Abstract

Anchored on self-determination theory (SDT), this descriptive-correlational study aimed to assess the need satisfaction and academic intrinsic motivation of university students (n=150). Analyses revealed that university students were intrinsically motivated and are moderately satisfied in their autonomy, competence and relatedness needs. Measure of relationship showed that autonomy and relatedness satisfaction significantly related to the intrinsic motivation of university students. This revealed that need satisfaction and motivation dictated academic lives of university students. Thus, teachers should initiate socio-academic activities that challenge and develop autonomy and relatedness among university students. Satisfaction to these activities increases students’ intrinsic motivation to pursue their education.

Keywords: need satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, self-determination theory (SDT), university students, descriptive-correlation

1.0 Introduction

Numerous indicators have been associated with how individual is being motivated. Ryan & Deci (2000) said that a person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act is thus characterized as unmotivated; whereas someone who is energized or activated toward an end is considered as motivated. Palmer (2007), in like manner, viewed that when students are motivated they pay attention, they begin working or task immediately, they ask questions, volunteer answers, and they appear to be happy and eager. Thus, individuals exert energy and effort to do and accomplish their task if they are motivated – a sign on how important motivation is in owing goals and desires.

Literatures (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Black & Deci, 2000) said that intrinsically motivated students are bound to do much better in classroom activities because they are willing and eager to learn new material. Their learning experience is more meaningful, and they go deeper into the subject to fully understand it. Or an intrinsically
motivated student will work on a math equation, for example, because it is enjoyable. Or will work on a solution to a problem because the challenge of finding a solution provides a sense of pleasure. On the other hand, extrinsically motivated students may have to be bribed to perform the same tasks or does the person work on the task because there is some reward involved, such as a prize, a payment, or in the case of students, a grade.

The role and the importance of motivation to the learning settings and learning environment has been searched and probed by many psychologists and researchers. Much of this area has been carried out from the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and the conditions that fosters each (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Covington & Mueller, 2001), or a combination of both (Rigby et al., 1992; Murray, 2011). The former refers the two kinds of motivation as separated or incompatible factors while the latter defines the opposite.

Other fields of motivational researches focused on factors like what ways in which motivation has been defined (Lai, 2011), how motivation develops (Turner & Patrick, 2008), how teacher motivates students (Thoonen, Sleegers, Peetsma, & Oort, 2011), how school helps students motivation (Maehr & Midgley, 1991), what kinds of motivation students have and the effectiveness of intrinsic and extrinsic factors on human motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The aforementioned studies focused more on the nature and effectiveness of motivation in helping students. Oftentimes, these studies limit itself on the understanding the movement, development, and influence of intrinsic motivation towards the students. However, there were only few studies which try to assess the impact of need satisfaction to motivation among university students. This study, therefore, is designed to determine the level of intrinsic motivation among secondary education students in Southern Leyte State University Tomas Oppus and to assess how it is related to the internal motivation of the students.

2.0 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the Self-Determination Theory of Motivation by Deci and Ryan (2000) – a theory which addresses
issues of intrinsic motivation especially for university students.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of motivation distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation is observed when one engages in an activity out of genuine interest and is truly self-determined. Intrinsic motivation is the desired type of motivation for study as it is associated with deep learning, better performance and positive well-being in comparison to extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is considered the desired type of motivation in students and it has been shown to be associated with deep learning, better performance and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Competence as defined by Niemiec, (2009) is seeking to control the outcome and experience mastery. Students develop competence if they mastered their area or field of specialization. The need for

Figure 1. Theoretical and Conceptual framework of the study.
competence in learning is the need to feel capable of learning the study or course material (Kusurkar, et al., 2011).

The need for relatedness or the universal want to interact is defined as the need to be connected to and experience caring for others (Niemiec, 2009). In addition, the need for relatedness is the need to feel a connectedness or a sense of belongingness with fellow students and the teachers. A person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act is thus characterized as unmotivated, whereas someone who is energized or activated toward an end is considered motivated. Students who work with others are accordingly concerned with motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Lastly, autonomy or the universal urge to be causal agents of one’s own life and act in harmony with one’s integrated self (Niemiec, 2009). The need for autonomy is the need to feel that one is carrying out a task of his own choice. It is not forced or coerced in any way (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) when applied to the realm of education is concerned primarily with promoting in students own interest in learning, a valuing of education and confidence in their own capacities and attributes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It can be used to explain the behaviour and performance of university students. It is a humanistic theory of motivation and well-being. The central premise of the theory is that individuals have innate tendencies towards personal growth and vitality that are either satisfied or thwarted by their immediate environment (followed by needs). When these needs are fully satisfied, individuals exhibit optimal motivation and wellbeing.

### 3.0 Methodology

This descriptive correlational study participated by 150 randomly identified education students from all year levels were conducted at Southern Leyte State University-Tomas Oppus in the year 2013-2014. An adopted questionnaire from Johnston & Finney (2010) was used to collect the data for students’ needs and motivation. Data collected for this study were descriptively analyzed using mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient, and regression analysis.

### 4.0 Results and Discussion
Need Satisfaction Level among Education Students in a State University

Results of the analysis revealed that students in a university are moderately satisfied in all their basic needs - autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This implies that university students exercise their freedom at some extent and, master their task personally or along with other university students. According to Wilkesmann (2012), students in a university perceive freedom in scheduling their studies according to their own requirements and feel independent in determining study procedures. They have the option of choosing what they do. In other words, they are not controlled (Black & Deci, 2000). This reflects that an independent student can also be competent in a sense that competence can be developed if one seeks to control the outcome of the tasks and experience mastery (Niemiec, 2009). Such feeling of independence and competence created a space for establishing deep relationship with other students in the university.

Table 1. Needs satisfaction level of education students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Needs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatedness</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Academic Intrinsic Motivation among Education Students in a State University

The study revealed that university students are motivated and interested in performing school academic related tasks. A specific result showed that students are very interested to learn things they need to learn. This means that students set high goals for themselves for they believe that their choice of degree prepares them for their future. In fact, this study shows that students enjoy in learning various subjects. This manifests how motivated and inspired education students are in their academic pursuit.

The findings of this study is consistent with that of Lai (2011) who stressed that intrinsic motivation is animated by personal enjoyment, interest, and/or pleasure.
Further study stipulated that intrinsic motivation is the desire to do or achieve something because one truly wants to and takes pleasure or sees value in doing so (Pintrich, 2003). Thus, when students are intrinsically motivated, they enjoy and are interested to do various academic tasks. Ultimately, when intrinsically motivated, a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external prods, pressures, or rewards.

Moreover, this study supports the claim of Hidi (2000) and Renninger (2000) who emphasized that sources of intrinsic motivation include perceptions of autonomy, interests in given tasks, and the need for competence. This is also mentioned by Brophy (1999) who concurred and noted that a supportive social context, challenging activities and student’s interest and value in learning are crucial to the development of intrinsic motivation.

In accordance to the study of Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is inherent in the feeling of satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence. As Mueller, et al. (2011) concurred that a supportive social context, challenging activities and student interest and value in learning are crucial to the development of academic intrinsic motivation.

**Relationship between the Need Satisfaction Level and Intrinsic Motivation Level of Education Students**

The finding showed that there is a significant relationship between the need satisfaction level and intrinsic motivation level among university students. This implies that their satisfaction of having the feeling of making own decisions (need for autonomy), of experiencing mastery (need for competence), and of feeling connected and belonged (need for relatedness) will tell their level of interests and willingness in doing such academic tasks. Renninger, (2000) have found that sources of intrinsic motivation include perceptions of autonomy, interests in given tasks, and the need for competence.

Furthermore, these findings were also supported by the study of Niemiec, (2009) and Kusurkar, (2011) that intrinsic motivation is dependent on the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs; the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness.
Additionally, Martens and Kirchner (2004) investigated the relationship between autonomy, competence, relatedness, and intrinsic motivation, they reported that autonomy, competence, and relatedness predict intrinsic motivation. More importantly, their results indicated that the three innate psychological needs were so strongly correlated that they appeared to be a single factor. That is, if the social context allows for one of the innate psychological needs to be met, then the other innate psychological needs are supported as well.

Further analysis revealed that the general regression model shows that the basic needs of university education students explain 79 percent of the variability of their academic intrinsic motivation. Specifically, competence, relatedness and autonomy are positive correlates to

Table 2. Level of academic intrinsic motivation among education students.
intrinsic motivation which means that the level of satisfaction of these three basic needs contributes certainly to students’ intrinsic motivation.

The result above supported the study of Martens and Kirchner (2004) who reported that autonomy, competence, and relatedness predicts intrinsic motivation. More importantly, their results indicated that the three innate psychological needs were so strongly correlated that they appeared to be a single factor. That is, if the social-context allows for one of the innate psychological needs to be met, then the other innate psychological needs are supported as well.

5.0 Conclusion

This study concludes that the need satisfaction level among university students is significantly associated and related to their academic intrinsic motivation level. Thus, the need satisfaction and motivation dictated academic lives of university students. It is, therefore, recommended that teachers should initiate socioacademic activities that challenge and develop the three basic needs among university education students. Satisfaction to these activities increases students’ intrinsic motivation to pursue their academic journey.

6.0 References Cited


