

# Examining Student Motivation In Hungary And Vojvodina

**Lila Seres**

Óbuda University – Kandó Kálmán Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Trefort Ágoston Centre for Engineering Education, Tavaszmező st. 17. 1084 Budapest, Hungary

slillaiskola@gmail.com

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*Student motivation represents one of the greatest challenges in education today. Many students show low levels of interest in the curriculum, which negatively affects both their academic performance and their overall attitude toward learning. Therefore, it is essential for educators to explore what truly motivates young people to learn and how these motivational factors may differ depending on age as well as social and regional background. In my research, I examine the factors influencing learning motivation across different age groups and regions, comparing Hungarian students living in Hungary and Serbia. The questionnaire-based survey provides an opportunity to gain insight into the sources of students' motivation and to understand how these factors influence their approach to learning. The aim of this study is to identify the similarities and differences that shape student motivation, in order to develop a clearer understanding of how learners can be more effectively encouraged and engaged in the educational process. The results of the research may contribute to the development of practical strategies that educators can apply to enhance student motivation and thereby support more successful learning outcomes.*

*Keywords: learning motivation; student engagement; regional comparison*

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## 1. Introduction

Learning motivation is one of the most important yet most complex factors in education. Based on my own experience, I have observed that students' motivation has been gradually decreasing from generation to generation. Many children do not see the direct benefits of learning, find it difficult to get enthusiastic about school subjects, and often rely on external pressures such as grades or parental and teacher expectations, to maintain their academic performance.

I believe that gaining a deeper understanding of learning motivation is essential for the development of future education. If we could better comprehend what truly drives students, teachers could support them more effectively, and teaching could

become a more engaging and personalized experience. It is becoming increasingly common for children's attention to be captured by digital devices, social media, and activities that offer instant gratification, while the long-term goals of learning seem less tangible to them. This phenomenon can be observed not only in Serbia but also in Hungary, raising the question of how students' social, regional, or cultural environment may influence their motivation.

These considerations led me to choose my research topic, which focuses on examining student motivation through a comparison of different age groups and regions.

During the research, I conducted an online questionnaire survey completed by students of various ages in both Hungary and Serbia. The purpose of the questionnaire was to explore what motivates students to learn, whether it is the influence of parents, teachers or friends, the importance of grades and academic performance, or goals related to their own future.

The aim of this paper is to present the similarities and differences among motivational factors. With the help of the results, I hope to gain a better understanding of which elements can enhance or hinder students' motivation across different age groups and regions. The ultimate goal of the research is to draw conclusions that can be applied in practical pedagogical work, as a clearer picture of students' intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation may help us find the tools and methods to rekindle their curiosity and joy in learning.

## **2. Types and Sources of Learning Motivation**

Learning motivation is one of the central issues in educational psychology, as it fundamentally determines students' performance, development, and attitude toward school. Understanding students' motivation is crucial for the success of pedagogical work, since motivated learners are more active, persistent, and better able to cope with challenges. In contrast, unmotivated students often show passivity, disinterest, and lower achievement. Therefore, the teacher's role is not limited to transmitting knowledge; it also includes fostering and maintaining appropriate learning motivation [1].

### **2.1. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation**

In research on learning motivation, two fundamental types of motivation are distinguished: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

In the case of intrinsic motivation, the source of action lies within the activity itself. The student learns because they enjoy the process of learning and take pleasure in acquiring new knowledge. Curiosity, interest, and the desire for knowledge provide an internal drive to learn. By contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to engaging in

learning to obtain external rewards or avoid punishment, for example, earning good grades, receiving parental praise, or gaining teacher recognition. While extrinsic motivation can be effective in the short term, it rarely ensures lasting commitment to learning on its own [1].

According to Vallerand [2], three subtypes can be identified within intrinsic motivation:

1. Motivation toward knowledge – learning for the joy of acquiring new knowledge.
2. Motivation toward accomplishment and creativity – driven by self-fulfillment, self-improvement, and the pleasure of creation.
3. Motivation toward stimulation – driven by the positive emotions experienced during learning, the excitement of discovery, and the joy of success [2].

It is important for teachers to recognize that when intrinsically motivated students are rewarded too frequently with external incentives, their internal interest in learning may actually decrease. External rewards can, over time, suppress the enjoyment of learning for its own sake. As a result, students may eventually complete tasks only when a reward is expected [1].

## **2.2. The Role of the Social Environment**

The development of learning motivation is greatly influenced by the social environment, including the impact of parents, educators, and peers. A child does not learn in isolation. Their behavior and attitude toward learning are largely shaped by the feedback, expectations, and values of their surroundings.

According to Béla Kozéki's model [3], school motivation can be examined along three main dimensions: affective (emotional), cognitive (knowledge-based), and self-control or value-oriented aspects. These dimensions, together with the influence of the social environment (parents, educators, peers), shape the learner's motivational style [3].

Motivation, therefore, does not simply refer to the degree of willingness to learn but represents a complex system in which biological, emotional, social, and cognitive factors all play a role. Recognizing this complexity is essential for teachers, as only by understanding the sources of motivation can they adapt their teaching methods to the students' individual needs. The true goal is not merely to compel students to learn but to awaken within them an inner drive, so that curiosity, the joy of discovery, and the desire for self-improvement become the true engines of learning.

## **3. The Significance of the Research**

The examination of student motivation is a particularly important field of educational research, as motivation fundamentally determines the success of the

learning process. A motivated student participates more actively in class and remains more persistent in learning over the long term. The effectiveness of teaching is closely related to how well the teacher can recognize what drives their students and how these motivational factors can be developed and maintained. Therefore, understanding motivation is not only theoretically significant but also of great practical value. It helps teachers consciously apply educational methods that foster students' intrinsic interest and support the development of a positive attitude toward learning.

Studying motivation by age group is especially important, since the sources and forms of motivation change considerably as children grow older. In the lower grades, students are typically motivated by the teacher's approval, playful activities, and the experience of success. In upper grades and adolescence, the opinions of peers, the need for independence, and the importance of performance become increasingly dominant. At the same time, future goals, plans for further education, and the desire for self-fulfillment also play a decisive role. Motivation, therefore, is a dynamic phenomenon that teachers must approach differently at each stage of development. Mapping these changes can help make education more responsive to students' current needs and inner drives.

Extending the research to a regional comparison, specifically between Serbia and Hungary, offers additional valuable perspectives. Cultural, linguistic, and social contexts, as well as the characteristics of each educational system, can all influence the nature of students' motivation toward learning. Identifying regional differences can contribute to a deeper understanding of how environmental factors shape students' attitudes toward learning. This is particularly relevant in the case of Hungarian communities beyond the border, where the interaction between the educational environment and cultural identity may create unique patterns of learning motivation.

## **4. Research Hypotheses**

The sources and directions of motivation largely depend on age, school type, subject interest, and sociocultural background. The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the analysis of the questionnaire results.

### **4.1. Development of Motivation by Age**

It is assumed that among younger students (5th–6th graders), learning motivation primarily stems from external factors. These students are mainly driven by parental expectations, the desire to achieve good grades, and teachers' praise.

In contrast, the motivation of older students (7th–8th graders and secondary school students) is expected to derive increasingly from internal sources. In their case, future goals, such as continuing education, university admission, and professional

self-realization become the dominant factors. The need for independence, a sense of responsibility, and self-evaluation gradually increase in importance, while external recognition, such as teacher praise, has a decreasing influence on learning motivation.

## **4.2. Differences in Motivation Based on Subject Interest**

It is assumed that students' motivation also varies according to their subject preferences. Learners who are more interested in the humanities (e.g., literature, history, languages) are likely to be driven by intrinsic, self-developing motivation. For them, the acquisition of knowledge, cultural enrichment, and self-expression are valuable in themselves.

In contrast, students who prefer science-related subjects (e.g., mathematics, physics, computer science) tend to show more goal-oriented motivation. They are typically motivated by the practical usefulness of knowledge and by future career prospects, such as gaining university admission or achieving professional stability.

## **4.3. Relationship Between Learning Format and Motivation**

It is also hypothesized that most respondents prefer individual learning to group work. One possible reason is that teamwork in school often does not rely on genuine cooperation. In many cases, the tasks are not distributed evenly, which can lead to frustration or a sense of unfairness among students.

## **4.4. Differences in Motivation by School Type**

Another assumption is that students from different types of schools exhibit distinct motivational patterns. For grammar school students, the main motivational factors are likely to be future goals, further education, and self-realization. In contrast, students in technical or vocational schools may focus more on short-term goals, such as achieving good grades or meeting parental expectations. They are often more motivated by tangible, practical knowledge, as many of them enter the workforce directly after graduation.

Primary school students, due to their age, are more easily motivated by their parents, unlike older learners. Furthermore, teacher praise is also likely to have a more positive impact on them.

It is also assumed that vocational students place less importance on teacher feedback, and that teacher recognition has a weaker motivational effect in this group.

#### **4.5. Regional Differences in Learning Motivation**

It is hypothesized that Hungarian students' motivation is more strongly linked to future goals, particularly to university admission, since the requirements for further education in Hungary, such as entrance thresholds, tend to be more demanding.

In contrast, among students in Vojvodina, family expectations, teacher feedback, and the influence of the immediate environment are likely to play a more significant role in learning motivation. However, it is also assumed that in both regions, younger students are primarily motivated by parental expectations, while among older students, personal goals, future plans, and self-realization come to the forefront.

### **5. Sampling Method and Research Conditions**

The research covered two countries, Serbia and Hungary, and involved participants aged approximately 11 to 19, corresponding to students from the 5th to the 12th grade.

The target population therefore consisted of students receiving education in the Hungarian language, enrolled either in general or vocational schools. The participants represented diverse social and geographical backgrounds, but shared the common characteristic of studying within a Hungarian-language educational environment.

#### **5.1. Research Sites and Sample Composition**

Data collection was carried out in two countries and four educational institutions. In Serbia, the questionnaire was administered at the Kispiac Primary School and in the Kosztolányi Dezső Talent Support Grammar School of Subotica. In addition, students from various vocational schools and technical secondary schools also participated voluntarily. In Hungary, the research was conducted at the Karolina Primary School and Grammar School in Szeged, which included students enrolled in both the general and the eight-year grammar school programs.

The total sample consisted of 281 students, which was considered sufficient to draw general conclusions about the main characteristics of student motivation in both regions.

#### **5.2. Sampling Procedure and Research Process**

The data collection took place in the autumn of 2025 and lasted for a period of four weeks. Students completed the questionnaire online via Google Forms during regular class hours. In Serbia, data collection was conducted during informatics

lessons, while in Hungary, it took place during digital culture classes, under the supervision of teachers.

Completing the questionnaire took approximately five minutes on average, and participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Prior to data collection, necessary permissions were obtained in both countries. In Serbia, the school principals and psychologists reviewed and approved the questionnaire in advance, whereas in Hungary, parental consent was also required for participation.

### **5.3. Representativeness and Limitations of the Sample**

The aim of this research was not to achieve national representativeness, but rather to identify trends among students participating in Hungarian-language education. Despite this, the composition of the sample is relatively diverse, as it includes data collected from various types of schools (primary schools, grammar schools, technical schools, and vocational institutions) in two different countries. The distribution of the sample allows for the examination of motivational differences across age groups and regional dimensions.

Throughout the research process, efforts were made to ensure data reliability and adherence to ethical principles. Although the sample cannot be considered fully representative of the entire student population in the respective countries, the results are suitable for identifying general tendencies and contributing to the study of student motivation within the context of Hungarian-language education.

## **6. Method of Data Processing**

The organization and analysis of the responses were carried out using WPS Office Spreadsheets, a software suitable for performing both descriptive and basic statistical analyses.

The analysis was conducted in accordance with the formulated hypothesis. During data processing, both descriptive and simple inferential statistical methods were applied. Through descriptive statistics, the percentage distribution, means, and frequencies of the responses were calculated, allowing the identification of the most characteristic patterns. In addition, comparative statistical analyses were performed to explore differences between groups, for example, how factors such as age, subject preference, or school type influence the level and nature of learning motivation.

The research was based on a quantitative methodology, meaning that the analysis focused on numerical, measurable results. The aim of the quantitative analysis was to reveal the various dimensions of student motivation and the relationships among them using statistical methods.

The results were presented through charts and graphs, as these provide a clear and easily interpretable visual representation of the statistical data. Each figure was accompanied by explanatory text to support accurate interpretation of the findings.

The ultimate goal of the data processing was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the factors that determine students' motivation, and to explore how these factors vary across different age groups, school types, and regions. The results of the analysis provide answers to the research hypotheses and contribute to a deeper understanding of student motivation, providing insights that may ultimately inform and enhance pedagogical practice.

## **7. Overview of the Respondents**

In the following section, I present the composition of the respondents based on several key factors that form the foundation of the later analysis. These include the country where they study (Serbia or Hungary), the type of school they attend, their current grade level, and their favorite school subject. Examining these aspects provides a clearer understanding of the sample's background and helps interpret the motivational differences observed in the subsequent analysis.

### **7.1. Composition of the Respondents**

A total of 281 students participated in the research, all of whom were Hungarian-speaking students from two countries, Hungary and Serbia. The sample included students from grades 5 to 12, corresponding to an age range of approximately 11 to 19 years. All participants were enrolled in either general education or vocational institutions. The questionnaire was completed online during class time, specifically during information technology or digital culture lessons.

#### **7.1.1. Distribution of Respondents by Country**

A total of 281 students participated in the research. Among them, 178 students (63.3%) live in Hungary, while 103 students (36.7%) live in Serbia.

This indicates that the Hungarian sample is slightly larger, partly due to the fact that the participating classes in Hungary had a higher number of students.

Nevertheless, the proportion between the two countries provides an adequate basis for regional-level comparison of the results, which represents one of the key objectives of the study.

#### **7.1.2. Distribution by School Type**

The sample shows considerable diversity in terms of school type.

The majority of respondents attend grammar schools (180 students, 64.1%), representing more than half of the total sample. This predominance can be explained by the fact that in Hungary, students enrolled in eight-year grammar schools complete grades 5 to 8 within the same institution, thus broadening the age range within the secondary school category.

The proportion of primary school students is 23.8% (67 students), while students attending technical schools represent 7.5% (21 students), and those in vocational schools account for 4.6% (13 students).

This distribution ensures that the analysis allows for meaningful comparison of motivation across both different age groups and different types of educational institutions.

### **7.1.3. Distribution by Grade Level**

The distribution of participants by grade level was the following:

- Grade 5: 31 students (11%)
- Grade 6: 35 students (12.5%)
- Grade 7: 21 students (7.5%)
- Grade 8: 29 students (10.3%)
- Grade 9: 59 students (21%)
- Grade 10: 26 students (9.3%)
- Grade 11: 50 students (17.8%)
- Grade 12: 30 students (10.7%)

Based on this distribution, it can be observed that the majority of responses came from students in grades 9 and 11. Although the proportion of lower-grade students, particularly those in grades 5 to 8, is smaller, it still provides an adequate basis for comparing different age groups.

### **7.1.4. Distribution of Favourite Subjects**

This section of the questionnaire focused on students' subject preferences. Based on the responses to the question "Which subject do you like the most?", it can be observed that students' interests are highly diverse, although certain subject areas appear to be particularly popular.

The most frequently mentioned favourite subject was Physical Education (75 students, 26.7%), indicating that movement and physical activity play an important role in students' everyday lives.

This was followed by humanities subjects, such as Hungarian language and literature, history, foreign languages, philosophy, and psychology with a total of 60 students (21.4%), and STEM subjects including mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computer science with 58 students (20.6%).

Art-related subjects (drawing, music, drama, communication) were chosen as favourites by 31 students (11%), while natural science subjects (biology, geography, science, environmental studies) were selected by 30 students (10.7%).

The “Other” category included 24 responses (8.5%), featuring specialized subjects (e.g. programming, web development, database management), technology, religious education, and several individual comments such as “I don’t like any subject” or “I don’t have a favourite.”

Within the “Other” category, several students named multiple subjects, often from different categories. For example, some mentioned both mathematics and history, or physical education and a foreign language.

This suggests that many students are not exclusively interested in one particular area but find motivation and enjoyment in several fields of study.

The data were processed using pivot tables, and the categories were created based on the thematic grouping of subjects. In general, the results indicate that subjects involving practical activities, physical engagement, or personal interest are particularly popular among students, while traditional theoretical subjects tend to be somewhat less favoured.

The findings highlight that Physical Education enjoys exceptional popularity, which can be attributed to several factors. On one hand, sports activities provide relaxation and a sense of community; on the other, physical education lessons often offer immediate success experiences, which are highly motivating.

The nearly equal representation of humanities and STEM subjects among students’ favourites suggests that learners’ interests are diverse. Intellectual challenges and opportunities for self-expression are both important motivational factors.

Interestingly, the relatively lower popularity of artistic and natural science subjects may be related to the fact that these subjects often provide less direct feedback or immediate achievement, and their teaching methods may differ from more interactive approaches.

The variety of responses in the “Other” category such as programming, technology, religious studies, or vocational subjects also indicates that students’ personal interests frequently go beyond traditional school subjects and extend toward practical, modern, and digital fields.

Considering that responses mentioning vocational subjects mainly came from students attending technical and vocational schools, it can be inferred that these

learners particularly enjoy their chosen field of study and show strong interest in related subjects such as programming.

## **8. Analysis of Motivation Based on the Hypotheses**

The following section presents the analysis of the hypotheses based on the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire. Each hypothesis is examined in light of the emerging trends, correlations, and potential deviations observed in the responses.

### **8.1. The Development of Motivation by Age**

In line with the hypotheses, among 5th–6th grade students, motivation was found to be more strongly influenced by external factors, such as parental and teacher expectations. On a scale from 1 to 5, younger respondents consistently reported higher scores for these items, indicating greater external dependence. In contrast, these averages decreased proportionally among students in higher grades. Older students were more interested in further education and the practical usefulness of the subjects in the future. Furthermore, the importance of gaining university admission increased steadily with grade level, suggesting that students become progressively more goal-oriented during adolescence.

Among the “least important” motivational factors, the option “My friends’/classmates’ opinions” appeared with notably high frequency in every age group. However, in grades 9–10, the proportion of students who selected “My teachers’ expectations” as a less important factor increased. This trend continued among 11th–12th graders, where an even greater number of respondents considered their teachers’ expectations less important than their peers’ opinions. This finding may indicate a transformation in students’ value systems and motivational structures during late adolescence. As autonomy increases and detachment from adult authority figures becomes more typical, peer relationships and the sense of belonging to one’s social group gain greater importance. Consequently, the influence of teachers’ expectations diminishes, while friends’ opinions and social acceptance play an increasingly significant role in shaping both learning motivation and self-evaluation.

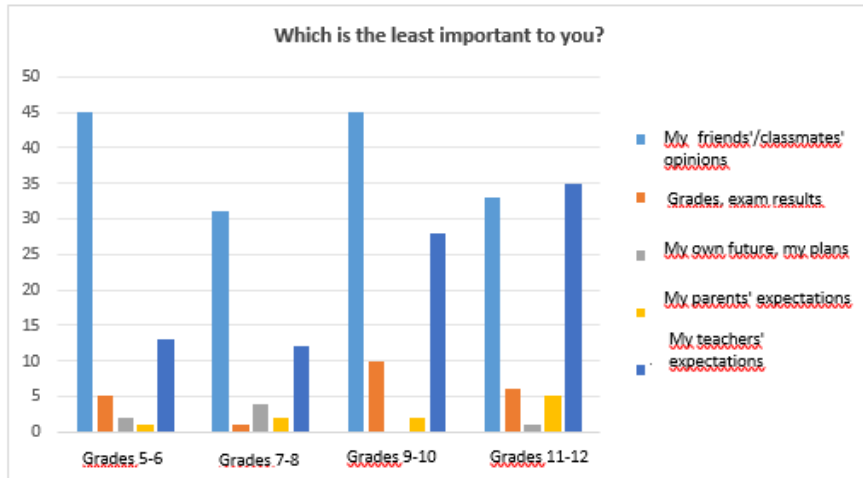


Figure 1

"Which is the least important to you?"

Yes/no type questions further revealed that a larger proportion of 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> graders had experienced studying in order to receive a teacher's praise, while this proportion declined among older students. This result also supports the hypothesis, confirming that external motivation tends to dominate at younger ages, whereas internal motivation becomes more prevalent as students grow older.

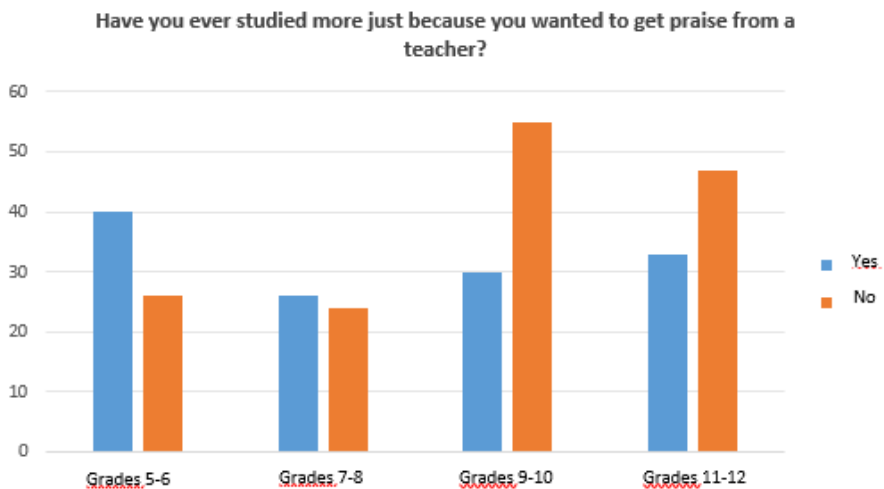


Figure 2

"Have you ever studied more just because you wanted to get praise from a teacher?"

## 8.2 Differences in the Sources of Motivation According to Subject Interest

The results partially supported and partially refined the original hypothesis. Students with a science-oriented interest gave, on average, higher ratings to the statement “It is important for me to get good grades” than those with a humanities-oriented interest. This indicates that students inclined toward sciences tend to be more performance-oriented and are more strongly motivated by measurable results.



Figure 3

“It is important for me to get good grades”

In contrast, for the statement “I prefer studying when I know I will be able to use the knowledge in the future”, students with a humanities-oriented interest showed the highest level of agreement, while those with a scientific orientation scored lower. This suggests that humanities-oriented students place greater emphasis on the practical applicability of knowledge and on connecting what they learn to their future goals. Science-oriented students, on the other hand, may be more accepting of abstract or theoretical knowledge, as subjects such as mathematics often do not have immediately apparent practical applications. Based on these findings, this part of the hypothesis was not fully confirmed.

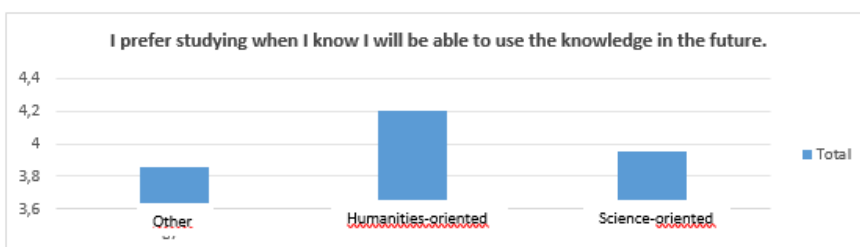


Figure 4

“I prefer studying when I know I will be able to use the knowledge in the future”

The motivational impact of teacher praise also revealed an interesting difference. Science-oriented students gave higher average ratings than humanities-oriented ones. This may be explained by the fact that in science subjects, performance

feedback is often clearer and more objective, a problem typically has one correct solution, which is either right or wrong. Therefore, teacher recognition appears in a more concrete and direct form, which may enhance students' motivation.

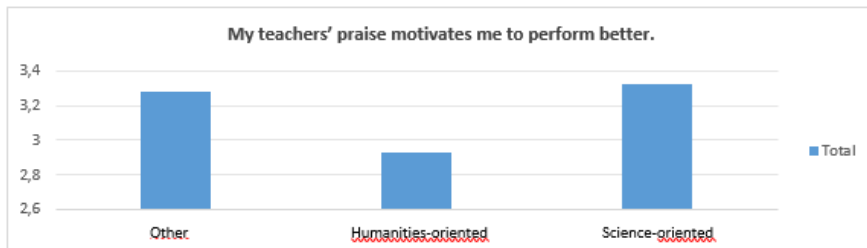


Figure 5

“My teachers’ praise motivates me to perform better”

For the statement “I want to perform well compared to my classmates,” science-oriented students achieved the highest averages, indicating a stronger sense of competitiveness. The learning of science subjects is often associated with competition and objectively measurable outcomes, which may contribute to the development of a more competitive attitude.

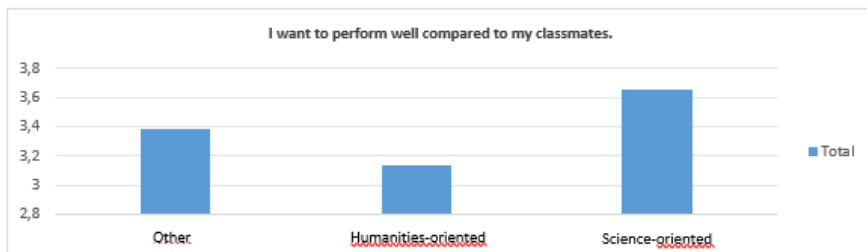


Figure 6

“I want to perform well compared to my classmates”

### 8.3 The Relationship Between Learning Style and Motivation

The responses to the question “Do you prefer studying alone rather than in a group?” confirmed the initial assumption. Out of all respondents, 205 students (73%) chose “yes”, while 76 students (27%) selected “no”. This clearly indicates that the vast majority of students prefer individual learning over group learning.

The result aligns with the assumption that group work in schools often does not represent genuine collaboration, but rather a formal type of joint work without real task distribution. As a result, some students may perceive group learning situations as unfair or frustrating. In contrast, individual learning allows students to progress

at their own pace, driven by intrinsic motivation, while maintaining greater control over the learning process.

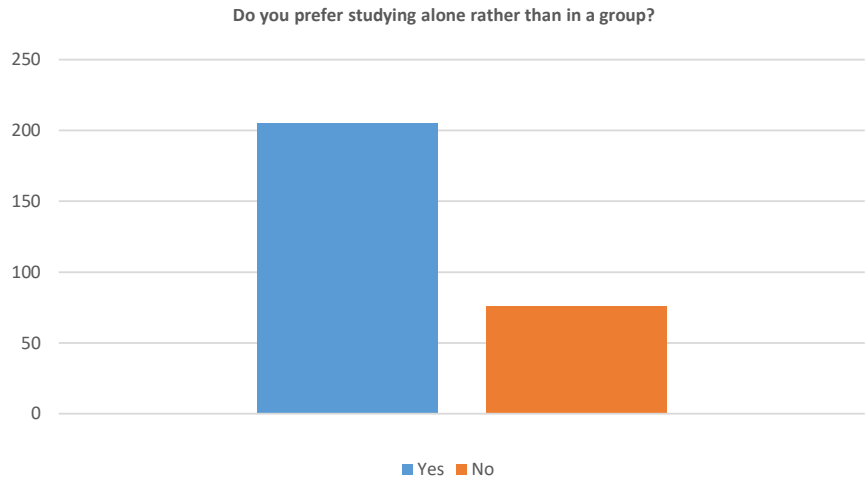


Figure 7

“Do you prefer studying alone rather than in a group?”

### 8.4. Differences in Motivation by School Type

The results showed a mixed picture. In some cases, the hypotheses were confirmed, while in others they differed from expectations.

For the statement “I prefer learning when I know I will use the knowledge in the future”, students from technical and vocational schools achieved the highest scores. In both cases, the average was above 4.00, which supports the hypothesis. For these students, motivation is primarily determined by the practical usefulness and applicability of knowledge, which aligns with the practice-oriented nature of their training.

In the case of the statement “I mostly study so that I can be admitted to university”, grammar school students scored the highest, with an average of 3.57, fully consistent with the hypothesis. Technical school students followed with an average of 3.24, which also presents a positive picture. This indicates that an increasing number of students in technical schools are also considering further education, not only the acquisition of vocational qualifications.

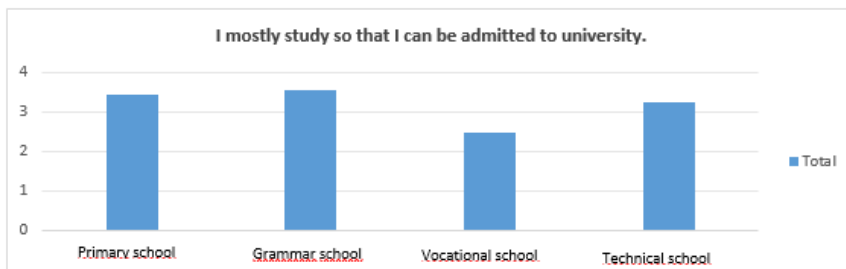


Figure 8

“I mostly study so that I can be admitted to university”

Regarding the statement “Praise from my teachers motivates me to perform better”, primary school students achieved the highest scores, confirming that in this age group, teacher feedback and recognition play a particularly important role in shaping learning motivation.

This finding is further supported by the responses to the question “Has it ever happened that you studied more just because you wanted to be praised by your teacher?” where the proportion of “yes” answers was the highest among primary school students (61%), gradually decreasing in higher school types. This also supports the conclusion that teacher feedback serves as a strong external motivator for younger students, while internal motivational factors become more dominant among secondary school students.

An interesting result emerged from the statement “I usually study just to avoid getting a bad grade”, to which, surprisingly, grammar school students gave the highest average score (3.19). This may indicate that in this school type, due to higher performance expectations and pressure to continue studies, avoidance motivation, the desire to avoid failure, is more frequently present.

## 8.5. Regional Differences in Learning Motivation

The fifth hypothesis of the research examined regional differences, with particular focus on students from Hungary and Vojvodina. The assumption was that Hungarian students’ motivation is more strongly linked to future goals, especially admission to higher education, while for students from Vojvodina, family expectations, teacher feedback, and the influence of the immediate environment play a more significant role.

However, the results did not clearly confirm this hypothesis. The motivational patterns in both regions followed a very similar curve, meaning that the factors influencing learning, such as parental expectations, teacher feedback, and the importance of future goals, appeared in the same order and proportion among both Hungarian and Vojvodinian students. This suggests that the structure of learning

motivation and the types of motivating factors are largely similar in cultural and pedagogical terms across the two regions.

At the same time, the average scores were higher in nearly all questions among Hungarian students, indicating that, overall, they are more motivated than their peers in Vojvodina. This difference was particularly noticeable in the items where students rated their learning attitudes on a scale from 1 to 5. Hungarian students consistently gave higher ratings in every category.

This trend suggests that among the surveyed students, the intensity of learning motivation, not its type, but the degree of commitment, is higher in Hungary, while it appears weaker in Vojvodina. Several factors may underlie this difference. Firstly, entry into higher education in Hungary is tied to stricter requirements, which naturally increases students' willingness to study. Secondly, in the Hungarian educational environment, the greater societal value placed on knowledge and academic achievement may be attributed to factors such as better school infrastructure, broader learning opportunities, and higher-quality educational programs.

In contrast, the lower level of motivation among Vojvodinian students may also point to systemic challenges. These may include a lack of educational resources, limited opportunities for further study, and a declining social prestige associated with education. In the long term, such factors can also affect young people's self-esteem and future outlook.

Although the research did not include an in-depth comparison of the two educational systems, the results clearly indicate that strengthening the learning motivation of students in Vojvodina should be a priority. Achieving this would require pedagogical approaches and educational policy measures that support students' intrinsic motivation and enhance the perceived value of learning within the local society.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that student motivation is a complex phenomenon shaped by the combined influence of numerous factors. Nevertheless, several general patterns clearly emerged. The responses show that for students, the teacher's personality, supportive and encouraging feedback, and the perception that the learning material is both interesting and useful for their future are of outstanding importance. Intrinsic motivation in the learning process is primarily strengthened when students understand the purpose of what they are learning and feel that the acquired knowledge will be applicable later in life.

The findings also highlight the crucial role of teachers in maintaining motivation. Teacher expectations, recognition, and encouragement have a particularly strong impact on younger learners, as they are more dependent on external reinforcement.

In contrast, for older students, personal goals and future plans become the main motivational drivers. Therefore, it is essential that education emphasizes the practical applicability of knowledge and its connection to further studies and career paths.

A comparison between students from Hungary and Vojvodina revealed that although motivational patterns are similar, Hungarian students demonstrated generally higher levels of motivation. This suggests that within the educational environment of Vojvodina, greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening students' intrinsic motivation and helping them recognize the meaning and value of learning.

From a pedagogical perspective, it is advisable to employ teaching methods that not only convey knowledge but also spark curiosity, connect learning material to students' personal futures, and demonstrate its real-life usefulness. Teacher recognition, positive feedback, and an inspiring, authentic personality can all contribute to the development of deeper and more lasting learning motivation among students.

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