The Influence of Power on Affiliation and Achievement in Learning

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of power on affiliation and achievement in learning within the Malaysian educational context. Drawing upon theories of motivation and social psychology, the research examines how students perceive power dynamics in their learning environments, the extent to which affiliation with peers and educators affects their motivation, and the relationship between these factors and academic achievement. Employing an online survey using Google Form among 35 students, the study aims to provide insights into the complex interplay between power, affiliation, and achievement in learning. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of student motivation and inform pedagogical practices and interventions aimed at fostering supportive learning environments and enhancing academic success. Understanding these complexities can inform educators on how to cultivate a learning environment that fosters healthy power dynamics, positive social interactions, and academic success.

Keywords: Affiliation, motivation, self-regulated, power dynamics.

INTRODUCTION

Background of study

Malaysia, a country known for its diverse cultural and ethnic landscape, presents a unique context to explore the interplay between power, affiliation, and achievement in the realm of learning. The country's educational system, which caters to a multicultural student population, has long been a subject of interest for researchers and policymakers alike. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in enhancing student engagement and academic performance, particularly in the context of Malaysia's diverse ethnic and racial composition. Furthermore, the impact of factors such as motivation, organizational culture, and leadership styles on the development of communication skills among university students in Malaysia has been well-documented (Rodzala S. A. & Saat M. M., 2018). However, the direct influence of power dynamics on the relationship between affiliation and achievement in learning remains an area that warrants further investigation. As Malaysia continues to navigate the challenges of fostering inclusive and equitable educational opportunities, understanding the nuanced interplay between these factors can inform policy decisions and pedagogical approaches that cater to the unique needs of the nation's diverse learner population (Rodzala S. A. & Saat M. M., 2018) (Sua T. Y., Ngah K. & Darit S. M., 2013) (Wah Y. L. & Nasri N. M., 2019).

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Current Studies in the Area of Research

In Malaysia, where hierarchical structures and cultural norms may influence classroom dynamics, there is a need to understand how power dynamics impact students' affiliation patterns and academic achievements within

educational settings. While existing literature has explored the influence of power on learning outcomes globally, there is a scarcity of research specifically contextualized within Malaysian schools. The cultural emphasis on respect for authority and collectivist values in Malaysia may shape power dynamics within classrooms, potentially affecting students' affiliative tendencies and motivation to excel academically. However, empirical evidence regarding the specific mechanisms through which power operates in Malaysian educational contexts remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of power on affiliation and achievement in learning within Malaysian schools, addressing the following research questions: How do power dynamics manifest in Malaysian classrooms, and how do they influence students' affiliation patterns? How does the power differential between teachers and students impact students' motivation and academic achievement in Malaysia? By addressing these questions, this research seeks to provide insights into the role of power in shaping educational experiences and outcomes in Malaysia, thereby informing strategies for creating inclusive and empowering learning environments tailored to the Malaysian context.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is done to explore the perception of their motivation and self-regulated learning strategies. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions.

- How do learners perceive power as motivation in learning?
- How do learners perceive affiliation as motivation in learning?
- How do learners perceive achievement as motivation in learning?
- Is there a relationship between power, affiliation, and achievement?

This research hopes to understand in complex ways how learners' intrinsic social and psychological motivations interact in their process of managing and maintaining their own learning. In investigating power, social affiliation, and achievement within the context of self-regulated learning, research will uncover in what ways learners specifically defined “motivational profiles" determine what strategies will be used by the learner, whether power and leadership motivation, social affiliation and community motivational drives, or achievement and excellence motivational needs drive them. In effect, through investigating how power, affiliation, and achievement are interwoven, it will be discovered how and in what manner groups of and by motivations interact and work either separately or cumulatively to affect and determine how a learner will persevere, use resources, and engage in metacognition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation to Learn

Studies exploring motivation to learn among Malaysian students reveal a complex interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. While research suggests a generally moderate level of motivation overall (Salih M., Mohammed Y. M. Mai & Shibli A. A., 2016), students often exhibit higher extrinsic motivation, driven by external pressures like parental expectations and future career prospects (Salih M., Mohammed Y. M. Mai & Shibli A. A., 2016) (Hamzah L. M., Sueb R., Alias N. F., Mustafa S. M. S. & Yusof M. M. M, 2022). However, intrinsic motivation fueled by genuine interest and enjoyment in learning is also present and positively impacts academic achievement (Hamzah L. M., Sueb R., Alias N. F., Mustafa S. M. S. & Yusof M. M. M, 2022) (Chengjun M. & Mustakim S. S, 2022). Additionally, factors like teacher support, effective learning strategies, and a positive classroom environment can significantly enhance student motivation (Chengjun M. & Mustakim S. S, 2022). Furthermore, research indicates that motivation can vary by subject area, with some studies suggesting higher intrinsic motivation for science learning in females compared to males (Salih M., Mohammed Y. M. Mai & Shibli A. A., 2016). Overall, this body of research underscores the multifaceted nature of motivation among Malaysian students and the importance of fostering a learning environment that caters to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

Self- Regulated Learning Strategies

Self-regulated learning (SRL) has been a subject of extensive research in the educational landscape, particularly in the context of Malaysia. Studies have explored the levels of self-regulated learning among university students in the country, highlighting the importance of metacognitive knowledge and the application of domain-appropriate learning strategies. One study found that the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) is a valid and reliable instrument for examining self-regulated learning among Malaysian university students [7]. Another study developed a measurement model for online self-regulated learning strategies in Malaysian Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), emphasizing the need for a tailored approach to understanding self-regulation in the digital learning environment. Additionally, research has examined the role of interactivity and instructional scaffolding in promoting self-regulated learning in online video-based learning environments, indicating the potential for transferring self-regulated strategies from traditional to digital contexts (Shayesteh Hashemyolia, Azizan Asmuni, Ahmad Fauzi Mohd Ayub, Shaffe Mohd Daud, Jasmin Arif Shah, 2014) (Zalli M. M.M., Nordin H. & Hashim R.A, 2012) (Delen E., Liew J. & Willson V., 2014).

Past Studies on Motivation to Learn

Past studies in Malaysia reveal a complex interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing student motivation. While extrinsic motivators driven by parental expectations and future careers are prevalent (Abd Razak, N. A., & Harun, J., 2018) (Mazuin, H., Ibrahim, S., & Ayub, N. H., 2022), intrinsic motivation fueled by genuine interest also exists and positively impacts achievement (Mazuin, H., Ibrahim, S., & Ayub, N. H., 2022) (Mohamad, M. H., & Hassan, R., 2016). Additionally, teacher support, effective learning strategies, and a positive classroom environment can significantly enhance student motivation (Mohamad, M. et al, 2016). Furthermore, research suggests variations in motivation by subject and demographics, with some studies indicating higher intrinsic motivation for science learning in females compared to males (Abd Razak, N. A., & Harun, J., 2018). Overall, this research underscores the multifaceted nature of motivation among Malaysian students and the importance of fostering a learning environment that caters to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

Past Studies on Self-Regulated Learning Strategies

Malaysian research highlights self-regulated learning strategies (SRLS) as crucial for student success. Studies demonstrate a positive correlation between self-regulated learners and academic achievement (Haron, N. H., Haron, K., Ali, J. S., Salim, A. H., & Hussain, S. M., 2015) (Zalli, M. S. A., Hassan, R., & Abu Samah, A., 2019). These studies identify cognitive engagement, resource management, and motivational beliefs as key aspects of SRLS impacting learning outcomes (Zalli, M. S. A. et al, 2019). Furthermore, research suggests SRL strategies are particularly effective in online learning environments, potentially due to the increased need for self-directed learning (Zalli, M. S. A. et al, 2019). There's also some evidence that SRL ability may vary by student experience. For instance, one study found stronger resource management skills among second-year nursing students, possibly due to adapting to online learning during the pandemic (Eyupoglu, N., & Uluoglu, S., 2023). Overall, this research emphasizes the value of promoting SRLS among Malaysian students to enhance academic performance.

Conceptual Framework

For learning to be successful, learners need to stay motivated. One important motivator for any type of learning is the environment (Rahmat,N.H., Sukimin,I.S., Sim,M.S., Anuar,M., & Mohandas, E.S., 2021). In addition to that, learning success also depends on the fulfillment of the needs of the learners. According to McClelland (1965), learners' needs are affiliation, which involves making the learner feel they belong. This is supported through learners' self-efficacy. Secondly, learners need to feel a sense of achievement. To do so, they need to have positive intrinsic values. Sometimes, striving for success may involve learners feeling a sense of test anxiety. The last need is the feeling of power. Having a sense of power over their learning can be translated to the learners using self-regulated strategies. Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework of the study. This study combines McClelland's three theories of need to merge with Pintrich & De Groot's (1990) strategies to reveal the framework in Figure 1.

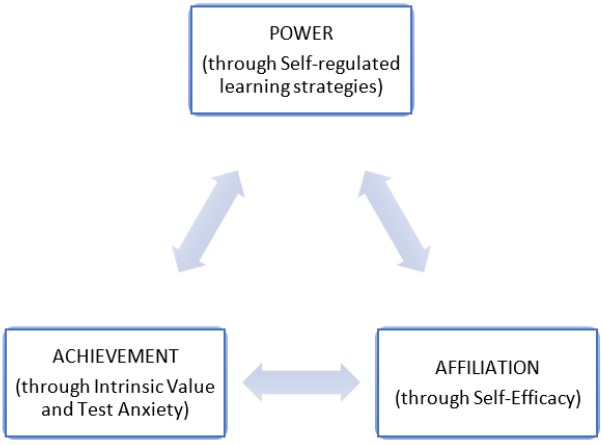

Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study

The Influence of Power on Affiliation and Achievement in Learning

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study examines the incentive elements that motivate undergraduate students to learn. Based on their enrolment status and availability to take part in the study, 35 undergraduate participants were chosen as a purposive sample. Purposive sampling was chosen for this exploratory study even though it restricts how broadly the results may be applied. A 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire based on Pintrich and DeGroot's (1990) motivational framework and McClelland's (1965) theory of needs was used to gather data. The survey consisted of four sections. Part One collected demographic data, Part Two quantified achievement and affiliation, and Part Three evaluated power motivation.

With Cronbach's alpha values of 0.769 for affiliation, 0.704 for achievement, and 0.881 for power, the instrument showed acceptable to good internal consistency, as Table 1 illustrates. These findings show that the tool is valid for assessing the desired motivational dimensions. To answer the research questions, inferential statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS. The associations between power, affiliation, and achievement motivation among undergraduate students were investigated using correlation and regression analysis.

Table 1- Distribution of Items in the Survey

PART	McClelland (1965) Theory of Needs	STRATEGY Pintrich & DeGroot (1990)		SCALE	No Of Items	Total Items	
ONE		DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE					
TWO	AFFILIATION	MOTIVATIONAL BELIEFS	A	SELF-EFFICACY	9	9	.769
	ACHIEVEMENT		B	INTRINSIC VALUE	9	13	.704
			C	TEST ANXIETY	4		
THREE	POWER	SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES	D	COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE	13	22	.881
			E	SELF-REGULATION	9		
		TOTAL NO OF ITEMS				44	.897

FINDINGS

Findings for Demographic Profile

The demographic profile gives an overview of the gender distribution of survey respondents. According to Table 2, 74% of respondents identified as male and 26% as female.

Table 2. Percentage for Gender

1	Male	74%
2	Female	26%

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents across disciplines. The respondent is heavily skewed towards Science & Technology, which is 89%. Social Sciences account for 9%, whereas Business accounts for 2%.

Table 3- Percentage for Discipline

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

Findings for Power

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive power as motivation in learning? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) Cognitive Strategy Use and (ii) Self-Regulation.

Table 4- Mean for COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE

Item	Mean
SRLSCSUQ1 When I study for a test, I try to put together the information from class and from the book.	4.2
SRLSCSUQ 2 When I do homework, I try to remember what the teacher said in class so I can answer the questions correctly.	4.1
SRLSCSUQ 3 It is hard for me to decide what the main ideas are in what I read.	3.3
SRLSCSUQ 4 When I study, I put important ideas into my own words.	3.7
SRLSCSUQ 5 I always try to understand what the teacher is saying even if it doesn't make sense.	3.9
SRLSCSUQ 6 When I study for a test, I try to remember as many facts as I can.	3.9
SRLSCSUQ 7 When studying, I copy my notes over to help me remember material.	3.7
SRLSCSUQ 8 When I study for a test, I practice saying the important facts repeatedly to myself.	3.8
SRLSCSUQ 9 I use what I have learned from old homework assignments and the textbook to do new assignments.	4.1
SRLSCSUQ 10 When I am studying a topic, I try to make everything fit together.	3.9
SRLSCSUQ 11 When I read material for this class, I say the words again to myself to help me remember.	3.7
SRLSCSUQ 12 I outline the chapters in my book to help me study.	3.5
SRLSCSUQ 13 When reading, I try to connect the things I am reading about with what I already know.	3.7

Table 4 presents survey responses regarding various study habits and strategies. Each statement is rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating strong agreement. Overall, the responses indicate that students tend to prioritize integrating information from both class and the book when studying for tests and doing homework, showing a mean score of around 4.0 for these behaviors. However, there is some difficulty in identifying main ideas and summarizing content in their own words, as reflected in the lower mean scores for these activities (around 3.5). Students also exhibit a tendency to actively engage with the material by trying to understand even when it's challenging, though repetitive memorization methods like saying key facts repeatedly or copying notes for better retention yield slightly lower mean scores. Additionally, incorporating prior knowledge into new assignments and making connections between new and existing information appear to be common study strategies, as indicated by the mean scores around 4.0 for these statements. Generally, respondents demonstrated a tendency to employ a variety of study techniques, with a particular emphasis on integrating prior knowledge and understanding class material for both homework and test preparation.

Table 5- mean for SELF-REGULATION

Item	Mean
SRLSSRQ1I ask myself questions to make sure I know the material I have been studying.	3.7
SRLSSRQ 2When work is hard I either give up or study only the easy parts.	3
SRLSSRQ 3I work on practice exercises and answer end of chapter questions even when I don't have to.	3.3
SRLSSRQ 4Even when study materials are dull and uninteresting, I keep working until I finish.	3.6
SRLSSRQ 5Before I begin studying, I think about the things I will need to do to learn.	3.7
SRLSSRQ 6I often find that I have been reading for class but don't know what it is all about.	3.1
I find SRLSSRQ 7that when the teacher is talking, I think of other things and don't really listen to what is being said.	2.9
SRLSSRQ 8When I'm reading, I stop once in a while and go over what I have read.	3.4
SRLSSRQ 91 work hard to get a good grade even when I don't like a class.	2.9

According to Table 5, based on the provided mean scores for each item of the Self-Regulated Learning Self-Report Questionnaire (SRLSSRQ), the respondents generally demonstrate moderately high levels of self-regulated learning strategies, with mean scores ranging from 2.9 to 3.7. Specifically, items such as "I ask myself questions to make sure I know the material I have been studying" (Item 1) and "Before I begin studying, I think about the things I will need to do to learn" (Item 5) received relatively higher mean scores, indicating a strong tendency to engage in metacognitive strategies. However, items such as "When the work is hard, I either give up or study only the easy parts" (Item 2) and "I often find that I have been reading for class but don't know what it is all about" (Item 6) received lower mean scores, suggesting potential areas for improvement in persistence and comprehension strategies. These findings provide valuable insights into students' self-regulated learning behaviors and can inform targeted interventions aimed at enhancing their academic success and learning outcomes.

Findings for Achievement

This section presents data to answer research questions 2- How do learners perceive affiliation as motivation in learning? In the context of this study, this is measured by Self-Efficacy.

Table 7- Mean for INTRINSIC VALUE

	Mean
MBIVQ1 I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things.	3.5
MBIVQ2 It is important for me to learn what is being taught in this class.	4
MBIVQ3 I like what I am learning in this class.	3.5
MBIVQ 4 I think I will be able to use what I learn in this class in other classes.	3.7
MBIVQ 5 I often choose paper topics I will learn something from, even if they require more work.	3.2
MBIVQ 6 Even when I do poorly on a test, I try to learn from my mistakes.	4.1
MBIVQ7 I think that what I am learning in this class is useful for me to know.	4
MBIVQ 8 I think that what we are learning in this class is interesting.	3.8
MBIVQ 9 Understanding this subject is important to me.	4.2

According to Table 7, the mean scores from the Motivated Behavior Inventory Questionnaire (MBIVQ) suggest that the respondents exhibit strong intrinsic motivation and value for learning within the classroom context, with mean scores ranging from 3.2 to 4.2. Specifically, students express a preference for challenging classwork to facilitate learning new concepts (Item 1) and demonstrate high levels of importance placed on learning what is being taught (Item 2) and liking the subject matter (Item 3). Moreover, students perceive the content as relevant and applicable beyond the classroom, indicating a belief in the utility of their learning (Items 4, 7, and 9). Although the mean score for choosing paper topics based on learning opportunities is slightly lower (Item 5), students demonstrate a strong willingness to learn from mistakes and persist in their learning endeavors, as evidenced by the exceptionally high mean score for learning from test performance (Item 6). Additionally, students find the subject matter interesting (Item 8), further highlighting their intrinsic motivation and engagement with the material. These findings underscore the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation and emphasizing the relevance and applicability of course content to enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes within the Malaysian educational context.

Table 8- Mean for TEST ANXIETY

Item	Mean
MBTAQ1 I am so nervous during a test that I cannot remember facts I have learned.	3
MBTAQ 2 I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take a test.	2.7
MBTAQ 3 I worry a great deal about tests.	3.3
MBTAQ 4 When I take a test, I think about how poorly I am doing.	3.1

Based on Table 8, the mean scores from the Motivated Behavior Test Anxiety Questionnaire (MBTAQ) indicate that the respondents experience moderate levels of test anxiety, with mean scores ranging from 2.7 to 3.3. Specifically, students report feeling nervous and uneasy during tests (Items 1 and 2), with a tendency to worry about test performance (Item 3) and focus on perceived shortcomings during test-taking (Item 4). While the mean scores suggest that test anxiety is present among the respondents, they fall within the moderate range, indicating that test anxiety may not be overly debilitating but still warrants attention. These findings highlight the importance of implementing strategies to manage test anxiety and promote a positive test-taking environment, such as providing adequate support, resources, and interventions to help students cope with test-related stressors effectively within the Malaysian educational context.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussions

In conclusion, the survey responses depicted in Tables 4 to 8 have unveiled valuable insights into students' study habits, self-regulated learning behaviors, academic self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and test anxiety within the Malaysian educational context. Overall, the findings showcase a tendency among students to prioritize integrating information from various sources, demonstrating moderately high levels of self-regulated learning strategies and academic self-efficacy, coupled with strong intrinsic motivation for learning. While areas for improvement in persistence, comprehension strategies, and managing test anxiety have been identified, these results can inform targeted interventions aimed at enhancing academic success and fostering a positive learning mindset. The significance of fostering intrinsic motivation, emphasizing the relevance of course content, and managing test anxiety is highlighted, showcasing the potential for meaningful improvements in students' learning experiences and outcomes. These findings call for focused efforts to address identified areas of improvement and promote a supportive and enriching educational environment for students in Malaysia.

Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Pedagogical implications stemming from "The Influence of Power on Affiliation and Achievement in Learning" suggest educators prioritize strategies that empower students, foster supportive learning communities, and

promote meaningful goal setting to enhance motivation and academic success. Future research should delve deeper into the influence of cultural factors on students' perceptions of power, affiliation, and achievement, employing longitudinal studies to explore the long-term effects and examining the role of teacher practices and classroom climate in shaping motivational beliefs and behaviors. By addressing these implications and conducting further research, educators can develop evidence-based strategies to support students' motivation and success in educational contexts.

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