

The influence of academic motivation on the academic performance of senior secondary grade students (A study based on Tamil medium schools in the Colombo south education zone, in Sri Lanka)

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ABSTRACT

Higher learning outcomes can be achieved by developing a cooperative mindset in the classroom. Academic motivation refers to a student's intrinsic motivation to engage in learning activities and work hard for academic success. The concept of motivation is generally considered to be a dynamic force that drives human behavior. Students with high motivation have better learning habits and tend to demonstrate interest and perseverance in learning. It is against this background that this study on the influence of academic motivation on the academic performance of senior secondary school students was conducted based on Tamil medium schools in the Colombo South Educational Zone. Major research questions of the study are (1) what is the relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic performance of academic students? (2) What is the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academic performance? This study was conducted as a quantitative method study following a descriptive survey design based on the research questions such as, what are the school-level motivational factors that have a direct impact on student learning?. What is the relationship between mothers' educational level and academic performance? What is the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and gender? The study population was students studying in the Senior Secondary Levels (10, 11) in Tamil-medium schools within the Colombo south Educational Zone. 200 students and 50 teachers who taught in the senior secondary grades were selected through stratified random sampling technique, Data was obtained from the teachers and students through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using the SPSS 20. Data was analyzed descriptively statistically. The main findings of the study are that there is a significant relationship between students' self-motivation and learning performance; there is a significant direct relationship between controlled motivation and learning performance; there is a significant direct relationship between academic performance and extrinsic motivation; there are gender differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academic performance; women are more motivated in education than men; and the level of education of mothers acts as a high educational external motivator in students' academic performance.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Students, Motivation

INTRODUCTION

Academic motivation refers to a student's intrinsic motivation to engage in learning activities and to work hard for academic success. The concept of motivation is generally considered to be a dynamic force that drives human behavior (Dee, 1983). Motivation includes factors such as interest in learning, self-directed learning, learning goals, values associated with learning, plays an important role in students' learning abilities and overall academic performance. Students with high motivation have better learning habits and motivated to demonstrate interest and perseverance in learning and achieve high levels of academic achievement. Furthermore, students develop the ability to think critically, self-confidence, commitment to goals, contribute to skill development and personal growth. The motivation that students achieve mainly classified into two categories: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Hivert & Alcourey (2020), have revealed that students' motivation is significantly influenced by their teachers, subject content and learning environment, their expectations, perspectives and attitudes towards their peers, and their education. Similarly, Dörnyei (2020), has shown that how students perceive their teachers' personal behaviors has a significant impact on

their academic motivation and that teachers who behave appropriately in classroom environments have a positive impact on their students' motivation., This study was conducted with the aim of how variables related to motivation affect academic performance of students who in the senior secondary grades in Colombo Education zone.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Contemporary learning styles of students are becoming more and more important, such as self-directed learning and collaborative learning, as well as self-engaged learning and peer learning. Teachers are urged to adopt the role of facilitators from the role of teaching. Students are motivated by internal and external factors to develop high performance (Sheng & Dorney, 2007); Bernas & Gardner, 2008; & Pappi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012). Even students with high self-efficacy can fully understand only if they are actively engaged in learning (Nussaleni, 2000). Academic motivation leads students to set high goals for their learning (Duin, 2012). Academic motivation is influenced by their goals, past experiences, cultural background, perceptions of teachers and peers, and confidence in facing self-efficacy crises (Ruyadamanasa & Pusananae, 2009). Students with high levels of participation are more self-efficacious than students with low levels of participation; these students spend more time to learning (Anaibatanala et al., 1993). Intrinsic motivation seeks to control actions and provide intellectual stimulation and a perspective on learning new things, while extrinsic motivation drives students to achieve goals through external actions (Deenasūñananae, 2020). Both types of motivation play a profound role in the teaching-learning process, as motivated students; set goals and reinforce knowledge. Likewise, lack of motivation causes poor performance in students, which is why it is necessary to create a favorable environment. The classroom environment is important for stimulating interest (Guzmán & García, 2020). It has been classified as a strong predictor of academic performance. Academic performance depends on many biological, psychological, economic and sociological factors that influence or determine the results of the learning-teaching process. It is also considered an indicator of the learning achieved by the student, which is why it is considered an indicator of educational quality (Horten et al., 2020). Academic performance is one of the most important variables in the learning process, which involves the relationship between what the student needs to learn and what he or she has learned, the learning that is brought about by the teacher's pedagogical intervention. Long-term academic success is another important factor that should be facilitated with the help of the right engagement of the learners (Carmona et al. 2021). When learners get intrinsic motivation from their educational system, it facilitates the development of their academic competence. On the other hand, the belief in the ability to succeed helps students to be more motivated. The self-efficacy process is highlighted by the self-development of students. Students who feel motivated are able to achieve various challenging goals and improve their learning performance (Kim et al. 2019).

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic performance of students?
2. What is the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academic performance?
3. What are the school-level motivational factors that have a direct impact on student learning?
4. What is the relationship between mothers' educational level and academic performance?
5. What is the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and gender?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted as a quantitative study following the descriptive survey design. Students who studying in Senior Secondary (10, 11) in Tamil-medium schools within the Colombo south Educational Zone were taken as the study population and 200 students were selected through stratified random sampling technique and 50 teachers teaching them were taken as the study sample. Data were collected from the teachers and students through a structured questionnaire and the data were analyzed through descriptive statistics technique and the data were presented in a descriptive manner with support of SPSS 20.

Finding of the study

Significant relationships were observed between students' self-motivation and learning performance ($r = 0.234$ and significance; $P > .05$) and a significant direct relationship was found between controlled motivation and learning performance ($r = 0.261$ and significance; $p > .05$). The correlation coefficient between academic performance and extrinsic motivation was found to be $r = 0.151$ and significance; $P > .05$. Since $p < 0.05$ and the correlation coefficient is greater than zero, it can be seen that there is a direct significant relationship between academic performance and extrinsic motivation.

Table 1: Intervals between some important motivation variables

Variable	Interval	SD
Academic Motivation	132.97	18.07
Intrinsic Motivation	20.13	3.7
Academic Performance	22.95	5.27

(Source: Prepared by Researcher, 2024)

Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to examine the relationship between academic motivation and its subscales and academic performance (Table 1). A significant direct relationship was observed between academic motivation and academic performance ($r = .21$; $p > .05$). The results show that there is a significant direct relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic performance of the students ($r = .32$; $p = .001$). Independent sample t-tests were conducted to identify gender differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academic performance. Accordingly, significant gender differences were observed between academic motivation and academic performance. It was found that females ($M = 131.11$; $SD = 16.35$) were more motivated in education than males ($M = 10.85$; $SD = 17.94$). Furthermore, the results indicate that intrinsic motivation is higher in females ($p = 58.90$; $SD = 9.12$) than males ($M = 50.9$; $SD = 13.09$). Compare to $M = 56.62$; $SD = 11.36$) External motivation was higher in females ($M = 61.68$; $SD = 8.18$). However, no significant gender difference was found in motivation and education. However, education the performance results revealed a significant gender difference in the GPA, with females achieving higher scores ($M = 3.04$; $SD = 0.52$) than males ($M = 3.38$; $SD = 0.48$).

Table 2: Relationship between education level and motivation

Education level	M	SD
Mothers with 1-5 years of education	3.11	0.62
Mothers with 6-8 years of education	3.29	0.39
Mothers with 9-10 years of education	3.28	0.33
Mothers with 11-12 years of education	3.52	3.34
Mothers with 15-16 years of education	3.23	0.55
More than 16 years of education	3.14	0.54

(Source: Prepared by Researcher, 2024)

A way to find out the average differences in the participants' academic performance (GPA) based on their mother's education was to calculate the ANOVA. Accordingly, it was observed that there was a consistent

difference in the students' academic performance based on the mother's education level and external motivation. Compared to mothers with 13-14 years of education ($M = 3.88$; $SD = 0.66$), mothers with no education ($M = 3.14$; $SD = 0.63$), or mothers with 1-5 years of education ($M = 3.29$; $SD = 0.62$), mothers with 6-8 years of education ($M = 3.11$; $SD = 0.62$), mothers with 9-10 years of education ($M = 3.28$; $SD = 0.33$), mothers with 11-12 years of education ($M = 3.52$; $SD = 3.34$), and mothers with 15-16 years of education ($M = 3.23$; $SD = 0.55$), and above 16 years ($M = 3.14$; $SD = 0.54$). That is, it was revealed that the educational level of the mothers acts as a catalyst for higher educational attainment.

FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Parents can foster academic motivation by engaging in continuous learning themselves, providing a supportive and positive learning environment at home, setting realistic expectations, and celebrating their child's achievements. Encouraging curiosity, encouraging autonomy, and creating opportunities for meaningful learning experiences contribute to improving motivation. Maintaining open and transparent communication with the child and providing constructive feedback on their performance can help children to achieve high levels of motivation. Teachers can contribute to students' academic motivation by adopting engaging instructional methods in schools, demonstrating interest in the subject, creating a supportive classroom environment, and providing timely, constructive feedback and feedback on students' work. Encouraging collaboration, setting clear expectations, and creating opportunities for students to share their ideas and opinions improve motivation. Academic motivation increases interest in learning. The relationship between academic motivation and student engagement Academic motivation is a form of discipline that can positively or negatively influence a person's behavior. According to the results of various studies, students with a high level of participation are more self-efficacious than students with a low level of participation; these students have been observed to spend more time learning. Extrinsic motivation such as tangible rewards, competition, parental involvement, and so on, increases student engagement.

Incorporate Qualitative Data:

Adding Qualitative Elements, Such as Focus Group Discussions or Interviews, Could Provide richer insights into the motivational factors influencing student performance.

- Expand Theoretical Context: Deepen the discussion by linking findings to broader motivational theories (e.g., Self-Determination Theory) and comparing results with studies from other cultural or educational contexts.
- Address Language Issues: Conduct a thorough review to correct grammatical errors and improve language
- International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS) Review Form consistency for better readability.
- Broaden Implications: Highlight how the findings can inform educational policies or practices beyond Tamil-medium schools in Sri Lanka, offering a more global perspective.
- Future Research: Recommend longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of motivational strategies on academic performance.

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