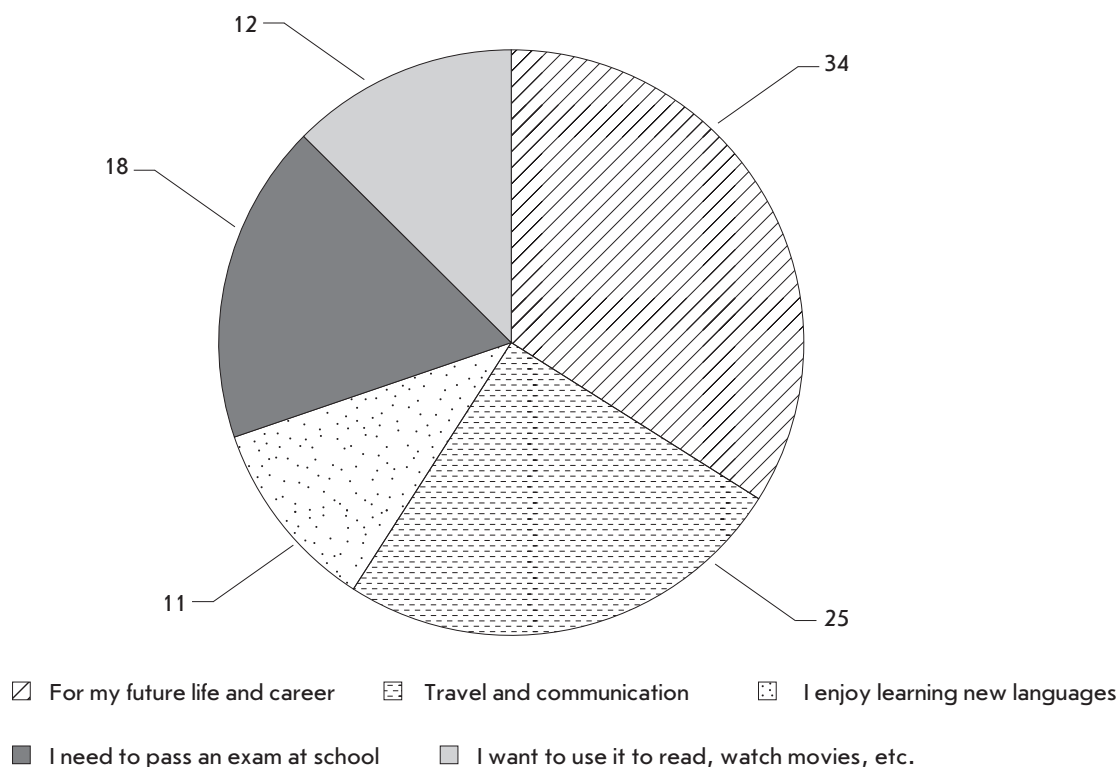


Fig. 2. Motivation for learning a foreign language, %

es in the study process would also help them be more motivated (e.g. 'increasing the level of interactivity, and a variety of educational forms'). Topics such as 'future prospects' and 'only I can motivate myself' were both mentioned by 8.7 % of respondents. The answers to this question, arranged from the most to the least often mentioned, can be presented as following: 1) relations with teachers/professors; 2) other; 3) wish the quarantine to be cancelled; 4) money and material incentives; 5) future prospects; 6) education and curriculum innovations; 7) only I can motivate myself.

We also studied factors that have a negative effect on motivation (Figure 3). According to the respondents (who could choose two answers), factors which decreased motivation most were 'a lack of time' and 'a lack of respect from the teacher'. The share of respondents who chose these factors was 55.1 % and 46.7 %, respectively. The least popular factor was 'a lack of quick results' (19 %). The share of respondents who chose 'absence of a good study environment' and 'it is too difficult / too easy to study' was 33 % in each case. It is worth noting that the shares mostly remain stable regardless of the students' academic major. Respondents had a chance to add their own answer to this question, only 28 of them did so, and ten out of these 28 mentioned a lack of respect from the teachers, or other problems with teachers, although they already had a possibility to choose this response in a different part of the survey.

We also asked students to assess their motivation before classes moved online during

lockdown and after it. The situation before the quarantine was as following: 51 % of all respondents reported that they felt sufficiently high academic motivation before the lockdown, 38.4 % indicated that their motivation was insufficiently high, while other respondents could not assess the level of their motivation before the lockdown. It is worth noting that 61 % of first-year students reported a high motivation to study, which is 13 % more than the share of fourth-year students.

However, during the lockdown the situation changed: 37.7 % of all respondents noted that their motivation decreased significantly, and 15.5 % noted that they felt some drop in their motivation. Although 53.2 % of students were negatively affected by the transition to online classes, 22.5 % reported that their academic motivation increased during the quarantine, while 24.3 % stated that they did not feel any changes in their motivation. Among the students who felt highly motivated to study before the quarantine, 64 % noted that their motivation decreased significantly. However, 26 % of students who did not feel enough motivation to study before the quarantine stated that their motivation had not changed, and only 24 % said that their motivation decreased significantly.

The study also revealed that 59 % of all respondents spent more time on studying during the lockdown than they had done before, and 48 % of them felt a drop in their motivation. Among the student who spent less time on studying during the quarantine, 59 % reported a serious reduction in their academic motivation.

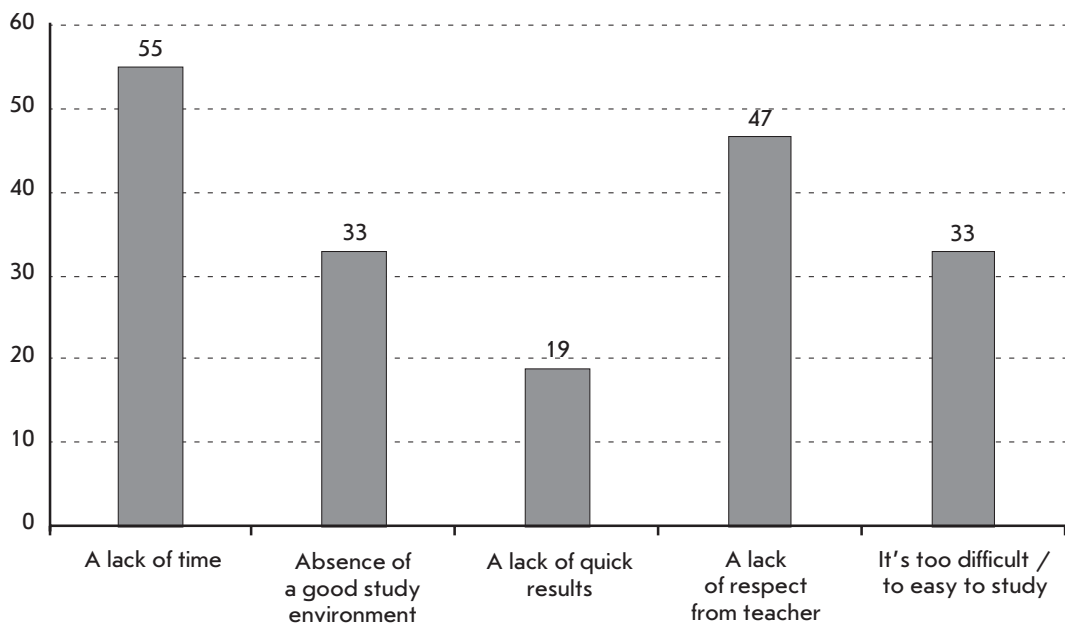


Fig. 3. Factors that decrease motivation, %

One of the expected causes for the increase in time spent on studying could be connected with its increased difficulty: 36 % of students reported that it was somewhat more difficult to study, and 19 % felt that it was much more difficult. At the same time, students noted that it was much easier or slightly easier to study in 12 % and 18 % of all cases, respectively.

According to the survey, most students feel the highest academic motivation at the beginning of the term (Table).

The share of students who felt the highest motivation at the beginning of the term decreases as students become older, and the share of students who feel the highest motivation at the end of the term (before exams) increases. In the group of 18–19 year old students, the share of people who felt the highest motivation at the beginning of the term was 57 %, at the end of the term — 9 %. In the group of 21–22 year old students, the situation was the reverse: the share of people who felt the highest motivation when they started a new course at the beginning of the term was 38 % (–19 %), and at the end of the term it was 41 % (+32 %). Students who usually feel highly motivated at the end of the term noted that their academic motivation decreased or significantly decreased during the quarantine in 33 % of all cases, and increased or significantly increased in 24 % of all cases, the others noted that their motivation did not change.

Discussion

According to the students, intrinsic factors (an understanding that studying is important for the future life and career, future knowledge and skills) affect academic motivation more than extrinsic factors like grades, a teacher's personality, friends, and control from their parents or a boss. In the current study, the factor with the highest rating was 'future life and knowledge': students want to improve themselves, and understand that their lives depend on their education. At the same time, a lack of quick results decreases the students' motivation only in 19 % of all cases. It means that either students are ready for the studying process to be long-term, or results are not important, which contradicts most

other rated factors. Although students rated intrinsic factors higher than extrinsic factors, as can be seen in Fig. 1, the difference between them is small. However, the transition to online classes resulted in a drop in motivation for approximately half of the students. As the intrinsic factors should not be affected by this transition and stay the same during online and offline studying, this change must be connected with extrinsic factors, which were the ones to undergo a considerable change during lockdown, primarily in terms of study environment and communication with teachers and peers. Although the participants gave intrinsic factors a higher rating, the fact that academic motivation of most students decreased during the quarantine can be interpreted as a proof that extrinsic factors are also highly important for academic motivation. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is rejected with some reservations.

Survey results showed very clearly that the role of parents as a factor which affects students' motivation was assessed by the respondents as unimportant. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is also rejected, while the obtained results indicate a need for further research of the role of parents and parental control, as well as the role of parents during online and offline studying.

The personality of a teacher as a factor influencing academic motivation and as a source of motivation is very important for students, only 23.2 % of all respondents noted that teachers did not affect or almost did not affect their motivation to study. 'A lack of respect from the teacher' was most often chosen as a factor that affects students' motivation negatively. The answers to the open-ended question mentioned 'teachers' as a factor that could increase motivation more often than factors like 'money and material advantages', 'future prospects' or 'quarantine cancelation'. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is confirmed.

Our data indicate that 55.2 % of students felt more motivated to study before the quarantine than during the quarantine, however, it is important to mention that 24.3 % of respondents did not feel any changes in their academic motivation and 22.5 % felt an increase in their motivation. If the quarantine had not affected

When do you feel the highest motivation to study?

Age	Answer, %			
	At the beginning of the term	At the end of the term	During the term	I feel no motivation to study
18–19 years old	57	9	25	10
20–21 years old	47	16	29	9
21–22 years old	38	41	16	5
22 and older	38	22	34	6

academic motivation, students who normally felt highly motivated at the end of the term would have felt an increase in academic motivation even during the lockdown. However, only 24 % of them reported feeling an increase in their motivation, and 33 % felt a drop in motivation. In addition, 59 % of students spent more time on studying during the quarantine, so it could also be viewed a factor which decreased their academic motivation. Hypothesis 4 is confirmed with some reservations.

The students reported that they started to spend more time on studying under lockdown, which could be linked with changes in their study routine. It could also be connected with the necessity to adapt to new conditions, new demands for self-discipline and time management, as well as with limited possibilities of communicating with teachers and each other. This data can be contrasted with a study released by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science, according to which 49 % of students reported having more free time during the quarantine¹. Our findings, however, are more compatible with the report of the Higher Schools of Economics, whose authors claim that 50 % of students noted that their efficiency decreased during the quarantine, and, at the same time, 40% noted that study load increased². In our survey, 36 % of students felt that it was somewhat more difficult to study, and 19 % felt that it was much more difficult, which allows us to state that Hypothesis 5 on the negative impact of lockdown is confirmed.

Conclusions

Motivation is an important part of studying: motivated students are more involved in the studying process, they achieve better results, and are more effective as students. Understanding factors that influence academic motivation in general as well as motivation in different educational formats and environments specifically will help students, professors and administrators optimize their approaches to education.

The conducted research suggests that although students believe that extrinsic motivating factors (grades, money, etc.) can increase motivation, their role is viewed as less important

than that of intrinsic factors (for example, understanding that knowledge and skills acquired at university will help the student's future). Of all the extrinsic factors, teachers and relations with teachers are among the most powerful ones. The study also indicates that problems in communication with the teacher could lead to a loss of academic motivation, or undermine it.

Despite the fact that online courses have already found their own place in the world of education, the emergency transition to remote learning during lockdown lead to a drop in motivation for a considerable share of students, as 53.2 % of respondents noticed a decrease in their motivation to study after the start of the quarantine. The survey showed that 59 % of students started to spend more time on studying, and 55 % reported that it became harder for them to study, although the transition to remote learning happened in the middle of the semester and the students still had the same teachers and studied the same subjects. This could be interpreted to indicate that the study environment, understood in a broad sense, is another key factor in academic motivation. Thus, further research of the study environment and the value of different channels of communication would benefit the design of both offline and online courses.

Appendix 1

1. Before quarantine, did you feel highly motivated to study?
 - a. yes, my motivation was high
 - b. no, my motivation was not high
 - c. I don't know
2. When do you feel the highest motivation to study?
 - a. at the beginning of the term/semester
 - b. during the term/semester
 - c. at the end of the term/semester
 - d. I do not feel much motivation to study
3. How teachers/professors affect your study motivation?
 - a. they always inspire me to study
 - b. they inspire me to study sometimes
 - c. they almost don't inspire me to study.
 - d. they don't inspire me to study
4. Rate these motivating factors on a scale from 1 to 8 (where 1 is the most important factor for you, 8 is the least important)
 - a. grades
 - b. my teacher's / professor's personality
 - c. my parents / boss
 - d. knowledge and skills that I am learning
 - e. my friends / peers
 - f. books/online content
 - g. understanding that it is important for my future life / career

¹ Уроки «Стресс-теста». Вузы в условиях пандемии и после нее : академ. докл. = Lessons of a «Stress-test». Universities during the pandemic and after it : an academic Report. URL: http://www.tsu.ru/upload/medialibrary/add/uroki-stress_testa-vuzy-v-usloviyakh-pandemii-i-posle-nee.pdf.

² Как пережили пандемию вузы и колледжи: риски и новые возможности = How Universities and Colleges Survived the Pandemic: Risks and new Opportunities. URL: <https://ioe.hse.ru/news/373725976.html>.

h. my state of mind / how I am feeling at the moment

5. Which of these factors are most likely to kill / negatively affect your study motivation (you can choose no more than two, not including 'other')?

- it is too easy / too difficult to study
- absence of quick results
- a lack of trust and respect for my teacher / professor
- not enough time
- absence of a good study environment
- other _____

5. What is your motivation for studying foreign languages?

- I need to pass an exam at school
- I want to use it to read, watch movies, etc.
- travel and communication
- for my future life and studying
- I enjoy learning new languages

6. How has your motivation changed under the quarantine?

a. it has decreased dramatically

b. it has somewhat decreased

c. it has not changed much

d. it has increased slightly

e. it has increased significantly

7. How has the amount of time you spend on studying changed during the quarantine?

a. it has increased (I spend more time on studying)

b. it has not changed (I spend the same amount of time on studying)

c. it has decreased (I spend less time on studying)

9. How has quarantine affected the process of studying for you?

a. It is much easier to study

b. it is slightly easier to study

c. nothing has changed

d. it is somewhat more difficult to study

e. it is much more difficult to study

10. What do you think could increase your study motivation?

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