

Assessment of the Academic Motivation Level of Freshmen Education Students

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Abstract. Academic motivation plays an essential role in any educational setting. Analysis of students' motivation may impact students' academic success. At VSU-Isabel, it is observed that some students have poor academic achievement, a few intend to drop out, and absenteeism is also noted. These are the severe outcomes resulting from a lack of motivation. This study employed a descriptive research design to examine the academic motivation levels of 154 university students grouped by academic program, sex, age, and scholarship status. A standardized academic motivation scale consisting of 28 items, with four items per subscale, was assessed on a 7-point scale. Results showed that BPED students demonstrated better motivation than students in other courses. Females were more motivated than men, and students aged 20 years and above were more motivated compared to younger students. Additionally, students without scholarships showed higher motivation. It is concluded that there are no differences in the level of academic motivation across all variables involved, indicating that students have the same level of academic motivation. Theoretically, the findings reinforce the tenets of Self-Determination Theory, suggesting that autonomy and internal drivers influence motivations. Practically, the results imply the need for educational institutions to design personalized pedagogies and develop multiple instructional activities or interventions that help improve the level of academic motivation, supporting the autonomy, competence, and relatedness of these students until they successfully graduate.

Keywords: Academic motivation; Motivation level; With support; Scholarship.

1.0 Introduction

Academic motivation is an area of motivation that is essential for students' learning. According to Hulleman et al. (2016), academic motivation refers to the students' drive and interest in engaging with the educational process and their experiences at school. It has been claimed that academic motivation impacts a range of outcomes for college students (Roksa & Whitley, 2017). Considering that coursework at college can be challenging, and many of the demands of a university education are difficult to meet, academic motivations can provide students with the determination to overcome the challenges they may face while learning. Academic motivation is significant in that it has a favorable impact on students' perseverance levels (Howard et al., 2021). Research studies have consistently shown that academically driven students regard learning as essential and take pleasure in learning-related activities (Larsen & Puck, 2020). That is why students who have high academic motivation tend to perform better. Academic motivation is one concept in the field of motivation. Learners who are motivated tend to achieve better academic success. Motivation is one of the most essential elements in maintaining students' ongoing academic success, as it increases learning performance (Bakar, 2014). It is what keeps students persevering regardless of obstacles and difficulties. It gives them the strength to reach their full potential and be committed to

achieving their goals. According to Reeve (2016), motivation affects a person's energy level, determines perseverance in achieving a specific objective, modifies the different learning strategies employed, and shapes a person's mental process. Motivation lies behind an individual's desire to learn, take action, comprehend, think, or acquire specific abilities, skills, or mindsets (Filgona et al., 2020). Motivated students tend to perform well in class and have a positive academic experience (Vanslambrouck et al., 2018). Because of its relevance in the field of education, several studies about motivation have already been delved into (e.g., Sugano & Mamolo, 2021; Mamolo, 2019; Artino, 2008; Widjaja & Chen, 2017; Cudney & Ezzell, 2017; Oweis, 2018; Cheng et al., 2016; Chiang & Lee, 2016; Mamolo, 2022; Argaw et al., 2017).

A lack of academic motivation leads to declining academic achievement among students. Poor academic achievement, intention to drop out, and absenteeism are just a few of the severe outcomes resulting from poor motivation (Zhang et al., 2016), which has been observed among first-year education students at Visayas State University in Isabel. Several instructors have observed that some students require assistance to process and retain information, as well as to participate more actively in activities, particularly during the teaching-learning process. It has also been alarming that students are frequently tardy, arriving 15-30 minutes late to class, or absent for several days at a time. According to Brewer and Burgess (2005), when college students lack motivation, a common consequence is a decline in attendance, followed by frequent absences and lower grades.

Examining the academic motivation of education students is essential to understanding and being informed about the possible ways to support their learning, especially in improving their academic achievement and well-being throughout their teaching training and future teaching endeavors. In the Philippines, only a small percentage of students who enroll in college complete their bachelor's degree. As they adjust to their new academic environment and their role as college students, first-year students confront various social and academic hurdles. LaBrie et al. (2012) state that many students undergo significant lifestyle changes while attending college. It requires a great deal of self-determination and dedication to succeed in college, considering that coursework can be challenging and many students need more time to become ready and equipped to handle the demands of a university education. Particularly in technical or advanced courses, students may feel that the material is moving too quickly for them to understand, which may cause worry and frustration. According to Iglesias-Benavides et al. (2016), the effects of these changes limit both academic success and an easy adjustment to college life.

For these reasons, this study aims to determine the level of academic motivation of Visayas State University first-year education students. The study's findings raise awareness and serve as a basis for recommendations on how teachers and parents can enhance academic motivation, which is crucial for achieving optimal learning experiences and completing a bachelor's degree. This study is essential because there have been no previous studies in the University system that have determined the academic motivation of learners, which could serve as baseline information for future interventions. Furthermore, the study is essential and urgent to ensure that administrators, school stakeholders, and students work together to improve the education system.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design, which is used to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon under investigation. Descriptive research seeks to accurately and systematically describe a population, circumstance, or phenomenon (McCombes, 2022). According to Vijayamohan (2021), a descriptive research design is utilized to thoroughly comprehend a topic and investigate its background, details, and current patterns. The study ascertained the level of academic motivation of first-year students at the VSU Isabel campus. Moreover, a significant difference was sought among variables.

2.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted at Visayas State University, Isabel, specifically in the Department of Teacher Education. VSU Isabel is one of the component campuses of VSU Baybay, which offers bachelor's degrees in Secondary and Elementary Education, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Information Technology, and Agribusiness. It also has two colleges, which are specialized academic units concentrating on specific fields of study. These two colleges are the College of Engineering and Technology, the College of Teacher Education, Arts & Sciences, and the College of Agribusiness. Visayas State University, located in Isabel, is a dynamic academic research setting.

2.3 Research Participants

The study's respondents were the freshmen or 1st-year students enrolled in education courses, including the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd), Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) with majors in Math, English, and Science, and Bachelor of Physical Education (BPED), at Visayas State University in Isabel. Regarding the enrollment data, the total number of students enrolled for the Academic year 2023-2024 is 257. There are 91 from BEEd, 63 from BPED, 16 from BSEd-Math, 61 from BSEd-English, and 26 from BSEd-Science. A stratified random sampling group was formed according to academic programs. Using a sampling calculator, with a total enrollment of 257, a 5% margin of error, and a 95% confidence level, 154 students from different academic programs were included in the research. This means there were 54 from BEED, 38 from BPED, 10 from BSED-Math, 37 from BSED English, and 15 from BSEd Science. The inclusion criteria require that participants are officially enrolled, at least 18 years old, capable of giving consent, and attending the university during the data collection period. A simple random sample was selected using an Excel randomizer to choose the representative sample within each stratum. All names were encoded into the Excel file, and then, via the randomizer, those chosen were included in the study.

2.4 Research Instruments

The instrument used in this study is the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), which was adopted. The Academic Motivation Scale is a scale that assesses motivation in high school and college, constructed by Vallerand et al. (1992). It contains seven sub-scales, with 28 items assessed through a seven-point scale. The AMS has demonstrated satisfactory to good reliability and validity in several research studies among college students (Can, 2015; Fairchild et al., 2005) and university students (Vallerand et al., 1992), with alpha values for the AMS ranging from .62 to .86 (Vallerand et al., 1992), .70-.86 (Cokley et al., 2001), and .70-.90 (Fairchild et al., 2005). Therefore, it is utilized in the study.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought the approval of the Dean of COTEASA to conduct this study. After securing approval, the survey questionnaire was prepared and reproduced, and the researcher obtained informed consent forms from the students included in the study. Students were reminded that their participation is entirely voluntary and that the data gathered will be used solely for research purposes. Moreover, the research data gathering strictly adhered to the Data Privacy Act 2012. A survey questionnaire, as adopted from the AMS survey, was administered. The collected data will be summarized and tabulated in preparation for data analysis.

2.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The Academic Motivation Scale, developed by Vallerand et al. (1992), assessed seven types of constructs. It contained 28 items, with four items per subscale assessed on a 7-point scale. The results gathered were treated as interval data. To answer objective number 1, the mean and standard deviation were used. The level of academic motivation of the students grouped according to the four variables in the study was described using the mean. In contrast, the standard deviation was used to measure the spread of the data. For inferential statistics, a t-test for independent samples was used to compare the sex assigned at birth (male vs. female) and scholarship status (with or without scholarship). ANOVA was used to determine a significant difference in the students' motivation among different age groups and academic programs

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 VSU-Isabel Freshmen Education Students' Level of Academic Motivation

Table 1 illustrates the Level of Academic Motivation of the VSU-Isabel Freshmen Students grouped according to their academic program. Results show that the Bachelor of Physical Education got the highest level of academic motivation with $M = 6.43$, $SD = 1.04$. The Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Math has the lowest level of academic motivation, with $M = 5.86$, $SD = 0.49$.

Table 1. *The Academic Motivation Level of VSU-Isabel Freshmen Education Students when grouped according to Academic Program*

Academic Program	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BPED	43	1.61	6.43	4.87	1.04
BEEd	50	1.25	6.32	4.99	1.12
BSEd Science	15	2.04	5.93	4.32	1.16
BSEd Math	11	4.07	5.86	.05	.49
BSEd English	35	3.57	6.25	5.09	.70

Table 2 presents the Level of Academic Motivation of the VSU-Isabel Freshmen Students grouped according to their sex assigned at birth. Results show that both sexes have closely similar levels of academic motivation. Although females received more varied answers, $SD = 1.03$, than males, $SD = 0.71$, the means indicate that they are at a similar level of academic motivation.

Table 2. *The Academic Motivation Level of VSU-Isabel Freshmen Education Students when grouped according to Sex Assigned at Birth*

Sex	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Female	134	1.25	6.43	4.90	1.03
Male	20	3.75	6.25	5.04	.70

Table 3 illustrates the Level of Academic Motivation of VSU-Isabel Freshmen Students grouped by age: 18 years old, 19 years old, 20 years old, and above. Results show that those referred to as "Ate" and "Kuya", because they are 20 years old and above, have higher academic motivation ($M = 6.43$, $SD = 0.82$).

Table 3. *The Academic Motivation Level of VSU-Isabel Freshmen Education Students when grouped according to Age*

Age	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
18 Years Old	31	1.25	6.21	4.62	1.22
19 Years Old	64	1.54	6.25	4.91	1.01
20 and Above Years Old	55	2.57	6.43	5.10	.82

Table 4 presents the Level of Academic Motivation of the VSU-Isabel Freshmen Students grouped according to their scholarship status. Results show an alarming fact that those without scholarship status have higher academic motivation, with $M = 6.43$, $SD = 0.95$, compared to those who received scholarships; $M = 6.04$, $SD = 1.50$.

Table 4. *The Academic Motivation Level of VSU-Isabel Freshmen Education Students when Grouped According to Scholarship Status*

Scholarship Status	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
With Scholarship	12	1.61	6.04	4.76	1.50
Without Scholarship	142	1.25	6.43	4.93	.95

3.2 VSU-Isabel Freshmen Education Students' Level Academic Motivation Significant Differences

Table 5 shows no significant difference between groups, as indicated by an F -test of 1.76 and a p -value of 0.13. This means that the academic motivation among academic programs is the same regardless of the programs in which the first-year students in VSU Isabel were enrolled.

Table 5. *ANOVA Results on the Differences in the Academic Motivation of VSU-Isabel Education Students by Academic Program*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.89	4	1.72	1.76	.13
Within Groups	145.58	149	.97		
Total	152.48	153			

Table 6 presents no significant difference between gender, $p = 0.27$. This means that the academic motivation between genders among first-year students at VSU Isabel is the same, regardless of whether the students are Male or Female.

Table 6. *Independent Samples T-test Results on the Differences in the Academic Motivation of VSU-Isabel Freshmen Education Students by Gender*

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Gender	Equal variances assumed	1.198	.276	-.589	152	.557	-.141	.239	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances are not assumed			-.778	32.63	.442	-.141	.181	Lower	Upper

Table 7 shows no significant difference between groups, $F\text{-test} = 2.27$, $p = 0.10$. This means that the academic motivation among the VSU Isabel first-year education students across all age levels is the same. They may be 18, 19, or 20 years old and above, and their academic motivation is the same.

Table 7. *T-test Results on the Differences in the Academic Motivation of VSU-Isabel Freshmen Education Students by Age*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.55	2	2.27	2.27	.106
Within Groups	147.15	147	1.00		
Total	151.71	149			

Table 8 highlights no significant difference between scholarship, $p = 0.70$. This means that the academic motivation of VSU Isabel's first-year students is the same regardless of their scholarship status. Those who receive or do not receive an allowance from private or government sponsors have the same level of academic motivation.

Table 8. *Independent Samples T-test Results on the Differences in the Academic Motivation of VSU-Isabel Freshmen Education Students by Scholarship*

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
With Scholarships	Equal variances assumed	5.299	.023	-.56	152	.57	-.168	.300	-.763	.42
	Equal variances are not assumed			-.38	11.75	.70	-.168	.440	-1.13	.79

This study investigated the academic motivation of first-year education students at Visayas State University, Isabel. It was found that, in terms of academic motivation level, grouped according to the academic program, BPED students have a higher level of motivation, with $M = 6.43$, $SD = 1.04$, compared to the BSED Mathematics students, who had the lowest level of academic motivation, with $M = 5.86$, $SD = 0.49$. The nature of the program may be the main factor in this difference, as math is considered more difficult than PE. This corroborates the findings of Seth et al. (2023), highlighting that students are more likely to perform well in class if they are happy with their primary choice. However, further tests revealed no significant difference between the groups ($F\text{-test} = 1.76$, $p = 0.13$). This means that the academic motivation among different academic programs is the same regardless of the programs in which the first-year students in VSU Isabel were enrolled. This further means that students are more or less of the same performance in the subjects they are enrolled in. They may major in math, English, or PE, but they exert effort similarly, and no one in the group performed better.

Comparing sex assigned at birth, female students have higher academic motivation with $M = 6.43$, $SD = 1.03$ than male students, $M = 6.25$, $SD = .70$. These are in line with the findings of Asimaki and Vergidis (2013), Carvalho (2016), Duckworth et al. (2015), and Otanes et al. (2022). Carvalho (2016) argues that despite societal norms that dictate men are more robust and manly than women, gender disparities in motivation to learn and participate in academic activities may arise from different patterns of learning and social standards for males and females. According to numerous research studies, women are more likely than men to be driven by academic pursuits and display positive emotional traits (Asimaki & Vergidis, 2013). However, the t-test revealed no significant difference between genders, $p = 0.27$. This means that the academic motivation between genders among first-year students at VSU Isabel is the same, regardless of whether the student is male or female. This finding is similar to the results of the studies by Vakilmofrad et al. (2021) and Hu and Luo. These findings would support what is observed in the classroom setting. At VSU, Isabel, regardless of gender, exhibited a similar manner of participation. Though there are more enrolled girls than boys, their performance is the same.

The study also revealed that students aged 20 years and above, referred to as Ate and Kuya, had higher academic motivation ($M = 6.43$, $SD = .82$). This may be because they are more mature and can better manage their time and learning. A study conducted by Yi-Yin (2011) found that motivation for acquiring new knowledge and enjoying learning are the priorities for older adults. This finding is like the research findings of Vakilmofrad et al. (2021). However, a t-test result for the differences in the Academic Motivation Level of VSU-Isabel Freshmen Education Students, when grouped by age, revealed no significant difference between groups ($F\text{-test} = 2.27$, $p = 0.10$). This means that the academic motivation among the VSU Isabel first-year education students across all age levels is the same. They may be 18, 19, or 20 years old and above, and their academic motivation is the same. This corroborates the findings of Marumo et al. (2019) and Momanyi et al. (2015). The results would convey a message

that maturity is not a factor in academic motivation. This suggests that students may have already had life experiences and are older, but compared to their counterparts, they perform similarly in class, as they share the same motivation level. Thus, it is not safe to say that the older the student becomes, the more motivated they are in the class.

One of the last findings of the study shows an alarming fact that those without scholarship status have higher academic motivation, with $M = 6.43$, $SD = 0.95$, compared to those who got scholarships; $M 6.04$, $SD = 1.50$. Students with scholarships should perform better because, according to Khan and Chong Ewe (2015), their financial assistance should motivate them to work hard and improve their academic achievement. In addition, there was no significant difference between the scholarship group ($p = 0.70$) and the non-scholarship group. This means that the academic motivation of VSU Isabel's first-year students is the same regardless of their scholarship status. Those who receive or do not receive an allowance from private or government sponsors have the same level of academic motivation. This is an alarming result, as students who receive scholarships are often supported by public or private funds. Though it is believed that they should be more motivated than those who are not receiving any allowance, this is not the case. Thus, donors may find ways to engage beneficiaries actively in the learning process. They must be updated on the scholars' performance and provide another way to help if possible.

The results could be generalized to students who could be more motivated toward learning. The results, when grouped according to stated variables, show that students are less motivated, leading to possible boredom in school, tardiness, low participation, and, worse, dropping out of school and not finishing college. The results are alarming, as according to the SDT, both intrinsic motivation and well-internalized forms of extrinsic motivation predict a range of positive outcomes across various educational levels. They are enhanced by support for students' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). However, the results show otherwise. Even those who receive stipends because they have scholarships are less motivated than those who do not.

4.0 Conclusion

This study assessed the academic motivation of first-year education students in VSU Isabel across all offered academic programs. Based on the findings, the following conclusions are formulated. The nature of the program or satisfaction with the chosen major can affect students' motivation, as seen in the comparison between BPED students and the rest of the academic program, which included respondents. Female students tend to have higher academic motivation than their male counterparts, as women often exhibit more motivation and drive, as well as more positive emotional behavior. Students aged 20 years and above are also more motivated than younger students, as older adults often prioritize their education and training, and they find joy in learning. Students without scholarship status have higher academic motivation than those who are scholarship grantees. Academic motivation is crucial because it empowers students to persevere in the face of obstacles and challenges. Examining the motivation of education students is essential to understanding and being informed about the possible ways to support their learning, especially in improving their academic achievement and well-being throughout their teaching training and future teaching endeavors.

The results show no differences in the academic motivation levels of university students. Their academic motivation needs to be improved to enhance their school performance further. The research findings provide a baseline for stakeholders to collaborate in the development of students. School administrators may provide a series of interventions to the learners in a way that could improve their motivation. Instructors may also modify their teaching pedagogies and find ways to involve the students in learning that could ignite their motivation. Furthermore, students must take responsibility for their learning. They are already at the college level; hence, they must do things that are expected of them, such as being participatory in class and setting better examples for the younger generations.

Based on the conclusions of this study, some recommendations can be made to instructors or teachers who want to motivate students. Academic programs influence students' motivation, so teachers may employ a range of alternative instructional techniques to grab students' interest and attention. Using active learning techniques and offering autonomy-supportive environments may help sustain motivation. The age and sex of students are also factors that influence motivation, so teachers must always maintain an optimistic outlook toward their students. They should also be open-minded, pleasant, passionate, and informed about the names and interests of their students. Furthermore, they may also tailor their approach to address each student's requirements, providing

flexibility in scheduling and course objectives.

Overall, considering the findings of this study, it could be advantageous to pay attention to the level of motivation of the students in designing and implementing lessons, taking into consideration the age, unique differences between males and females, and academic program, and to include factors that encourage academic and intrinsic motivation among students.

For future research, the participants in this study were selected from only one state university, and the number of male students was less than that of female students. For further studies, it would be desirable to acquire a sample representative from other States, Universities, and Colleges (SUCs) to have a larger and more varied participant pool and observe whether significant differences arise. Qualitative studies may also be done to explore the lived experiences and personal narratives behind students' motivational levels, especially among scholarship recipients.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Not indicated

6.0 Funding

Not indicated

7.0 Conflict of Interests

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