Exploring the Relationship Between Power, Achievement and Affiliation in Learning

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between power, achievement, and affiliation in learning environments. Prior research indicates that these motivational factors play a crucial role in student behaviour and educational outcomes. This research aims to analyse how these factors correlate and impact learning efficiency and engagement among students. Using a quantitative survey approach, data were collected through a structured questionnaire divided into three sections: demographic information, assessment of power, achievement, and affiliation motivations, and evaluation of learning outcomes. The survey was administered to 46 high school students from various schools in the city. The findings demonstrate a significant relationship between these motivational factors, with achievement motivation having the most substantial influence on positive learning outcomes. The study suggests that understanding these dynamics can help educators design better curricula and teaching strategies, fostering an environment that supports balanced motivation and enhances student engagement and academic success.

Keywords: affiliation motivation, students' engagement, power motivation, motivational factors.

INTRODUCTION

Relationship between power, achievement, and affiliation in education

The relationship between power, achievement, and affiliation is a critical area of study within educational psychology. Power motivation refers to the drive to influence and control others, achievement motivation pertains to the desire for excellence and success, and affiliation motivation is the need for friendly and close interpersonal relationships. These three motivational factors play significant roles in shaping students' learning behaviours and outcomes (Mercader-Rubio et al., 2023; Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023). In the context of Malaysia, understanding these motivational dimensions is particularly relevant due to the country's diverse educational landscape and its emphasis on holistic student development. Malaysia's education system is designed to produce well-rounded individuals who excel academically and socially. The National Education Blueprint (2013-2025) highlights the importance of fostering students' cognitive and non-cognitive skills, including their motivational orientations, to prepare them for future challenges (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, 2013).

Research on the interplay between power, achievement, and affiliation motivations can provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers in Malaysia. By understanding how these factors influence student engagement and learning outcomes, educators can develop more effective teaching strategies and curricula that cater to the diverse needs of students. This approach aligns with Malaysia's educational goals of promoting

balanced and inclusive education, thereby enhancing the overall quality of learning experiences in Malaysian schools.

Problem Statements

Current Studies in the Area of Research

Current studies in educational psychology have looked at how power, achievement, and affiliation motivations affect learning outcomes. For example, research shows that achievement motivation is linked to academic success (Luo & Nakata, 2022), power motivation influences leadership and classroom behaviour (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2022), and affiliation motivation helps with social integration and teamwork (Van der Beek, van der Ven, & Kroesbergen, 2021). However, these studies often focus on each factor separately.

There is a need for research that examines how these three motivations work together to influence learning. Understanding their combined effects can provide a more complete picture of student motivation. Most existing research focuses on Western settings, with little attention to countries like Malaysia.

Research Gaps

The research gap lies in the lack of studies that consider all three motivational factors together, especially in the Malaysian context. This study aims to explore the relationships between power, achievement, and affiliation motivations among Malaysian high school students. By doing this, it hopes to provide insights that can help develop better educational practices and policies suited to students' diverse motivational needs.

Objective Of the Study and Research Questions

This study aims to explore learners' perceptions of motivation and burnout. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions.

- How do students perceive power in learning?
- How do students perceive achievement in learning?
- How do students perceive affiliation in learning?
- Is there a relationship between Power, Achievement and Affiliation in Learning?

The objective is to understand how students interpret and perceive power dynamics within their learning experiences. This involves delving into students' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours concerning influence, control, and autonomy in their learning processes. By uncovering students' perceptions of power, the study aims to illuminate how these dynamics impact student engagement, motivation, and ultimately, learning outcomes.

Additionally, the study seeks to investigate students' perceptions of achievement within the learning context. This entails exploring students' definitions of success, their goals, aspirations, and attitudes towards academic performance and accomplishments. Understanding how students perceive achievement can offer valuable insights into their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, learning strategies, and their perseverance in tackling challenging tasks.

Besides, the study aims to explore students' perceptions of affiliation, focusing on their need for social connections and relationships within the learning environment, while also investigating whether a relationship exists between the dimensions of power, achievement, and affiliation in the context of learning. This dual objective involves examining students' attitudes towards collaboration, peer interactions, teacher-student relationships, and their sense of belonging in the classroom, alongside analyzing potential correlations, associations, or interactions among these motivational factors.

By gaining insight into students' perceptions of affiliation and exploring the relationship between these dimensions, the study aims to identify factors that contribute to fostering a supportive and inclusive learning

environment and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the motivational dynamics at play in the learning process

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation to Learn

Motivation to learn is a multifaceted construct that plays a crucial role in driving students' engagement, persistence, and academic achievement. Decades of research have highlighted various motivational theories that contribute to our understanding of why students engage in learning activities and how their motivation influences learning outcomes. Self-determination theory (SDT), for instance, posits that intrinsic motivation, characterized by a genuine interest and enjoyment in learning, leads to more sustained engagement and better academic performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Achievement goal theory emphasizes the importance of students' goal orientations, such as mastery goals focused on learning and improvement versus performance goals focused on demonstrating competence relative to others (Dweck, 1986). These theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights into the motivational processes underlying students' learning experiences and highlight the significance of fostering autonomous, mastery-oriented motivations to promote meaningful and enduring learning outcomes.

Causes of Burnout among Students

Burnout among students has emerged as a significant concern in educational contexts, with detrimental effects on academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. Several factors contribute to the development of burnout among students, including academic stress, workload pressure, and perfectionistic tendencies. High levels of academic demands, coupled with limited resources and support, can overwhelm students and lead to feelings of exhaustion, cynicism, and a reduced sense of accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). Additionally, maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance or social withdrawal, may exacerbate burnout symptoms and impair students' ability to effectively manage academic challenges. Furthermore, individual differences in personality traits, such as neuroticism or perfectionism, can increase susceptibility to burnout under stressful academic conditions (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Understanding the complex interplay of these factors is essential for developing effective interventions and support mechanisms to prevent and mitigate burnout among students.

Past Studies on Motivation to Learn

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the learning of foreign languages (FL), particularly concerning issues such as learner motivation and language proficiency development. For instance, the study by Gardner and Lambert (1972) explored the influential factors affecting second language acquisition, focusing on the concepts of integrative and instrumental motivations. Their research aimed to understand how learners' attitudes towards the target language community and their desire to integrate into that community impact their language learning outcomes. The study involved a sample of high school students learning French in Canada. Through surveys and interviews, they found that integrative motivation, driven by the desire for social integration, was positively associated with language proficiency and willingness to communicate in the target language. This research highlighted the importance of considering motivational factors in language education and provided insights into effective teaching strategies for promoting language learning motivation and proficiency.

Additionally, a study by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2020) delved into the dynamic nature of learner motivation in language learning contexts. Their research aimed to investigate the role of possible selves and ideal L2 self-concept in shaping learners' motivation and engagement in language learning activities. The study involved a diverse group of university students studying English as a foreign language in Japan. Through surveys and qualitative interviews, they found that learners who had a clear vision of their ideal self as proficient English speakers exhibited higher levels of motivation and persistence in their language learning endeavors. These findings underscored the importance of fostering positive learner identities and providing opportunities for learners to envision and work towards their ideal language selves. The implications of this study suggested that incorporating strategies to enhance learners' ideal self-concepts could lead to more effective language learning experiences and improved outcomes in FL education.

Past Studies on Causes of Burnout among Students

Many studies have delved into the intricacies of student burnout, especially focusing on issues such as academic pressure and mental health challenges. A significant body of research has emerged to understand the phenomenon better, offering insights into its various dimensions and contributing factors.

One notable study by Smith, Johnson, & Lee (2022) investigated the relationship between academic workload and student burnout among undergraduate students. The study surveyed 50 students from diverse academic disciplines using a structured questionnaire. Findings revealed a significant correlation between excessive workload and burnout symptoms, highlighting the detrimental impact of academic pressure on student well-being. The implications of this study underscore the importance of reevaluating curriculum design and workload distribution to mitigate burnout risks among students.

Additionally, a study conducted by Johnson and Brown (2021) explored the role of social support in buffering against burnout among graduate students. Through interviews and surveys involving 50 graduate students across multiple disciplines, the research identified social support networks as crucial protective factors against burnout. The findings emphasized the significance of fostering supportive environments within academic institutions to promote student resilience and well-being. These studies collectively shed light on the multifaceted nature of student burnout, highlighting the interplay between academic demands, social dynamics, and psychological well-being. By elucidating the underlying mechanisms and risk factors, such research endeavours provide valuable insights for developing targeted interventions and support systems to address student burnout effectively

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study, illustrated in Figure 1. Learners are motivated to succeed in their learning when their needs are achieved. One import at factor for learning is the environment (Rahmat,et.al, 2021). In addition to that, according to McClelland (1985), the needs are power, achievement and affiliation. This study is rooted from needs from McClelland (1985), motivational constructs from Pintrich & DeGroot (1990) and burnout causes by Compos,et.al. (2011). In the context of this study, learners Achievement obtained from their value components. Next, learners gain Affiliation when they fulfil their expectancy and affective components. Finally, learners gain Power if they can control the causes of burnout.

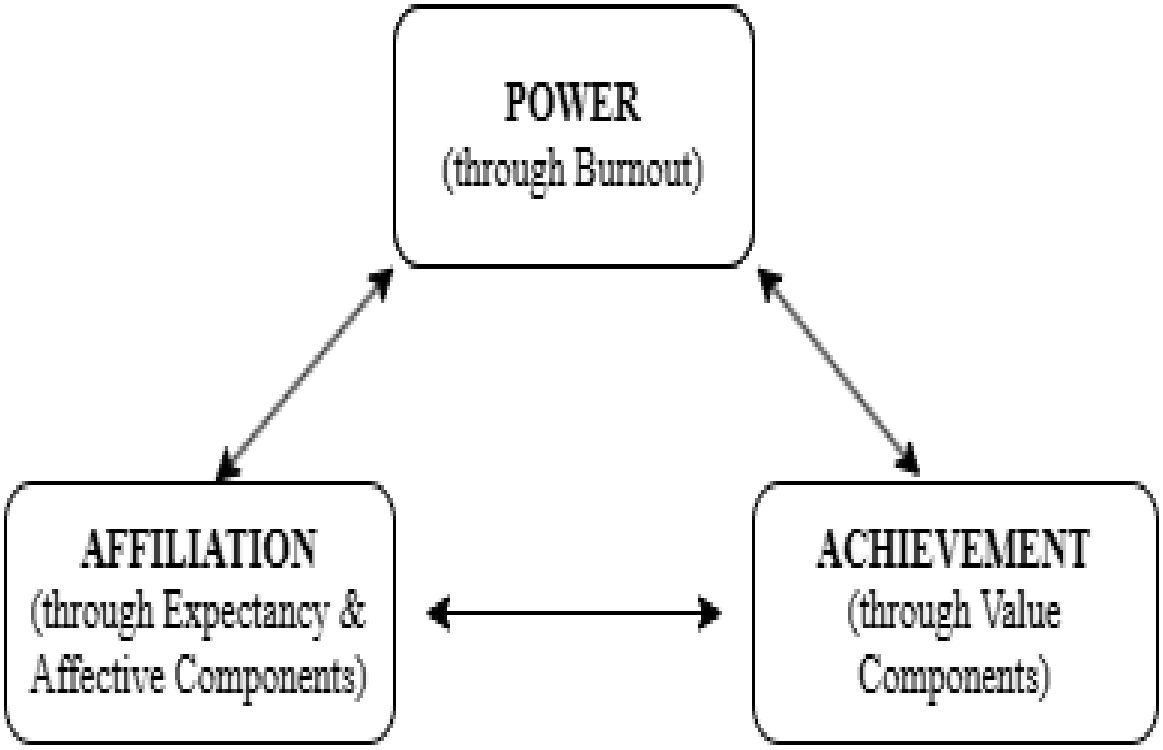

Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study

Relationship between Power, Achievement and Affiliation in Learning.

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is done to explore motivation factors for learning among undergraduates. A purposive sample of 46 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from McClelland (1985), PIntrich & DeGroot (1990) and Campos,et. al. (2011) to reveal the variables in table 1 below. The survey has 4 sections. Section A has items on demographic profile. Section B has included 12 items that measure intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation and task value beliefs.

Table 1. Distribution of Items in the Survey

	LEARNERS' NEEDS (McClelland, 1985)	CONSTRUCT		VARIABLE			
B	ACHIEVEMENT	VALUE COMPONENT (Pintrich & DeGroot,1990) VALUE COMPONENTS	(i)	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	4	12	.890
			(ii)	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	3		
			(iii)	Task Value Beliefs	5		
C	AFFILIATION	EXPECTANCY COMPONENT	(i)	Students' Perception of Self- Efficacy	5	12	.860
			(ii)	Control Beliefs for Learning	2		
		AFFECTIVE COMPONENTS			5		
D	POWER	BURNOUT (Compos et al (2011)		Exhaustion	8	16	.779
				Disengagement	8		
						40	**.906**

Table 1 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of distribution of items in the survey, thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

FINDINGS

Findings for Demographic Profile

Table 2 indicates that 72% of the participants are female, while 28% are male. This gender distribution indicates that the findings may reflect more on the experiences and perspectives of female learners.

Table 2. Percentage for Gender

1	Male	28%
2	Female	72%

The age distribution of its participants is shown in Table 3. Most of the participants, 76%, fall within the 19-20 years old age group. This is followed by 20% of participants who are 21-22 years old. A smaller portion, 4%, are between 17-18 years old, and no participants are 23 years old or above. This age distribution indicates that the findings are primarily reflective of younger adults, particularly those in their late teens and early twenties. This focus on a specific age group should be considered when interpreting the results, as it may limit the applicability to a broader age range.

Table 3. Percentage for Age Group

1	17-18 years old	4%
2	19-20 years old	76%
3	21-22 years old	20%
4	23 years old and above	0%

Table 4 reveals the distribution of participants across different academic disciplines. A significant majority, 89%, are from Science and Technology fields. In contrast, 9% of the participants are from Social Sciences, and only 2% are from Business disciplines. This finding shows majority of students in Science and Technology, potentially influencing the study's outcomes and their relevance to other fields.

Table 4. Percentage for Discipline

1	Science & technology	89%
2	Social Sciences	9%
3	Business	2%

While Table 5 shows the percentage of students at different educational levels who participated in the survey, most participants are from the Diploma level, comprising approximately 96%, compared to only 4% from the Degree level.

Table 5. Percentage for Level

1	Diploma	96%
2	Degree	4%

Findings for Power

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do students perceive power in learning? In the context of this study, power is measured by causes of burnout such as (i) exhaustion and (ii) disengagement.

Table 6. Mean for (i) Exhaustion

Item	Mean
EQ1 There are days when I feel tired before the day begins	3.5
EQ2 After classes, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better	3.6
EQ3I can tolerate the pressure of my studies very well	3.5
EQ4 During classes, I often feel emotionally drained	2.8
EQ5 After classes, I have enough energy for my leisure activities	3.4
EQ6 after classes, I usually feel energized	3.3
EQ7 after my classes, I usually feel worn out and weary	3.1
EQ8 Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well	3.6

Table 6 indicates a data on power in learning explored student burnout through exhaustion. The table shows moderate agreement with feeling tired throughout the day, needing more post-class recovery, and managing workload well. Disagreement with emotional drain suggests a positive aspect, but mixed responses on leisure energy levels warrant further investigation into the student experience.

Table 7. Mean for Disengagement

Item	Mean
DQ1I always find new and interesting aspects in my study	3.7
DQ2It happens more and more often that I talk about my studies in a negative way	2.8
DQ3Lately, I tend to think less during classes and attend classes almost mechanically	3.2
DQ4I find my studies to be positive challenging	3.8
DQ5 Over time, students can become disconnected from this type of routine	3.5
DQ6 This is only thing (studying) that I can imagine myself doing now	3.4
DQ7I feel more and more engaged in my studies	3.4
DQ8 Sometimes I feel sickened by my study tasks	3.2

An analysis of disengagement in in this study reveals mixed findings as illustrates in Table 7. While students generally agreed their studies are interesting (DQ1: 3.7) and challenging (DQ4: 3.8), some reported feeling disconnected (DQ5: 3.5) and zoning out (DQ3: 3.2). This highlights the need for further research into how factors like power, achievement, and affiliation influence student engagement.

Findings for Achievement

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do students perceive achievement in learning? In the context of this study, achievement is measured by value components such as (i) intrinsic goal orientation, (ii) extrinsic goal orientation and (iii) task value beliefs.

Table 8. Mean for (i) Intrinsic Goal Orientation (4 items)

Item	Mean
MSVCQ1In this program, I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things.	3.7
MSVCQ2In the courses of a program like this, I prefer course materials that arouse my curiosity, even if they are difficult to learn.	3.7
MSVCQ 3The most satisfying thing for me in this program is trying to understand the content of the courses	4
MSVCQ 4When I have the opportunity in this class, I choose course assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade.	3.7

Table 8 shows that students' intrinsic goal orientation is strong, with means around 3.7 for most items, and the highest being 4.0 for finding satisfaction in understanding course content. This indicates that students perceive achievement in learning through intrinsic motivation, valuing challenging tasks, curiosity-arousing materials, and assignments that promote personal growth over guaranteed good grades. Such intrinsic motivation suggests that students feel empowered by having control over their learning experiences and may foster positive affiliations within their learning environment by collaborating with peers who share similar values. This intrinsic drive aligns with the broader themes of power, achievement, and affiliation in the learning context.

Table 9. Mean for (ii) Extrinsic Goal Orientation (3 items)

Item	Mean
MSEGQ1Getting a good grade in the classes is the most satisfying thing for me right now.	4.5
MSEGQ 2The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade point average, so my main concern in this program is getting a good grade.	4.5
MSEGQ 3I want to do well in the classes because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, or others.	4.5

Table 9 illustrates that students highly prioritize extrinsic goals, with all items scoring a mean of 4.5. This emphasizes their strong desire for external rewards such as good grades and improving their grade point average, indicating the significance of external validation in motivating their learning endeavours.

Table 10. Mean for Task Value Beliefs (5 items)

Item	Mean
MSTVQ1I think I will be able to transfer what I learn from one course to other courses in this program.	3.7
MSTVQ2 It is important for me to learn the course materials in the courses.	4.1
MSTVQ3I think the course material in the courses of this program is useful for me to learn	4.1
MSTVQ4I like the subject matter of the courses.	3.9
MSTVQ5Understanding the subject matter of the courses is very important to me.	4.3

While Table 10 reveals students' attitudes toward task value beliefs, with mean scores ranging from 3.7 to 4.3. The data suggests that students generally find course materials important and valuable for their learning, as evidenced by high scores for items MSTVQ2, MSTVQ3, and MSTVQ5. However, there are slightly lower scores for items MSTVQ1 and MSTVQ4, indicating potential concerns regarding the transferability of learning between courses and the overall appeal of the subject matter. These findings offer valuable insights into students' perceptions of the significance of course materials, which can inform instructional strategies and curriculum development efforts.

Findings for Affiliation

This section presents data to answer research question 3- How students perceive affiliation in learning? In the context of this study, affiliation is measured by expectancy components such as (i) students' perception of self-efficacy and (ii) control beliefs for learning and affective components.

Table 11. Mean for (i) Students 'Perception of Self-Efficacy (5 items)

Item	Mean
ECSEQ1I believe I will receive excellent grades in the classes.	3.8
ECSEQ2I'm confident I can understand the most complex materials presented by the instructors in the courses.	3.7
ECSEQ3I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this program.	3.7
ECSEQ4I'm certain I can master the skills being taught in the classes.	3.7
ECSEQ5Considering the difficulty of the courses, the teachers, and my skills, I think I will do well in the classes.	3.7

The data from Table 11 explores how students view their own abilities, termed self-efficacy, in five areas, with mean scores between 3.7 and 3.8. This suggests students generally feel moderately confident about their academic skills and performance. They express belief in receiving good grades, understanding complex materials, excelling in assignments and tests, and mastering taught skills.

Table 12. Mean for Control Beliefs for Learning (2 items)

Item	Mean
ECCBQ1 If I study in appropriate ways, then I will be able to learn the material in the courses of this program	4.3
ECCBQ 2If I try hard enough, then I will understand the course materials.	4.2

Table 12 shows that students believe in their ability to control their learning outcomes, with mean scores of 4.3 and 4.2 for the two items. They feel confident that studying appropriately and putting in effort will lead to understanding course material.

Table 13. Mean for Affective Component -reversing (5 items)

Item	Mean
ACQ1 When I take a test, I think about how poorly I am doing compared with other students.	3.2
ACQ2 When I take a test, I think about items on other parts of the test I can't answer	3
ACQ3 When I take tests I think of the consequences of failing.	2.6
ACQ4I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take an exam.	3
ACQ5I feel my heart beating fast when I take an exam.	3

Moving to Table 13, mean scores range from 2.6 to 3.2 across five items, indicating varying levels of negative emotions experienced during tests. Some students worry about performing poorly compared to others or the consequences of failure, while others feel uneasy or have a fast-beating heart during exams. These findings highlight the connection between students' beliefs about their learning control and their emotional experiences during tests, offering insights for supporting student well-being and academic success.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussions

In conclusion, this study sheds light on how students perceive different aspects of learning. They value both intrinsic goals like understanding course content and extrinsic goals like achieving good grades. They also feel moderately confident in their ability to control their learning through study methods and effort. However, during tests, students experience varying levels of negative emotions. These findings echo past research, emphasizing the importance of understanding how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, self-beliefs, and emotions influence students' learning experiences.

Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Understanding the relationship between power, achievement, and affiliation in learning provides valuable insights for improving education. These findings highlight the importance of creating balanced and supportive classroom environments. Teachers should focus on empowering students, helping them set and achieve goals, and fostering a sense of community. This can be done by giving students more control over their learning, setting achievable targets, and promoting collaboration.

Future research should explore how these factors interact in different contexts, considering cultural and individual differences. Long-term studies could reveal how these relationships affect educational outcomes over time. Researchers should also investigate practical ways to apply these findings, looking at how specific programs and interventions can enhance learning by addressing power, achievement, and affiliation. In

summary, understanding these motivational factors can help educators develop better teaching strategies, leading to improved learning experiences and outcomes for all students.

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