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## **EFL students' motivation and its relatedness with their academic performance**

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that motivate EFL teachers to acquire knowledge, as well as the connection between these motives and academic performance. Prospective first-year EFL teachers studying after school and college took part in this experiment. Each participant filled out a questionnaire in *Google Forms* where they ranked motives for learning activities in order of importance. Then the results were analyzed with an independent t-test analysis. At the end of the semester, students passed an exam in the course "Introduction to Linguistics" and based on the exam results, it was determined whether there was a relatedness between motives and students' academic performance. The results showed that student motivation is related to students' academic performance. It was found that the highest motive among post-secondary students is the motive "everyone is studying, and so am I" (8.32), second place is "I don't want to let the group down" (8.15), third place is "this is what my parents wanted" (7.97). In technical and vocational education groups the leading place is occupied by the motive "avoiding complaints" (8.17), the next motive is "everyone is learning and so am I" (7.77), "I don't want to let the group down" (7.62).

*Keywords:* EFL teacher's motivation, academic performance, academic achievements, student success, motive, motivational theories, motivational processes, higher education.

### *Introduction*

Motivation is a vital factor for achieving academic success. Currently, a significant amount of research is being conducted to study student motivation from the point of view of sociology, psychology, linguistics, etc. In the present study, motivation is considered from the perspective of psychology, since the study is aimed at identifying the motives of educational activities, which will help teachers find out students' attitudes to learning, motives, and also identify their connection with academic performance. According to Harmer [1] motivation is "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something". Brown [2; 152] defines motivation as a term that is used to define the success or the failure of any complex task. Ryan and Deci [3] argue that motivation is the urge to do something. According to other studies [4, 5], the presence of motivation indicates an interest in acquiring knowledge. Analysis of this concept allows us to conclude that motivation is an integral factor for achieving academic success.

Scientists distinguish two main types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is characterized by the pursuit of satisfaction derived from engaging in activities, whereas extrinsic motivation is focused on performing actions to achieve specific goals. For instance, students driven by intrinsic motivation find enjoyment in studying for its own sake, rather than for the purpose of attaining good grades. Conversely, students with extrinsic motivation study primarily to achieve high grades. Research has explored the relationship between intrinsic motivation and learning effectiveness, consistently finding that intrinsic motivation positively influences students' learning outcomes. However, there is no consensus regarding the impact of extrinsic motivation on learning effectiveness; some studies indicate that extrinsic motives can lead to high performance, while others link them to increased psychological stress. In this study, we will examine the motivations that guide students in their pursuit of knowledge [6].

It should also be noted that there are motivational theories that are directly related to the psychological, social and cultural aspects of activity. Scholars argue that theories fall into three main categories: content theories, process theories, and modern theories [7], which build on earlier theories of motivation. These include Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's theory of motivation and hygiene, and V. Vroom's theory of expectations. According to Maslow, every person has five different levels of needs (physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem needs, the need to be unique, self-esteem, self-actualization). The essence of this theory is that the satisfaction of one need leads to the desire and ability to achieve the next need [8]. Herzberg's theory of motivation and hygiene is aimed at identifying factors that contribute to satisfaction and dissatisfaction with work and communication [9]. Vroom considers motivation as a process of managing the

choice and predicting people's behavior [10]. Process theories study the causes of motivation and the ways of achieving satisfaction (Porter-Lawler's model). Contemporary theories of motivation include theories of equity, control, and agency, as well as theories of goal setting, reinforcement, and job design. According to Badubi R.M. et al. [11] to achieve a result, it is necessary to combine content theories and process theories. Modern dominant social-cognitive theories include achievement goal theory and expectancy-value models [12].

For example, Pintrich [13] contended that expectancy-value models have oriented on the role of individuals' expectations of success and task-values, and their relation to future performance and achievement-related decisions but have not examined how these variables might be related to goals. On the other hand, achievement goal theory has not taken into account the possibility that goals function differently at different task values. Accordingly, researchers may be able to comprehend motivational processes in a way that is not entirely captured by a single perspective through the combination of expectancy-value and achievement goal theories. According to achievement goal theory, there are two primary reasons why people participate in different achievement activities, and these reasons impact how they perceive and respond to events connected to achievement. These justifications apply to performance goals, which center on proving or validating competence in relation to others, and mastery goals, which center on learning and the development of competences [14]. Knowledge of these theories allows us to better understand the factors and aspects that influence student motivation.

In recent years, research on student motivation and its impact on academic performance has become a prominent area of study. However, studies focusing on the motivational factors of future EFL teachers in a specific context remain rare. Unlike previous works that mainly examine student motivation in different educational settings or generalize motivation theories across disciplines, this study focuses on prospective EFL teachers in Kazakhstan.

Understanding this niche adds depth to the existing literature and acknowledges the cultural and contextual factors that influence prospective teachers' motivation in the Kazakhstani educational landscape. The study not only seeks to explore current motivations, but also lays the foundation for future research by identifying gaps and suggesting new avenues for understanding teacher motivation.

The relevance of the study lies in its unique contribution to the existing body of literature examining student motivation and academic performance by focusing on the motivation of prospective EFL teachers in Kazakhstan. Identifying the motivations of future teachers' educational activities will help create more effective conditions for better learning.

This study attempts to provide a critical review of research on future teachers' motivation in order to respond to ongoing challenges and lay the foundation for future research. Acquiring this knowledge will lead EFL teachers to greater awareness of the specifics of their professional activities, satisfaction with it, and the ability to competently teach the younger generation.

Therefore, the aim of the study is to examine the motivations of future EFL teachers' educational activities and identify the relationship between motivations and student achievement. The results will have direct implications for educational policy and practice, providing information on how best to create a supportive environment for future EFL teachers. Identifying specific motivations and their relationship with student outcomes can lead to targeted professional development initiatives that will improve both teacher satisfaction and student achievement. The novelty of this study lies in its focused examination of prospective EFL teachers' motivation in a specific cultural context, an aspect that remains critically under-explored in the current academic discourse.

#### **Literature review on investigating students' academic achievements.**

Academic achievement is a complex process influenced by a variety of factors that interact differently in the educational environment. Researchers and educators are constantly researching the factors that influence student achievement. Among them, socioeconomic status, family involvement, quality of instruction, and student engagement affect academic performance.

One of the important areas of research focuses on the impact of socioeconomic status on academic achievement. Studies conducted by several scholars Tahir, T., et al. have found a correlation between socioeconomic status and academic achievement, emphasizing that students from families with higher SES tend to have more opportunities and resources respectively higher academic performance [15, 16].

Family involvement is also vital factor influencing students' academic success. The results of the study by Wilder, S. [17] indicate that active parental involvement contributes to creating of a positive learning environment and increases motivation to learn. However, it was noted that parental expectations of their children's academic achievement have a more positive influence than parental help doing homework.

The instructor's experience also affects student achievement. Research confirms that teacher qualifications, teaching methods, teacher feedback, and teacher-student relationships are important elements in achieving high student achievement [18]. Student engagement is a fundamental component of academic success. Lei, H., Cui, Y., & Zhou, W. found a strong relationship between behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement of learners. Their study shows that actively engaged students perform better academically, which is also influenced by the method of engagement reporting, gender, and cultural values [19].

Peer relationships also play an important role in students' socialization and academic performance. Wang, M. T., Kiuru, N., Degol, J.L., & Salmela-Aro, K. [20] investigated the influence of peers on adolescents' academic engagement. Emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects were studied, the analysis showed that one of the important factors is the students' involvement in school, the more interaction with peers occurs, the greater influence it has on the aspects studied and academic achievement. Positive interaction with peers with high academic performance has a favorable effect on students and increases their motivation to study as they strive to meet the standards of friends.

Simões S., Oliveira T., & Nunes C. [21] studied the usefulness of computers in education and found that students who use them for entertainment have lower grades compared to students who use them for educational purposes. The scientists also found that computers hurt the social factor as students become less sociable. Students from small families are more prone to this factor. Peng P. and Rogier A. Kievit [22] observed the connection of cognitive abilities and academic achievements and came to the conclusion that direct academic instructions have a positive effect on academic performance in comparison with intensive short-term cognitive training.

Another research made by Gustems-Carnicer J., Calderón C., & Calderón-Garrido D. [23] revealed the relationship between stress and academic achievements in Iranian university. Their experiment showed that students experience different types of stress during their studies, which leads to poor academic performance. Students who sought psychological help and applied strategies to reduce stress levels had good academic performance, unlike students who avoided or ignored the problem of stress.

Thus, the literature review revealed a multifaceted relationship between student academic achievement and various factors including socioeconomic status, family involvement, teaching quality, student engagement, peer relationships, technology, and stress. All of the factors examined have a strong relationship with student academic achievement, some to a greater extent, some to a lesser extent. In our paper, we will explore the relationship between motivation and academic performance, what motivates students to achieve high academic performance.

#### **Research questions:**

- (1) Are the motives of post-secondary and TVET students the same?
- (2) Do motives influence student academic performance?

#### *Methods and materials*

In the process of working on the study, the following methods were used: analysis of Kazakh and foreign literature on the research topic, questionnaire, analysis and synthesis of the data obtained.

Post-secondary students (148 students) and TVET students (40 students), majoring in languages took part in the experiment at a selected university in Kazakhstan during one semester. The study examines the motives of educational activities on the questionnaire adapted by M.M. Kalashnikova, V.N. Kosyrev, O.V. Shchekochikhin. The Google Forms questionnaire included 12 motives for educational activities, which students ranked in order of perceived effectiveness, with the most important motive listed first. The proposed motives reflected both intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation. The questionnaire was originally compiled in Russian to ensure better understanding of the research topic; the results were later translated into English for publication.

We focused on first-year students since lack of motivation can lead to dissatisfaction with their future profession, change of profession or student dropout. The earlier determination of students' interest is useful for lesson design and active involvement.

The experiment was held on the "Introduction to linguistics" course. It featured a well-structured format, comprising one lecture and one practical lesson each week. Lectures utilized a problem-solving and discussion-oriented approach, encouraging active participation and engagement among students. This interactive format facilitated deeper understanding of linguistic concepts, allowing learners to explore various theories and applications in a collaborative environment. The practical lessons provided opportunities for hands-on experience, reinforcing the knowledge gained in lectures. Overall, this course design fostered critical

thinking and effective communication skills, essential for comprehending the complexities of language and its role in human interaction. Students left equipped with valuable insights into the field of linguistics.

Data gathered was analyzed using an independent t-test analysis (t-test), at the level of 0.05 significance to determine the effectiveness of the training on the dependent variable (student motivation). The results were reflected in tables for visualization. This analysis allows us to determine a statistically significant relationship between students' motivation levels and their academic performance for two independent samples. For this purpose, we compared the mean scores of these two parameters for PS and TVET students.

The author also analyzed the exam results and their relatedness with motives and academic performance. The examination was conducted orally. Students chose a ticket consisting of three questions on the course material covered.

Student participation in the study was voluntary, students were informed about the purpose of the study and the anonymity of the data obtained.

### *Results and discussion*

The Table 1 data shows that post-secondary students and TVET students have a slight difference in indicators by motives. However, there is a difference in their ranking. The independent t-test of PS students sample as indicated in Table 1 has shown that the first place among the motives is occupied by the motive "everyone is studying, and so am I", where the mean score was 8.32 (SD=3.06), in second place is "I don't want to let the group down" (Mean=8.15; SD=3.25), in third place is "this is what my parents wanted" (Mean=7.97; SD=3.29). In TVET group the leading place is occupied by the motive "avoid complaints" (Mean=8.17; SD=3.06), the next motive is "everyone is studying, and so am I" (Mean=7.77; SD=3.36), "I don't want to let the group down" (Mean=7.62; SD=3.62), in last place for both groups are "I want to become a good teacher" (PS Mean=4.52; SD=3.35; TVET Mean= 4.92; SD=3.66) and "to achieve complete and deep knowledge" (PS Mean= 3.92; SD=3.04; TVET Mean=4.67; SD=3.32). These indicators show an unconscious choice of profession and unawareness of the importance of the future profession; students do not have a sufficient level of internal motivation to acquire a future profession. Basically, students are guided by their environment and the desire not to be worse than others, which indicates external motivation.

Table 1

**Results of motives for educational activities**

Motives for educational activities	Ranking place of motive among PS students		Ranking place of motive among TVET students	
	Number of students	Mean score (Standard deviation)	Number of students	Mean score (Standard deviation)
1	2	3	4	5
My duty obliges me to do this	148	6.68 (3.26)	40	6.2 (3.46)
To achieve complete and deep knowledge	148	3.92 (3.04)	40	4.67 (3.32)
I don't want to let the group down	148	8.15 (3.25)	40	7.62 (3.62)
I like getting good grades	148	5.38 (3.03)	40	5.07 (3.25)
I want to become a good teacher	148	4.52 (3.35)	40	4.92 (3.66)
To avoid complaints	148	7.73 (2.75)	40	8.17 (3.06)
I don't want to be worse than others	148	6.73 (3.19)	40	6.67 (2.48)
This is what my parents wanted	148	7.97 (3.29)	40	6.65 (3.45)

Continuation of Table 1

1	2	3	4	5
Like being a student	148	6.59 (3.01)	40	6.5 (3.39)
Higher education diploma required	148	4.92 (3.47)	40	5.12 (3.67)
Everyone is learning and so am I	148	8.32 (3.06)	40	7.77 (3.36)
Just wondering	148	7.11 (3.40)	40	6.92 (3.87)

The second research question is the existence of relatedness between the motives of educational activities and students' academic performance. To analyze this aspect, the author took the results of the exam in the course "Introduction to Linguistics."

The results in Table 2 have shown the mean and standard deviation in exam results. The participants in TVET group (Mean=86.15; SD=7.67) and PS group (Mean=80.02; SD=10.86) have a good level of academic performance. This implies that students of both groups succeeded in their studying, which is proven by the mean score.

Table 2

## Exam results in the course "Introduction to Linguistics"

PS students		TVET students	
Number of students	Mean score (Standard deviation)	Number of students	Mean score (Standard deviation)
148	80.02 (10.86)	40	86.15 (7.67)

Table 3

## Summary of the Pearson correlation analysis

Group	Mean score of motivation	Mean score of the exam
PS	3.2	80
TVET	3.8	86

The Table 3 data shows that TVET students have higher average motivation scores (3.8) compared to PS students (3.2). Similarly, TVET students also have higher average examination scores (86) compared to PS students (80).

The correlation analysis confirms the positive correlation between motivation and academic performance. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.45, indicating a moderate positive relationship. The figure shows that as students' motivation increases, their academic performance tends to increase.

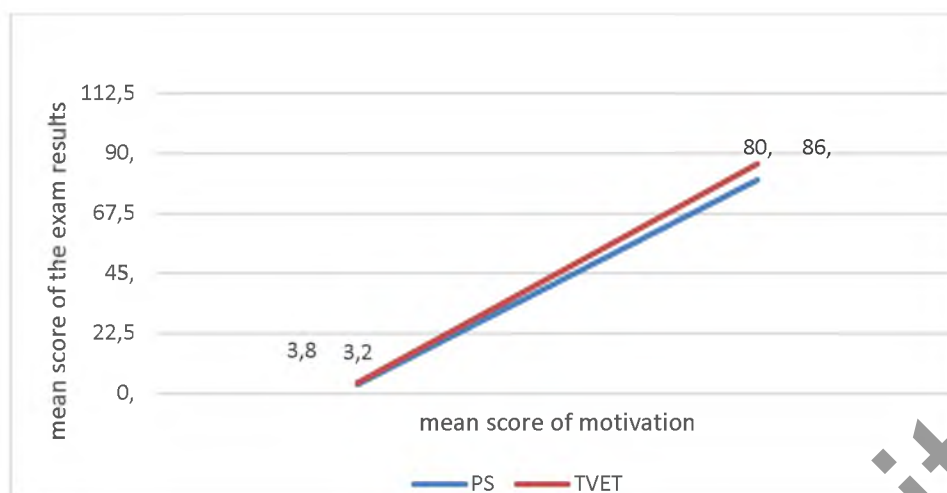


Figure 1. The Pearson correlation analysis

These results suggest that students with higher motivation scores tend to have higher examination scores. This highlights the importance of motivation in students' academic success and points to the need to encourage and maintain motivation among students to improve their learning outcomes.

This study was conducted to compare the motives of post-secondary students and TVET students, as well as to identify the relatedness between motives and students' academic performance. The result of the study shows that students of both groups do not fully understand the importance of their future profession. In other words, the main motives of students are external factors rather than internal ones. The results also attested to the fact that external motivation has a positive effect on students' academic achievements just like internal motivation. This finding therefore upholds previous studies.

The influence of internal motivation has been studied by many scientists and it has been proven that it has a long-term positive effect, any activity is performed with pleasure and desire, while external motivation depends on achieving a result that is separate from the action itself. For example, a student may study diligently to attain a high GPA. However, not all forms of external motivation are the same. They differ in degree and autonomy, i.e., motivation can come from an internal perceived locus of causality and a sense of personal will. Therefore, even if an activity is driven by external motivation, it can be internally regulated rather than externally controlled [24].

Researchers in Indonesia explored the connection between mindfulness, academic motivation, and academic performance in students studying English as a foreign language. Their empirical study revealed that mindfulness positively influences both motivation and academic outcomes. Students exhibiting higher levels of mindfulness demonstrated greater academic motivation, which correlates directly with improved academic performance. The authors propose that fostering mindfulness practices in educational settings could enhance student engagement and overall academic success [25].

A comparable study on the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on academic achievements, as well as the multiplier effects of motivation was carried out by Chinese scientists. The study discovered that individuals with high levels of intrinsic motivation performed worse academically when exposed to extrinsic motivation. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation improved academic achievements for students with poor intrinsic motivation [26]. So, the Chinese, Indonesian and our own research show that both types of motivation have positive effect on students' academic performance.

A possible reason of obtained results of our research may be that students are studying in their first year and are still going through the stage of adaptation to new conditions and requirements at the university. According to earlier research, "adult approval" and "peer approval" belong to important factors in diverse societies that determine the way students do academically [27, 28]. Fuligni [29; 61] noted that "sense of obligation to the family" influences students' inspiration. A number of studies show that motivational factors influence students' academic performance. For example, Zeynali S., Pishghadam R., Fatemi A.H. [30] examined the motivational and demotivational factors that influence academic performance in teaching English as a foreign language. Scientists have identified five variables: demotivation/motivation, collective/individual, perfectionist/non-perfectionist, intrinsic/extrinsic, and cooperative/competitive; they established that these variables correlate with each other and require the formation of abilities and leaving the comfort zone.

Ekiz S., Kulmetov Z. [31] studied parental, environmental, and teacher's attitude-related factors influencing students' motivation in the process of learning English. They found that parental support, strengthening student beliefs, and a supportive learning environment increased motivation. According to Khalifa, Mahmoud [32] and Al Hasani and Wilkins [33] student satisfaction and a HEI's service quality are strongly and directly correlated. Students who are happy with their university experience will enjoy their time there, go more frequently, and be more motivated to support and participate in university life.

Thus, one of the key elements influencing academic success is the environment. Factors such as approval of adults and peers, family support, teacher's belief in the student, and students' satisfaction with higher education institutions significantly increase motivation and engagement. Understanding these dynamics is necessary to create a favorable learning environment that promotes academic success among students.

The second research question identified the relatedness between motives and students' academic performance. Nowadays researchers and organizations like Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and PISA pay a great attention to social and emotional factors as indicators of student well-being and psychological development. According to a study by York T., Gibson C. and Rankin S. [34], academic performance or success is measured in grades obtained and the GPAs. Yurtseven N., Bülent A., Karataş H. [35] investigated this topic and concluded that academic performance in an English course is influenced by autonomy and relatedness, which are among the components of motivational orientation and basic psychological needs, competence and interest in mastering a foreign language. Betoret and Artiga [36] found that satisfaction of basic psychological needs has a positive impact on motivation to learn. Therefore, the interaction between teacher and student is one of the key factors in creating a motivational climate in the classroom. The teacher's interest and enthusiasm for his subject can develop the students' interest and even develop a high level of intrinsic motivation. The teacher leading the classes should be aware of the students' motivation levels and design the curriculum to promote active engagement in the learning process, as student involvement significantly enhances academic success. Moreover, providing constructive and timely feedback helps students better understand their progress and evaluate possible ways to improve their learning. An interested student is likely to persist in their studies, even when faced with challenging tasks, and derives personal value from the learning experience. An analysis of works on the study of motivation, as well as the conducted research, confirm the opinion that the academic performance of students is influenced by motivational factors, basic psychological needs, and environment. The motives chosen by the students indicate that external motives, as well as internal ones, have a positive result on the academic performance of students. However, internal motivation is more effective and enduring in the long-term.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, this study was aimed at studying the relatedness between the motivation of EFL teachers (PS and TVET) and academic performance. The pedagogical experiment revealed a clear connection between motivation and academic outcomes. Notably, the primary motivational drivers among post-secondary students included a desire not to fall behind their peers and parental expectations, while TVET participants specifically cited a need to avoid complaints alongside similar peer pressures. This indicates that external factors predominantly shape educational motivations in both groups.

Looking ahead, it is crucial to delve deeper into the nuances of teacher motivation, particularly on how it impacts student learning over time. Future research should investigate not only the existing motivations but also the mechanisms through which internal motivation can be developed among educators. By fostering intrinsic motivation, which tends to produce more sustainable and effective educational outcomes, stakeholders can enhance the overall quality of instruction and student success in EFL settings. Understanding these dynamics will be essential for implementing strategies that cultivate a more engaged educational environment, ultimately leading to improved academic performances across the board.

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## Болашақ ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерінің мотивациясы және оның академиялық нәтижелермен байланысы

Зерттеудің мақсаты болашақ ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерін білім алуға ынталандыратын факторларды, сонымен қатар осы мотивтер мен оқу үлгерімі арасындағы байланысты анықтау. Экспериментке мектеп пен колледжде бірінші курста оқитын болашақ ағылшын тілі мұғалімдері қатысты. Өрбір қатысушы *Google Forms*-те сауалнаманы толтырды, онда оқу әрекеттерінің мотивтерін маңыздылығына қарай орналастырды. Содан кейін нәтижелер t-Стьюдента тесті арқылы талданды. Семестр соңында студенттер «Тіл біліміне кіріспе» пәнінен емтихан тапсырып, емтихан нәтижелері бойынша студенттердің мотивтері мен оқу үлгерімі арасында байланыстың бар-жоғын айқындады. Зерттеу нәтижелері студенттердің мотивациясының оқушының үлгеріміне тікелей байланысты екенін көрсетті. Мектептегі білім негізінде оқитын оқушылар арасында ең жоғарғы мотив «бәрі оқиды, мен де оқимын» (8,32), екінші орында «Топты жібергім келмейді» (8,15), үшінші орында «әке-шешемнің қалауы осы болды» (7,97) деген сияқты мотивтер айқындалды. Колледж базасындағы топта жетекші орынды «шағымдарды болдырмау үшін» мотиві (8,17), келесі мотив «барлығы оқиды, мен де оқимын» (7,77), одан кейін «топты жібергім келмейді» мотиві анықталды (7,62).

*Кілт сөздер:* болашақ ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерінің мотивациясы, оқу үлгерімі, оқу жетістіктері, студенттердің жетістігі, мотив, мотивациялық теориялар, мотивациялық процестер, жоғары білімі.

## Мотивация будущих учителей английского языка и ее связь с академической успеваемостью

Целью данного исследования было выявление факторов, мотивирующих будущих учителей английского языка к приобретению знаний, а также связь данных мотивов с успеваемостью. В эксперименте приняли участие будущие учителя английского языка, обучающиеся на первом курсе на базе школьного образования и колледжа. Каждый участник заполнил анкету в *Google Forms*, где расположил мотивы учебной деятельности в порядке важности. Затем результаты были проанализированы с помощью критерия t-Стьюдента. В конце семестра студенты сдавали экзамен по курсу «Введение в языкознание» и по результатам экзамена определяли, существует ли связь между мотивами и успеваемостью студентов. Результаты исследования показали, что студенческая мотивация напрямую связана с их успеваемостью. Установлено, что у студентов, обучающихся на базе школьного образования, самым высоким мотивом является мотив «все учатся, и я тоже» (8,32), на втором месте «не хочу подвести группу» (8,15), на третьем месте «это то, чего хотели мои родители» (7,97). В группе на базе колледжа ведущее место занимает мотив «чтобы избежать нареканий» (8,17), следующий мотив — «все учатся, и я тоже» (7,77), «не хочу подводить группу» (7,62).

*Ключевые слова:* мотивация будущих учителей английского языка, академическая успеваемость, академические достижения, успехи студентов, мотив, мотивационные теории, мотивационные процессы, высшее образование.

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