

Original Research Article

The Relationship Between Learning Motivation and Academic Performance Among Student Parents

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the relationship between learning motivation and academic performance of the student parents of the select higher education. The respondents of the study included 101 student parents. It used descriptive-correlational design utilizing proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were treated using frequency, percentages, mean, standard deviation, T-test, one-way ANOVA, Duncan test for post hoc comparison and Pearson correlation. Findings revealed that majority of the student parents belonged to 18-24 age group, predominantly female, mostly lived with a partner, had a first child aged 0-4, belonged to poor families, and mostly with parents attended college without completing a degree. Meanwhile, the respondents' learning motivation showed an exceptionally high level whom majority of them possessed a superior level in academic performance. There were no significant differences observed in learning motivation based on sex, age of the first child, parents' monthly income, and education level of both the father and the mother, however, only the marital status was found to have significant difference. Moreover, this study showed learning motivation may not strongly impact academic performance. Hence, it is recommended that collaborative efforts from policymakers, school administrators, and instructors are encouraged to adopt inclusive support among these student parents.

Keywords: Academic performance, Competence, Learning motivation, Mediating role, Multiple regression, Student parents

INTRODUCTION

A successful transition from high school to college has been demonstrated by extensive study to be an essential component for success in higher education (Beach, 2019). In the landscape of higher education, the pursuit of academic performance has numerous factors, such as students' motivation and competence for learning that affect academic performance. Student parents are individuals enrolled in college or university who also have the responsibility of raising children. They often represent a diverse demographic, including single parents, married, or partnered parents, and those with children of varying ages. They may come from various socioeconomic backgrounds and

often face additional financial pressures and time constraints compared to their non-parenting peers (Roy et al., 2022).

According to Vyskocil (2018), student parents are in a special position as they pursue degrees in higher education institutions, and they encounter several obstacles when trying to further their education. In particular, the researcher who is a higher education instructor and at the same time a guidance advocate observed that while some student parents can succeed in their academic journey a number of student parents in higher education sometimes have difficulties and challenges in the educational setting, such as academic difficulties, monetary strain, time management, stigma and stereotyping, childcare and many more. Addressing these challenges requires a combination of different factors, such as motivation and competence to continue and be successful in their academic journey.

Motivation has long been recognized as a critical determinant of academic achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2017). For student parents, however, the dynamics of motivation are uniquely shaped by their dual roles, requiring a careful analysis of the elements that support or undermine their academic performance. This study aimed to explore the mediating role of student parents' competence in the complex relationship between their learning motivation and academic performance. Scholars have acknowledged the multifaceted nature of competence, encompassing not only cognitive abilities but also the practical skills and adaptive strategies required to effectively balance the demands of academic and parenting responsibilities (Dow-Fleisner et al., 2023). In this context, competence serves as a crucial mediator, potentially influencing the translation of learning motivation into tangible academic outcomes among student parents.

According to a study by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), there are approximately 1.5 million student parents in the Philippines. These students are more

likely to come from low-income families and to be female. They may have to pay for childcare, transportation, and other expenses while paying for tuition and other educational costs. For student parents, this may make it more difficult for them to study for college. Doubt exists on how successfully these student parents manage and face these challenges. To better understand the relationship between motivation and academic performance, this study looked at the mediating role of competence in pursuing higher education in that relationship. It ascertained how student parents' competence of select state higher education of Camiguin Province in pursuing higher education.

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive-correlational design utilizing regression analysis. The descriptive-correlational design determined the level of competence in pursuing higher education, learning motivation, and academic performance. The site of the study was the state higher education institution of Camiguin Province. This study utilized proportionate stratified random sampling with a sample size of at least 101 student parents identified by the student affairs office. The researcher utilized the survey questionnaire in gathering the primary data of which a consent letter was appended during the data collection to ensure the respondents on the confidentiality of their responses. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents. Following data collection, the researcher tallied and recorded the data subjected for statistical treatment such as frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation, T-test, ANOVA, structural equation model, and multiple regression analysis. Focus group discussion was also applied to this study to provide a deeper understanding of the quantitative findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis and interpretation of the data based on the problems of the study are presented below.

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Most student parents were aged 18 to 24 (70.3%) and were predominantly female (72.3%). Most lived with a partner (61.4%) and had a first child aged 0 to 4 (68.3%). Financially, 92.1% earn less than 10,957 pesos monthly. While 25.7% of fathers attended college without a degree, 9.9% were graduates. Similarly, 40.6% of mothers attended college without completing a degree.

2. Student Parents' Level of Learning Motivation

Table 1 reveals that the mean score for intrinsic motivation was 3.38, with a standard deviation of 0.33, indicating a high level of motivation among student parents to engage in learning for its inherent rewards and enjoyment. Similarly, the mean score for extrinsic motivation was 3.66, with a standard deviation of 0.34, reflecting a high level of motivation among student parents driven by external factors such as grades and perceived outcomes of effort.

Table 1
Student Parents' Level of Learning Motivation in terms of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Intrinsic Motivation	3.38	.33	High Motivation
Extrinsic Motivation	3.66	.34	High Motivation
Total Measure	3.52	.31	High Motivation
<i>Note:</i>	<i>3.26-4.00</i>	<i>High Motivation</i>	<i>1.76-2.50</i>
	<i>2.51-3.25</i>	<i>Moderate Motivation</i>	<i>1.00-1.75</i>
			<i>Poor Motivation</i>
			<i>No Motivation</i>

When considering the total measure, which combines both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the mean score was 3.52, with a standard deviation of 0.31, indicating an overall high level of motivation. This suggests that student parents were highly motivated

to learn and engage in their academic pursuits, driven by both internal factors such as interest and curiosity, as well as external factors such as grades and perceived outcomes of effort. Achieving a higher level of education can enable parents to provide more opportunities for their children, including access to better schools, extracurricular activities, and overall improved quality of life.

One of the respondents said that going to college is not just for her benefit as she said, "I always remind myself that pursuing this degree is not just for my own sake or should I say for my happiness, but this is also for my daughter, my partner and to my parents as well. The study by Liu et al. (2019) provides relevant insights into the multiplicative effect of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on academic performance. A student parent might have high intrinsic motivation because they are genuinely interested in their field of study and find learning enjoyable. Simultaneously, they might have high extrinsic motivation driven by the need to secure a better job to support their family financially. The combination of these motivations can lead to a multiplicative effect where the student is more committed, puts in more effort, and ultimately performs better academically than they would if they were motivated by just one factor. In addition, the findings also underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of learning motivation among student parents. While intrinsic motivation reflects a genuine enthusiasm for learning and engagement with course material, extrinsic motivation highlights the importance of external rewards and incentives in driving academic performance. By recognizing and addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, institutions can support the diverse needs and preferences of student parents, ultimately fostering a positive and conducive learning environment that promotes academic success and personal growth.

3. Academic Performance of Student-Parents

Table 2 shows that the majority of student parents, comprising 36.6% of the total sample, achieve a superior level of academic performance. This indicates that a significant portion of student parents excel in their studies, demonstrating strong dedication and proficiency in their academic pursuits.

Table 2
Academic Performance of Student-Parents

Academic Performance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	8	7.9
Superior	37	36.6
Very Good	36	35.6
Good	16	15.8
Fair/Passing	3	3.0
Failed	1	1.0
Total	101	100.0

Note: Mean (SD) = 3.28 (.99)

Description: Very Good

The table shows that the majority of student parents, comprising 36.6% of the total sample, achieve a superior level of academic performance. This indicates that a significant portion of them excel in their studies, demonstrating strong dedication and proficiency in their academic pursuits. The data further show that there were 35.6% of student parent who attained a very good academic performance, highlighting their overall success and competence in their coursework. Moreover, 7.9% of them achieved an excellent level of academic performance, indicating exceptional achievement and mastery of course material. These findings suggest that a substantial proportion of student parents are capable of excelling academically despite the challenges they may face in balancing their academic responsibilities with family obligations. Furthermore, 15.8% achieved a good level of academic performance, indicating solid achievement and competency in their coursework. Additionally, a small percentage comprising 3% of the sample, achieved a fair or passing level of academic performance, while only 1% reported having failed. While these lower performance levels are less common among

them, they still underscore the importance of providing tailored support and resources to address academic challenges and promote student success.

The data imply that student parents demonstrate a range of academic performance levels, with the majority achieving superior or very good performance. A study set out to investigate the relationship between learning engagement, motivation, and academic performance among university nursing students. This is supported by Sturges et al. (2016) that there was a significant relationship between students' GPAs, the number of hours they reported studying, their motivation, and their academic performance.

3. Significant Difference on the Learning Motivation of StudentParents When Grouped According to Their Profile

Among the demographic profile of the student parents such as age, sex, age of the first child, socio-economic status with reference to parents' monthly income, and parents' educational attainment, only marital status was found to have a significant difference in the learning motivation of student-parents. This finding is supported in Table 4 demonstrating that there are significant differences in learning motivation among student parents when grouped by marital status, particularly in terms of intrinsic motivation and the total measure of learning motivation.

Table 3
Test of Difference on the Learning Motivation of StudentParents When Grouped According to Marital Status Profile

Learning Motivation	Marital Status Group				F-value (p-value)	Remarks
	Single Parent (n=25)	Lived-in (n=62)	Married (n=9)	Separated (n=5)		
Intrinsic Motivation	3.42 ^b ±.29	3.38 ^b ±.33	3.53 ^b ±.29	2.96 ^a ±.35	3.800* (.013)	Significant
Extrinsic Motivation	3.64±.38	3.65±.33	3.85±.18	3.47±.38	1.548 (.207)	Not significant

Total Measure	3.53 ^b ±.31	3.51 ^b ±.30	3.69 ^b ±.23	3.21 ^a ±.36	2.766* (.046)	Significant
Note:	Analysis is based One-way ANOVA test			not significant at a .05 level		

For intrinsic motivation, the one-way ANOVA test reveals a significant F-value of 3.800 with a corresponding p-value of 0.013. Post-hoc comparison using the Duncan test indicated that single parents (mean = 3.42) and married student parents (mean = 3.53) exhibited higher levels of intrinsic motivation compared to those who are separated (mean = 2.96). This finding suggests that marital status may influence the internal drive and enthusiasm for learning among student parents, with single and married individuals showing greater intrinsic motivation. Moreover, the table reveals the significant difference of the student parents' total measure of marital status with an F-value of 2.766 and a p-value of 0.046. The post-hoc comparison indicated that single parents and married student-parents had higher total learning motivation scores compared to separated student-parents.

Furthermore, the data show that among the marital status of respondents, the separated student-parents were significantly less motivated both intrinsically and overall compared to their peers in other marital status categories. Separated student parents were often the primary or sole providers for their children. Separation can be a highly stressful and emotionally taxing experience, leading to feelings of sadness, anxiety, and depression. These emotional burdens can diminish a person's motivation and focus on other areas, including education. Moreover, separated student-parents might face increased financial difficulties, as they may have to manage household expenses and child-rearing costs on a single income. Financial stress can lead to a decreased focus on academic goals and lower motivation.

A respondent having one child and separated said that "*Kailangan ko mahumaneskwela sir kay basin makuaan ra akongsala ko saako parents ug para pudsa future saakonganakmaogyudna ang priority naku sir.*" (I need to finish school, sir,

because to make at least lessen my mistake to my parents and for the future of my child, that is my priority, sir.) Furthermore, as elaborated in the study of Zhao and Mei (2016) on college students' motivation differences in the online learning environment and what characteristics of learners could exert influence on their motivation found that learners' learning motivation was affected by learners' characteristics as gender, employment status, and marital status.

Table 4 presents the results of Pearson correlation coefficients (R-values) and corresponding p-values indicating that there were no significant relationships between learning motivation and academic performance.

Table 4

Test of Relationship between the Student Parents' Level of Learning Motivation and their Academic Performance

Level of Learning Motivation	Academic Performance		Remarks
	r-value	p-value	
Intrinsic	.009	.929	<i>Not significant</i>
Extrinsic	.093	.356	<i>Not significant</i>
Total Measure	.080	.428	<i>Not significant</i>

Note: Analysis is based on Pearson Correlation Not Significant ($p > .05$)

Specifically, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and total learning motivation correlation coefficients ranging from 0.009 to 0.093, with p-values exceeding 0.05, suggest that learning motivation may not strongly influence academic performance among student parents in this context.

These results suggest that there were no strong correlations between the level of learning motivation and academic performance among student-parents in this analysis. Other factors beyond learning motivation may have a more substantial influence on academic performance among student-parents. Moreover, the findings suggest that the motivations traditionally believed to influence academic success might not hold the same weight for student-parents, possibly due to unique challenges they face such as

balancing academic responsibilities with parenting duties. This implies that simply having high motivation, whether internal or external, does not guarantee strong academic outcomes.

This is also an experience of one of the respondents, who said that being a mother at the same time a student makes it very hard to handle academic responsibilities according to her. However, she always makes sure that her academics are good and that be a good mother as well. "It is not easy to be a mother at the same time as a student sir, I struggled a lot with my time management and sometimes I miss other activities in school." However, several studies have proved that learning motivation positively correlates with academic performance. Afzal et al. (2010), revealed that student motivation and academic performance have a significant relationship. Hamid and Singaram (2016) posited that individuals' self-regulation of cognition, motivation, and behavior mediates the connections between the person, situation, and academic performance.

Conclusion

This study concluded that while intrinsic motivation among student-parents varies significantly based on age, with younger individuals demonstrating lower motivation compared to their older counterparts, other demographic factors such as sex, age of the first child, parents' monthly income, and parental education levels do not substantially impact learning motivation. However, marital status emerges as a significant determinant, particularly influencing intrinsic motivation and the overall measure of learning motivation. Moreover, this study showed learning motivation may not strongly impact academic performance.

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