

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT DURING COVID-19

Nur Athirah Binti Mohd Khairulzaim

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT DURING COVID-19

NUR ATHIRAH BINTI MOHD KHAIRULZAIM

(70893)

This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Cognitive Science)

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(2022)

The project entitled 'The Relationship between Motivation and Academic Achievement During Covid-19' was prepared by Nur Athirah Binti Mohd Khairulzaim and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Cognitive Science).

Received for examination by:

(TAN KOCK WAH)

Date:

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ABSTRACT

Following the government's movement control order, which went into effect in Mac 2020, students took their lessons online during the Covid-19 period. This study intends to investigate the relationship between students' motivation and academic achievement during Covid-19. Additionally, it investigates how motivation varies by gender, place of residence and year of study. The participants in this voluntary survey were chosen using a simple random sampling approach. In total, 62 respondents from University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) took part in this survey. They are cognitive science undergraduates in their second and third years at the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development (FCSHD). The students' motivation was measured using the Academic Motivation Scale – college version (AMS-C 28) by Vallerand et al. (1993). The students' academic achievement was measured using cumulative grade point average (CGPA). The collected data was analyzed using Spearman's correlation and independent T-test. The result of Spearman's correlation shows there is a weak positive correlation between student's motivation and academic achievement. The independent T-test reveals that there is a significant different in motivation based on gender and place of residence, but there is no significant different based on year of study. The findings of this study could assist university administration and lecturers by offering some insights regarding students' academic accomplishment and motivation in online learning for better teaching and learning sessions during Covid-19.

Keywords: motivation, academic achievement, covid-19, gender, place of residence, year of study.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The world was hit by a global pandemic caused by Covid-19 in the year 2020. This has affected everyone, regardless of age, condition, position, or country. Malaysia's government began enforcing the MCO on March 18, 2020. We are currently in the third phase, MCO 3.0, at the time this study is being conducted. As a result of the government's lockdown or movement control order (MCO), a university student's normal daily class routine is converted into a full online class or lecture. Following this situation, University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) decided to hold a full online learning session for all students, including undergraduates. Undergraduate students are bound to struggle to maintain their attention and motivation during this period of time. This study is being conducted to investigate the relationship between motivation and academic achievement and other factors that may affect motivation such as gender, place of residence during online learning and year of study.

Background

Following the federal government's announcement in May 2020 regarding the conditional movement control order (CMCO), all higher education sectors were allowed to reopen following the MCO's abrupt closure. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) issued a media statement on May 27, 2020, instructing all higher educational providers to conduct teaching and learning activities through online learning or remote learning, with no traditional face-to-face teaching and learning permitted until December 31, 2020. (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020). As a result of this announcement, UNIMAS has been conducting online teaching and learning sessions since then, up until this study was performed.

Online learning takes place on a variety of devices such as computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones, and so on. Depending on the courses, this session will typically include either synchronous or asynchronous learning, or both depending on the lecturer. Asynchronous online

learning is facilitated by media such as recorded videos and discussion boards, with flexibility in learning being a key component. Meanwhile, synchronous online learning is supported by media such as video conferencing, with the main goal of encouraging real-time two-way communication between the host and participants (Hrastinski, 2008). Both sessions can be difficult to complete online, especially for students who have limited access to technological devices such as a computer and an internet connection. This may have an impact on their motivation to continue their studies in this situation.

During this session, students' motivation for studies may be affected, as they may be highly motivated or less motivated depending on their situation. It could include their personality during this time, their environment, time management, and resources to get through the learning method. Some students may use the flexibility of learning to search for additional references and information related to their studies, whereas others may use the flexibility to relax and ignore their studies. Research stated that motivation for online learning in Indonesian universities was reported to be contributing to inconsistent effects in higher education (Gustiani, 2020). It was also mentioned by Gustiani (2020) that some students were unmotivated to learn as a result of online learning, whereas others were highly motivated. Meeter et al. (2020) discovered in a study that current university students value online learning less than traditional college education because they are less motivated and dedicate shorter hours on their studies.

Problem Statement

Online learning is something that many undergraduate students are unfamiliar with. According to Rahim et al. (2021), this strategy, which has been used by Malaysian students for more than a year, has an impact on their motivation and satisfaction in education, based on research on the estimated hours spent on studying and the absence of attendance during lectures. A finding was reported by Neisler (2020, as cited in Hettiarachchi et al., 2021) that the most common obstacle of online leaning is keeping the students motivated as it affected their academic success and satisfaction. It was discovered that university students' motivation decreased during this session, but this had no effect on their results, which appeared to be better than what they expected if it had been a traditional learning session (Meeter et al. 2020). However, Mælan et al. (2021, as cited in Mak, 2021) stated in the research of students in Norway during pandemic that students with poor achievement in study demonstrated fewer efforts and in their education. This is further supported by the findings of Mak (2021) that students with lower performance in academic due to pandemic have lower interest in learning in this period as it was mentioned that student's academic achievement and environment does associate with their motivation in learning. Furthermore, it was discovered that there is a gap between students of high and low achievers in learning during this pandemic as low achievers have lower motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement in their studies (Mælan et al. 2021).

Because of these contradictory findings, this study tries to determine whether academic achievement is influenced by students' motivation during the epidemic. Furthermore, it seeks to explore how various other factors (e.g., gender, place of residence, and year of study) would influence student motivation during the epidemic. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies being conducted on the motivation of students from Malaysian universities in the current environment. The information gained from this research can be used by university administration to learn more about student motivation during this time period.

Objectives

This research is being carried out in order to achieve the following objectives:

- 1. To identify the relationship between motivation and academic achievement.
- 2. To determine if motivation differ based on gender.
- 3. To determine if motivation differ based on place of residence during online learning.
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4. To determine if motivation differ based on year of study.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study:

- 1. Is there a significant relationship between motivation and academic achievement?
- 2. Does student's motivation differ based on gender?
- 3. Does student's motivation differ based on place of residence during online learning?
- 4. Does student's motivation differ based on year of study?

Conceptual Framework

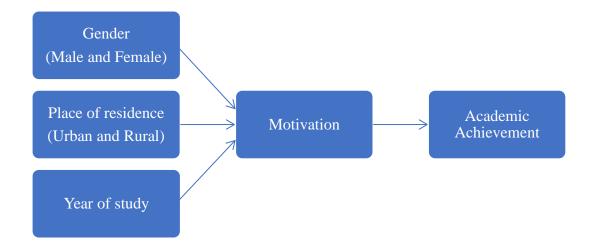


Figure 1. The conceptual framework for this research study.

This research study is guided by the above conceptual framework. The research questions generated before focused on the relationship of academic achievement and student's motivation, and the difference in motivation based on gender, place of residence and year of study. The academic achievement of the students is measured through their cumulative grade point average (CGPA). The gender tested in this research is binary which are male and female. The place of residences used in this study is the location of the students having their online learning which categorized into urban and rural area. The year of study is measured by using

second year and third year students as they already have a record of their academic achievement in the university.

Significance of the study

This study is important to determine the students' motivation during online learning and what is the causes. It will help to explain the reasons for the students' achievement during this time. It will also explain how gender and place of residence affect one's motivation to learn. This information helps the university administration on proper course planning and measure if such a situation arises again in the future. It is useful research for lectures and students to better understand themselves in this type of teaching and learning environments.

Limitations of the study

This study has several limitations such as research instrument, sample size and time constraints. The time constraints and sample size are limited as it only involves UNIMAS undergraduate students that takes online courses during this Covid-19 pandemic. They came from social science field of the university. It did not represent the whole student's population such as those who is in engineering field, medical field, science fields and technology field. The research instruments are only limited to online questionnaires distributed via an online form. The response may not reflect how they truly feel about the question, but rather how others expect them to feel.

Definition of terms

Motivation

Motivation, defined as the stimulation of behavior and attitude in order to attain a goal, is a critical component of our life experiences and with one another (Simpson & Balsam, 2015). It is a driving factor that causes people to behave in a particular way depending on the situations.

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For this study, the operational definition of motivation is measured through Academic Motivation Scale – College Version (AMS-C 28) which originally developed in French Vallerand et al. (1993). This questionnaire consists of 28 items covering intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation. This questionnaire is developed based on selfdetermination theory.

Academic performance

Academic performance is theoretically characterized as a symbol for academic achievements that demonstrate how far an individual has progressed toward desired objectives educational environments, particularly kindergarten, school, college, and university (Steinmayr, 2015). Academic success at the university level is measured by grade point average (GPA), with 4.0 being the best grade.

The operational definition for academic performance in this study is their cumulative grade point average (CGPA) which represents the participant's performance from the first semester to the current semester. The best grade a students could achieve is 4.0. It is used in the study as it displays their achievements during the pandemic which indicate their level of understanding in their studies.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

As indicated previously, students started to continue their studies by going fully online from their residents or also known as online distance learning during this pandemic. Depending on the lecturer, the students may have synchronous or asynchronous online learning, and both require stable internet connection. Due to this requirement, it might affect students' motivation in pursuing their study as mentioned by Meeter et al (2020) that student's motivation decreased as a result of the change between physical to online classes. This shows that we need to study on how students' motivation during online learning is reflected through their academic achievement and the factors affecting their motivation such as gender, place of residence during online learning and year of study.

Students' motivation and academic achievement

Motivation can boost a student's interest and involvement in a subject. This will improve their understanding of the subject and improve their results. According to Guey et al. (2010, as cited in Li & Zheng, 2017), a student's learning performance can be improved by establishing a setting that can motivated and encouraged them. It is supported by another researcher, Pintrich (2003, as cited in Sivrikaya, 2019), stated that motivation it a significant factor than is influencing one's accomplishment in the educational process. However, no relation between student's motivation and academic achievement was found in research performed by Fortier et al. (1995, as cited in Sivriyaka, 2019). Another research by Amrai et al. (2011) conclude that a weak relationship was found between motivation and academic achievement, but this may be linked to students' lack of accuracy in providing their mean score. During this Covid-19 pandemic, Mak (2021) findings stated that students' engagement in academic are highly affected as evidenced by their poor performance. Despite these findings, it is little known if the undergraduate student's performance and motivation is a significant

predictor in student's academic achievement especially in this period. This study also wanted to if motivation is affected by the year of study of the students.

Gender differences and motivation

It is beliefs that gender plays a role in level of motivation which involve intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to a study conducted by Sölpük Turhan (2020) that it was found that the differences between gender towards motivation only appear at a lower significant level. This is further supported by research from Bedel (2013, as cited in Sölpük Turhan, 2020) that gender did not affect a person's motivation in education. It is followed by another research by Rathakrishnan et al. (2021) that no significant difference between motivation and gender during online learning in this pandemic. However, research came out with the opposite result. Mawson & Bodnar (2021) found in their study that females have greater level of motivation compared to male of their age. Their findings were supported by research from D'Lima et al. (2014, as cited in Mawson & Bodnar, 2021) that stated female has higher extrinsic motivational level compared to the same-age males. Another research found that female students have higher motivation towards learning compared to male students (Kenar et al., 2016). Despite the findings mentioned above, there has been no research made on undergraduates' students from university in Sarawak if motivation is differed between the gender.

Place of residence and motivation

According to Williams and Burden (1997, as cited in Rahmat & Akbar, 2019) mentioned in their study that the greater satisfaction towards education can be obtained by creating a similarity between an idealistic and real learning environment. This shows that the environment settings can affect a person's learning situation. Thus, it means that it able to affect their motivation. When comparing two different education system which are traditional and open educational system, it was found that there is a significant different between students in rural and urban area for both systems (Singh & Singh, 2011). In the contrary, a report stated

that student from rural and urban area has no different level of motivation. The finding was gathered by Rahmat and Akbar (2019) where majority of students at rural are possessed high motivational level, while majority of students at urban area has moderate motivational level. Despite the findings mentioned, little is known if place of residence during this pandemic session will affect students' motivation especially during online learning in Malaysia. Hence, it is relevant for this study to be made to gain information if undergraduate student's motivation in online learning is affected by their residency.

The current study hopes to find more material to add to the existing literature. The relationship between motivation and academic achievement is studied using correlational analysis. Descriptive analysis is used to evaluate the characteristics that influence motivation, which include gender, residence, and year of study. It would be fascinating to incorporate studies based on local students' perceptions of their motivation in education, particularly in light of the current situation.

Past findings related to topic

Student's motivation has become a topic of interest as it has been done in previous research. In research about motivation in adult education from Hubackova and Semradova (2014) found that the factors affecting their motivation were obtaining new qualification, getting a degree, and financial consideration. Another study on student motivation in online classes found that the reasoning for their participation resulted from their extrinsic desire to achieve an adequate participation mark for the course (Lee & Martin, 2017). Research by Rahim et al. (2021) found that although the students struggled to retain their motivation since they wanted the lessons to end sooner, they also intended to do their best in every assignment assigned to them. This indicates that both students and teachers must play a role in ensuring students' enthusiasm to learn. It also demonstrates how, depending on their circumstances, their motivation may influence their learning process.

Summary

The majority of the research was conducted on a global basis, with minimal attention paid to students from UNIMAS. Current research will concentrate on the relationship between motivation and academic achievement, as well as differences in student motivation based on gender, place of residence, and year of study. It was found that there is contradiction in the past studies. For relationship between motivation and academic achievement, there are studies who found the positive relation while others found negative relation. In term of gender difference, there is no research made on undergraduate students in Malaysia. For the place of residence and motivation, research founds that rural student has higher motivational level compared to urban student, but it has not been tested in the Malaysia especially in current situation. Previous research also found that motivation also become one of the important factors in adult education. It also highlights that academic motivation can be affected by their environment which leads to the purpose of current research. It will be intriguing to investigate how the present situation affects students' motivation in education.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

In this chapter, the population and the sample for this research is stated. It will also include the sampling method which is random sampling. The instruments used for this experiment are described in full, including the participant's demographics and the Academic Motivation Scale – College version (AMS-C 28). The technique for data collecting procedures is described which is simple random sampling method. The data analysis using the SPSS Statistical program are explained in detail in this chapter. Generally, the analysis used were descriptive analysis, Spearman's correlation, and independent T-test. All of this is given to ensure that the research techniques are properly defined for a better understanding of this study design.

Research design

This study employed quantitative research, which is defined as systematic research that collects and analyses measurable data using statistical, mathematical, or computer approaches. The data for this study is gathered using an online questionnaire. The type of quantitative research that is used for this study is survey research through online questionnaire. The questionnaires are used to collect data because the information can be converted into numerical data that can be used in statistical procedures. The analysis is performed using the SPSS Statistics tool.

Population, sample & sampling procedure

This study's population consists of UNIMAS undergraduate students. The students represented in the sample are from the undergraduate students of cognitive science programme. This study's sampling method is a simple random sampling method. It is appropriate for this study because it gives each participant an equal chance of being chosen as a sample for analysis. The sample size for this study is intended to be to be 60 individuals, made up of equal male

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and female participants from 2nd and 3rd year students of the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development (FCSHD).

Instruments

For this study, the instruments are divided into two parts which labelled as part A and part B. Part A consist of the participants demography. It includes their age, gender, ethnicity, faculty, program taken, current year of study, CGPA and place of residence during online learning. Part B consist of the Academic Motivation Scale – College version (AMS-C 28) questionnaire. This questionnaire was originally in French before translated into English (see Appendix A for the questionnaire). It was developed by Vallerand et al. (1993) as a new measure of motivation toward education. This questionnaire includes seven subscales with a total of 28 items which are Intrinsic motivation (to know), Intrinsic motivation (toward accomplishment), Intrinsic motivation (to experience stimulation), Extrinsic motivation (identified), Extrinsic motivation (introjected), Extrinsic motivation (external regulation) and Amotivation. The response format is a 7-point liker scale (1=does not correspond at all to 7=corresponds exactly. To use this scale, only the complete reference data must be mentioned.

Validity & reliability

In this research by Algharaibeh (2021), the reliability of AMS-C 28 is tested using Cronbach alpha as its seven subscales ranged between 0.725 and 0.893 indicating that this questionnaire is reliable. Chong and Ahmed (2012) conducted research on nine Malaysian universities found that this questionnaire is reliable to measure the students' motivation in academic pursuits, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.708 to 0.804 for all subscales. In research from Sousa and Silva (2021), it was stated that the validity of AMS-C 28 was examined in different country for several subjects such as physical education, biology, and mathematics with the value of GFI ranging from 0.88 to 0.94. According to the research findings, all factors loading better than 0.5 and the Comparative Index of Fit (CFI) is larger

than 0.5 with the actual value being GFI=0.908 and CFI=0.941 (Sousa & Silva, 2021). This revealed that the AMS has high reliability and validity for measuring motivation through intrinsic, extrinsic and amotivation.

Data collection procedure

The procedure in collecting the data for this study is through simple random sampling method. It gives chances to randomly select a subset of participants to be chosen from the population of this study which is the undergraduates' students. The data is collected by distributing the online questionnaire that is prepared through Google Form system to the participants via social media. It is because the participants can be access easily through this platform. The questionnaire is written in a single language, English, and it includes a consent form for ethical and confidential purposes. Participants are urged to forward the link to others who may be interested in participating in this study. The targeted participants are from FCSHD, particularly from the cognitive science program in the second- and third-year students.

Data analysis procedure

The data obtained from the online questionnaire is analyzed using SPSS statistical program for descriptive analysis, independent T-test, and Spearman's correlation. Descriptive analyses were used to determine the mean and standard deviation. Four hypotheses were developed for this study. The hypotheses were established in accordance with the research purpose, which is to explore the relationship between motivation and academic achievement, as well as the factors influencing student motivation.

Table 1.

Summarization of data analysis procedure.

Type of Statistical Test

Hypothesis

Spearman's correlation	H ₀₁ : There is no significant relationship between motivation and academic achievement.
Independent T-test	H ₀₂ : There is no significant difference in motivation based on gender.
	H ₀₃ : There is no significant difference in motivation based on residential area during online learning.
	H_{04} : There is no significant difference in motivation based on year of study.

Ethics of the study

Each participant was given a consent form (see Appendix B for the informed consent and confidentiality form). This informs the participants about the study's purpose. The consent form is used to obtain participants' permission to participate in the study. It was stated in the form that their participation is entirely voluntary. The purpose of having this form is to convey enough information related to the studies that can help them to either continue to participate or decline the offer in joining the research project (Musmade et al., 2013). Any information provided by participants is strictly confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. Before being given the instruments for this study, each participant was briefed on the study and its implications.

This research is going to be conducted on a population of students who studies in social science field form UNIMAS. Participants need to answer all the questionnaires provided. It comes in the form of AMS-C 28 questionnaire. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire is well supported, and it is based on previous research that is accepted by the related committee. The participants involvement in this study is voluntary and they can excuse themselves from the study if required. Data analysis is conducted using SPSS statistical programs as the analyzation involved descriptive calculation, independent t-test, and Spearman's correlation.