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Motivation and academic performance of ethnic minority medical students

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Summary

This thesis is about the motivation and academic performance of (medical) students from ethnic minorities. This thesis aims to enhance our understanding of the factors and experiences influencing the motivation and academic performance of ethnic minority students, and how motivation influences their academic performance. A systematic review of the relevant literature, as well as quantitative and qualitative studies were conducted to answer the specific research questions. With the findings we might develop interventions to stimulate and help medical students from different ethnic backgrounds to perform to their full potential.

Chapter 1 The introduction provides the justification for conducting the studies in this thesis. Diversity in medical workforce is essential for providing appropriate culturally competent care to ethnic minority patients and to meet the needs of a diverse population. However, ethnic minority students, including medical students, face difficulties in completing the medical study successfully and have been reported to underperform compared to the majority group. This phenomenon is not yet fully understood. The motivation of ethnic minority students, which is the key concept in this thesis, is elaborated upon. Motivation, an important factor in deep learning and academic success, is defined from the perspective of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SDT, used as a framework in the quantitative studies, distinguish autonomous (originates from genuine interest or personal endorsement) and controlled motivation (comes from internal pressure or external pressure or rewards). Autonomous motivation is the desirable type of motivation in comparison to controlled motivation because it is associated with deep learning, better academic performance, and less exhaustion. Moreover, SDT describes a hierarchical model of motivation with three levels; global (a global motivational orientation), contextual (motivational orientation related to the life context of the individual, such as education or work) and situational motivation (motivation pertaining to a particular time and place). In addition, the ethnically very diverse population in the Netherlands, in which the studies of this thesis are conducted, is considered. Reflecting on the role of the principal investigator in the research, we experienced that the ethnic minority background of the researcher on this research topic contributed to a better understanding of the participants. In addition, it may have empowered the participants to feel more comfortable and to be more open in sharing their feelings. The main research questions that informed this thesis were: What are the factors that influence the motivation of the ethnic minority students? What are the mechanisms? How does motivation influence their academic performance?

Chapter 2 This chapter presents a systematic review which explored the factors that influence the academic motivation of ethnic minority students. Factors that positively or negatively influence the academic motivation of ethnic minority could be categorized into