

# Self-determination Theory: Statistical Correlations between Motivational Regulations and Basic Psychological Needs

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## Abstract

Self-determination theory has been predominantly used as a psychological framework to describe human motivation. It classifies three types of motivation with various forms of regulations, ranging from amotivation, extrinsic motivation (i.e., extrinsic regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation), to intrinsic motivation. In addition, it points out three basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, relatedness, competence) which are essential components to enhance the process of internalisation, meaning motivations driven by identified, integrated and intrinsic regulations. This study aims to provide statistical evidence of statistical correlations among these factors and regulations. To achieve this, an online questionnaire with 9 close-ended statements based on 5-Likert scale was distributed to high-school students and school leavers in Thailand. A total of 206 responses were received. Overall, a correlational analysis showed a positive correlation between internalisation and the basic psychological needs ( $r = 0.4$ ). Furthermore, there was a moderate positive correlation between integrated correlation and intrinsic motivation ( $r = 0.6$ ) which supports the described theoretical framework. In addition, there was a moderate positive correlation between autonomy and competence ( $r = 0.6$ ) in the perspective of psychological needs. However, the statistical evidence shows a moderate relationship between identified regulation and external regulation ( $r = 0.6$ ) which adds an insightful finding to our current understanding. It is suggested that in order to increase the level of internalisation, it is essential to provide a learning environment where students can feel the sense of success (competence), constructive relationship with others (relatedness), and a fair degree of self-regulated learning (autonomy).

**Keywords:** Motivation, Self-Determination Theory, Autonomy, Relatedness, Competence