

## *La motivación hacia el estudio de la Historia* *The motivation towards the study of History*

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**Resumen:** En el artículo se analiza cómo motivar a los estudiantes de las carreras pedagógicas hacia el estudio de Historia de Cuba. Para ello se explica la importancia de esta asignatura, las habilidades que desarrolla en los estudiantes, y las funciones que tiene como ciencia. Durante la investigación para realizar el diagnóstico inicial y el final se aplicaron métodos del nivel teórico (histórico- lógico, analítico-sintético, enfoque de sistema, inductivo – deductivo), empíricos (observación, entrevista, análisis documental, triangulación metodológica), y matemáticos (estadística descriptiva).

**Palabras claves:** Motivación extrínseca; Motivación intrínseca; Motivación hacia el estudio; Estudio de la historia

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**Abstract:** The article discusses how to motivate students of pedagogical careers towards the study of Cuban History. For this, the importance of this subject is explained, the skills it develops in students, and the functions it has as science. During the investigation to make the initial and final diagnosis, methods of the theoretical level (historical-logical, analytical-synthetic, system approach, inductive - deductive), empirical (observation, interview, documentary analysis, methodological triangulation), and mathematics were applied (Descriptive statistics).

**Keywords:** Extrinsic motivation; Intrinsic motivation; Motivation towards study; History study

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### **Introduction**

Since the beginning of psychological research, human motivation has aroused the interest of scholars in this branch of knowledge. Know what man thinks; what are your needs; the reason for their performance in different contexts; what do you prefer, how, and where do you plan to have turned out to be the center of your attention.

One of the fundamental tasks of personality psychology is the examination of the motivational sphere, which is integrated into the affective activity of the personality.

When studying human motivation, it is important to achieve the separation of its basic elements, on which the whole development of the motivational process is shaped. These are

considered to be starting points in the study of the motivational sphere. (González, Castellanos, Córdova, Rebollar, Martínez and Fernández, 1995, p. 96).

Studying man means analyzing his personality because motivation is one of its fundamental aspects, for that reason it is "the core of the person, it is constituted by their needs and motives" (González, 1995, p. 9).

A revealing element in the emotional motivational sphere of personality is the analysis of motivation as one of the means to make the new type of school become a source of joy and knowledge.

Different approaches such as the Marxist, behaviorist and humanist have analyzed the motivation from their diverse positions, and have made significant contributions that allow a much more complete and comprehensive conception of the motivated behavior, and thus present the personality as a carrier of those needs, reason of interests that move it towards a goal.

The first attempts of those who have knowledge today aimed at explaining human motivation are found in ancient Greece, where the philosopher Socrates tried to explain the search for happiness in man; Plato gave greater importance to the soul, leaving aside the world of the senses, and considered that the experience was not enough to explain everything that is known about the world, but that it lay in the knowledge acquired by the soul in its previous life; while for Aristotle there were certain human behaviors related to the feelings of affection that guided the behavior.

The biologist approach focused the analysis on the organic bases that explain motivated behaviors, defended the idea that the behavior is fundamentally instinctive, that is, conceives the instinct as a reflection. In 1923 the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud related different stages of motivational orientation with the stages of human development and defended the underlying motivation in behavior, supported by two fundamental theoretical lines: the adaptation of man to the environment, and the reaction of man to the environment, but both absolutize the role of the organic as the decisive aspect and basis of human behavior.

The behaviorists, for the 30s, were based on the stimulus-response relationship, reduced the motivational only to the external, thus simplifying the behaviors assumed by man so that the consequences of this impact on the motivation towards the study of the students when addressing the product and not the learning process. From the 70s they focus attention on the perceptual and intellectual processes, leave behind the affective processes and therefore the unity of this with the cognitive processes affecting the motivation towards the study, which is its greatest limitation, because it is learned leaving on the one hand, the possibility of learning with emotional affective involvement.

Humanists highlight the importance in the personality of internal components, superior character of human motivation, the role of self and consciousness in the regulation of behavioral behavior. According to Maslow, human needs are organized in a hierarchical way since the individual as an integrated whole has a series of stable motives that orient him towards the future, where autonomy prevails as a motive. This presupposes that the student is able to find what he has in himself, and the teacher must mold and teach. The humanist tendency emphasizes the active and creative role of personality.

Thus, while some attribute greater importance to the cognitive factor, others declare that it is the affective that drives it, but there are some cases that relate both factors.

On the other hand, Marxist psychologists such as Rubinstein (1973), Bozhovich (1976), González, D. (1982), González and Mitjans (1982) reflect the need to study motivation considering the unity between the affective and the cognitive, which is the distinguishing feature of its regulatory function.

In Cuba, González (1983), González, Castellanos, Córdova, Rebollar, Martínez and Fernández (1995), Bermúdez and Rodríguez (1996) and González (1995) stand out on this topic. The latter clearly expresses the marked interrelationship between motivation and personality.

## **Development**

According to González (1995), motivation is defined as:

The concatenated set of processes (psychic that involve superior nervous activity and reflects objective reality through the internal conditions of the personality) that contain the active and relatively autonomous role of personality and its constant transformation and determination reciprocal with external activity , its objects and stimuli, are aimed at satisfying the needs of man, and consequently, to regulate the direction (goal-object) and the intensity or activation of the behavior manifesting itself as a motivated activity (p. 36).

Motivation involves emotional processes, emotions and feelings, voluntary and impulsive tendencies, and cognitive processes of sensory perception, thinking and memory; Affective and tendencies occupy a primary role in it.

In pedagogical psychology, various aspects such as motivation are considered; motivation towards study and learning; the development of will, emotions and character. Motivating implies the art of attracting, stimulating the desire to know, creating interest in research, and arousing curiosity for new knowledge.

The concept of motivation implies that of efficiency. "Motivational efficiency is understood as the degree to which motivation mobilizes to the maximum and directs the activity towards the achievement of the desired goal-object, avoiding what is not wanted" (González, 1995, p.4).

The motivational state of the students is an important element that must be taken into consideration, one should not speak of motivation or demotivation without deepening the study of its characteristics. Teachers often refer to the lack of motivation towards studying when the desired results are not obtained and there are failures in the teaching-learning process, they allege that due to the lack of interest and concern students do not exercise the content received

The students, on the other hand, state that if the classes were more attractive, emotional and interesting, and aroused in them curiosity and interest in knowing more, the results would be better and superior in quality.

Therefore, the motivation involves social needs such as the duty to study, responsibility, the importance of preparing for future life, and cognitive interests such as the need for intellectual improvement, assessment and self-assessment of social life.

Motivation can be considered as a significant need if it is directed towards study to fulfill a social duty and prepare intellectually to function in society. The motivation towards the study is autonomous from the moment it responds to the cognitive interests, feelings and convictions of the personality.

The motivations that move the personality are the intrinsic and extrinsic, they incite and direct the learning in the students. Intrinsic motivation is based on personal interest in the content of the activity that is carried out, that is, the pleasure obtained from learning new content, which gives satisfaction for the work done without external stimuli mediating. Maintaining that kind of motivation is not always possible, although it would be ideal.

The primary task of the teacher is to know how to generate new motivations in their students, help them change priorities so that they can establish appropriate hierarchies in their motivational sphere that will lead them to quality learning.

The process of motivation towards the study consists of three phases enunciated by González (1995). These are:

- First phase: of the passive need and beginning of the guiding activity. Here there may be the potential need to study, and you are able to react with certain psychic activities. Trends are manifested in feelings and emotions for the activity of the study, and impulses or desires to study, and an affective assessment that will be expressed in perceptions and thoughts.
- Second phase: from transit from passive to active and oriented needs. Here is the object-meta-content reflex, the assessment of its possibilities (skills and abilities), expressed in the hierarchy of needs and disposition. This phase is the one that directs and drives the student's activity towards the satisfaction of his needs.

Third phase: the forms of expression of the dispositions are the feelings, the knowledge and the convictions that drive the executing activity, and transform it into a content satisfied need of the guiding activity. Here the orientation, regulation, and support of the motivated activity materialize. This phase is independent, but it is closely related to the previous two phases.

The study of history is for many little or nothing interesting, even unnecessary, as it is recommended not to look to the past but to the future. However, it is important to remember the words of Lucien Febvre, French historian, quoted by Saturnino (1995):

I gladly define history as a necessity of humanity

- The need that each human group experiences, in each moment of its evolution, to seek and give value in the past to the facts, events, trends that prepare the present time, that allow to understand it and that help to live it. (p.32).

Indeed, every social situation is the result of a process, no knowledge of such situation can occur outside the study of its training phases. The entities and phenomena that can be discerned in the movement of society constitute a reality characterized in terms of process and system.

The question why is it important to motivate towards the study of history and for what? highlights the usefulness of historical knowledge. The answer is that it allows the student:

- Know the past in order to understand the present of the world and of the society in which you live, and project yourself into the future.
- Develop a critical sense that allows you to analyze the root of the problems and reach conclusions.
- Study other cultures and social realities, which allows you to obtain a general culture.
- Develop cognitive potentialities.

- To strengthen the sense of belonging of national and cultural identity because when studying the past, it is possible to know the different historical roots, know who they are.
- History provides the tools to work this ethical dimension of social life.
- Develop skills in the methodology of scientific research.
- Analyze the evolution of social phenomena and contextualize them.

History is the fundamental resource that the educator has to teach students to think and defend their ideas with arguments, appropriate values, and know their roots. “History demands flexible mentality, breadth of thought, recognition of diversity and, consequently, assuming work methods and techniques as multiple and diverse alternatives for teaching work” (Díaz, 2000, p. 2).

Research carried out in the teaching-learning process shows the predominance of history classes with a reproductive nature, where the teacher is the center, and the student occupies a secondary place. This affects students in the development of skills such as arguing, reflecting critically and self-critically on the knowledge they acquire, the approach of new questions, analyzing in depth the objective reality. As a result, students move from one grade to another with insufficient preparation to meet the demands that the new grade poses.

History teaching should not be reduced only to the textbook, the student should have the possibility to consult and study various bibliographic sources to appropriate the knowledge that is necessary and select which one has the most accurate information.

Developing students' motivation towards the study of history represents a real challenge, which leads us to consider the aspects stated by Hernández (2014, p. 55).

- Develop curiosity, the desire to know and interest in cognitive activity; for this it is necessary that the teaching and extraclass activities have a rich content with clear and interesting tasks that make students reflect and allow them to actively participate in the search for solutions.

- Harmonize the probative with the emotional in the classes and other activities is a pedagogical requirement of the teaching of said subject, because if the presence of demonstrative facts is important, the emotional force with which they are explained is also important, the degree of conviction that It is evident in who addresses the issue. Reason and feeling must march together in the direction of student learning and education.
- The oral presentation of the history teacher through well-used narratives, descriptions and explanations is very important for the development of motivation, animation and enthusiasm for historical science. The way of saying remains an essential pedagogical factor, together with the daily dialogue with and among the students, and the stimulation of these to investigate, investigate. Questions and tasks fulfill their pedagogical mission if they require intellectual effort.
- Motivate students towards the study of history, make it more attractive, influences it to fulfill various functions: cultural, patriotic, propaganda, ideological, historical, scientific memory. (Prats, Santacana, Lima, Acevedo, Carretero and Miralles, 2011, p.22).
- An important element in historical education is the meaning that each student gives to what they learn. The value that he attributes to the historical facts and processes that he analyzes allows arousing greater interest and enthusiasm for knowing their customs, their historical roots, and defending their ideals, their idiosyncrasy, what makes them equal and different, what makes them a only nation.

To illustrate how the transit through the three phases enunciated by González (2002) in the motivation process is evidenced in the study of Cuban History, the use of the anecdote was selected considering that this generic form of literature does not require a high level of abstraction for interpretation; his language is generally simple and clear; and students are pleased to hear or read this type of text.

For its demonstration, a diagnosis was made based on an exploratory analysis of the study population made up of 64 students in the 2nd year of the day course of the Faculty of



Pedagogical Sciences of the University of Sancti Spiritus in the 2016-2017 school year. This allowed determine that this group has as common characteristics that they are students of a pedagogical career linked by having attended the first year together, and come from pre-university centers where they received the contents of the subject History of Cuba.

Within this population, it was decided to use the 2nd year Foreign Languages group as a sample with 26 students enrolled, representing 40% of the population.

The observation of 10 classes allowed us to verify that in none of them was a methodology used to work the anecdotes, only one mentioned a curious fact that was not previously planned.

The interview with 10 professors allowed us to confirm that they do not know a specific bibliography where the teaching of work with the anecdote is approached. In addition, they suggest that they do not have the time to teach the subjects of the subject so they almost never use the anecdote to motivate their study and that when they do it is spontaneous, unplanned.

The interview with 26 students, and the techniques of completing sentences and composition, confirmed that the majority, (24), are not attracted to the study of the History of Cuba because, they claim, content is repeated from one grade to another, although they express the need to obtain good results and social recognition. This shows that the learning is not long lasting (here the first phase is evident, and extrinsic motives).

Considering these results, the selection of historical anecdotes was carried out to, according to his argument, place them in the different classes of the Cuban History program of the Foreign Languages career. Below is an example of the above:

Theme II: Colonial Cuba until 1867

Theme: Consequences of the conquest and colonization for the first settlers of Cuba. Demonstrations of aboriginal rebellion.

Casiguaya, Guamá's wife, was hanged in Santiago de Cuba with four more Indian women. Upon leaving the prison to the place of execution, a chorus of Indian shouted manicate. The

scaffold, raised in front of the town hall and next to the Cathedral was chaired by the highest colonial authorities. The execution was scheduled for eight in the morning. When the time came the four Indians were hanged and when it was time for Casiguaya she asked Father Fray Pedro Trillo, who officiated at the sacrifice, that if he allowed her to hug and kiss her daughter, she would renounce her gods and accept the god of Christians. This request was accepted and Rousset then says that: "Upon receiving her daughter in her arms, she put her lips on the creature's forehead and kneeling before her to bless her, placed both hands around her throat until she strangled her; Stand up with your daughter and hold a cry of rage, of war, of victory, throwing the inert body of her daughter and Father Trillo the crucifix to the face, which wounded him as if he were a bolt and rushed to the gallows screaming, Damn! Neither the daughter, nor the wife of Guamá will be slaves of Christians and placing herself the rope like a dogal to her throat, she fell down swinging in space, hanged by herself...". (Rousset, 1918, p. 2)

The proposed methodology to work the anecdotes is the following:

1. Contextualization of the anecdote

Determine the historical stage.

Historical fact

Biographical Moment

Space in which it develops

Never move away from the exposure thread.

2. Study of those who star in the anecdote. Polarize attitudes.

3. Do not extend too much or entertain yourself in the knowledge that the audience already has.

4. Determine the relationship between the anecdotal message and motivation.

5. Provide arguments or reasons that justify the statements.

6. Extrapolate the anecdote message to the current conditions considering the characteristics of the student and the environment in which it develops.

7. Make clear the differences between facts, opinions, and feelings

Reflections of the students.

The teachers during the work with the anecdotes in their classes must consider the actions to be performed by the students, within them:

- Analyze, reflect, debate.
- Be interested, motivate.
- Reach conclusions.
- Accept or reject what is transmitted. Take decisions.

As the experiment advanced with the application of the methodology for working with historical anecdotes, it could be seen that the passive need was reversed in a satisfaction of the needs, that is, the students who saw the subject only as the repetition of the content received in previous grades showed a greater interest in knowing new events, and positive attitudes such as emotion and enjoyment were observed, which translates into feeling pleasure in obtaining new knowledge, and developing skills and abilities (here the second phase is evidenced, and intrinsic motives).

The pedagogical test and the final diagnosis of the motivation towards the study of the History of Cuba evidenced in the student's positive emotions and interest in their study not as another subject of the program, but in taking advantage of the potential that it offers as a source of pleasure, of culture and knowledge to make correct critical judgments about society as a whole. The students reflected interest and desire to know (third phase).

## **Conclusions**

It is a challenge for Cuban pedagogy to develop in students a greater interest in the study of the history of Cuba. The ideas presented in this article support the importance of motivation

in this aspect because the lack of motivation greatly reduces academic performance and interest in knowing the new or rediscovering the known from a new perspective.

Show interest in what was learned, strive and set goals for the future are some of the results that are obtained when applying methodologies that motivate students.

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