

Predicting students' career adaptability through academic motivation

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Abstract:

From an early age, students should be encouraged to develop the psychological attributes that will serve them well in their future professional careers. Previous literature indicates a positive correlation between academic motivation and students' career adaptation. Accordingly, this study postulates a positive correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and students' career adaptability, as well as a negative correlation between amotivation and students' career adaptability. This quantitative study employs a convenience survey approach to collect cross-sectional time data. The motivation and career adaptation scales were employed to collect the data, which were then subjected to analysis using Spearman correlations. The results of the first hypothesis indicate a positive and significant correlation between intrinsic ($\rho = .60$) and extrinsic ($\rho = .52$) motivation with career adaptation, with a sufficiently large correlation load. The study revealed a negative and significant correlation ($\rho = -.13$) between amotivation and career adaptability, as predicted by the second hypothesis. The study also outlines its limitations and offers recommendations for future research..

Keywords: Academic motivation; Career adaptability

1. Introduction

The unemployment rate for individuals aged 15 and above in Indonesia is 4.82%, or approximately 7.20 million people in 2024 (BRS, 2024). This phenomenon can be attributed to a multitude of factors, both intrinsic (individual) and extrinsic (external). However, before the term "unemployment" is applied, it is necessary to identify the nature of the problem. A review of the mentality of high school students is necessary to prepare them for their professional careers. Educational statistics data indicate that 30.22% of students graduating from high school in 2023 are

of productive age. Consequently, the unemployment rate in Indonesia is likely to be greater than what has been reported. Consequently, high school students who are still teenagers must assess their mental state in order to anticipate their future professional careers.

Adolescence is a period of life during which individuals must confront a number of challenges in order to gain a sense of identity, self-awareness, and future direction (Santrock, 2012). However, it is often observed that students lack academic motivation during this developmental period. It is evident that academic motivation is of significant importance, as it aligns with the desired learning outcomes. These outcomes can subsequently inform the development of activities and initiatives that can direct and maintain persistence in learning (Meyshera & Hamdan, 2023). A student who is able to maintain persistence in learning is more likely to be able to identify their life purpose as a student and to plan their future life journey.

In general, upon completion of their secondary education, students will likely pursue further professional development. Nevertheless, a significant number of companies will select prospective employees who demonstrate a high degree of career adaptability. Small to medium-sized companies are less likely to invest in employee training and development due to the higher costs and time constraints involved, as well as concerns about the effectiveness of such programs for the company. Conversely, large companies will undoubtedly demand higher standards. Consequently, prospective employees who lack the requisite career adaptability will be unable to compete for positions within the company.

Career adaptation is defined as the psychosocial resources that enable individuals to cope with changing work and working conditions. This involves the capacity to adapt to changing tasks, engage in continued self-learning, and regulate one's career direction (Savickas & Savickas, 2017). Adaptable individuals are prepared to anticipate and respond to undesirable situations, and they are able to identify and pursue alternative possibilities (Fang et al., 2018). Career adaptation is a crucial aspect of the process of adjusting to new rules, colleagues, and work environments (Savickas et al., 2009). In the absence of such preparation, the individual may develop an apathetic attitude, become unable to make decisions, exhibit unrealistic expectations, and hinder their own career advancement (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Moreover, examining students' career adaptability is crucial because it serves as a form of preparation for the world of work, which will ultimately foster self-confidence

and well-being in students (Hirschi, 2009). Career adaptability is a crucial factor in high school students' career development, and it is closely associated with academic achievement (Wang et al., 2024). Moreover, the academic environment exerts a significant influence on students' academic adaptability (Wang et al., 2023). Moreover, students are able to explore careers when they have career adaptation (Kou et al., 2024).

In addition, it is well established that students' motivation is correlated with the manner in which they adapt. Motivation is not only necessary in an academic context, but also in a broader context. The existing literature indicates that students who are motivated are more likely to adapt to their environment (Wijoyo et al., 2023). Students who exhibit a strong desire to succeed academically tend to exhibit higher levels of career concern, curiosity, and self-confidence (Shultz, 2017). Consequently, students who demonstrate career adaptability are more likely to encounter positive opportunities in their work context (Konstam & Celen-Demirtas, 2015).

Academic motivation serves to foster passion and enthusiasm for learning, thereby encouraging students to dedicate their full attention to achieving their academic goals (Wahyuni, 2010). At least, motivation is divided into intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation (Trinoyal et al., 2018). An individual with good motivational qualities is driven by their own desires, while poor motivation is determined by external factors (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Students who are intrinsically motivated will exhibit greater adaptability and satisfaction in the academic setting. Conversely, students who receive external encouragement tend to exhibit less adaptive behavior and perform at a suboptimal level (Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). Intrinsic motivation is a significant factor for students (Sobur, 2003). However, this does not negate the importance of extrinsic motivation, given the dynamic nature of students' circumstances and the prevalence of challenges in the learning environment (Sardiman, 2012).

Although the work and academic contexts differ, students who are intrinsically motivated will exhibit a high level of curiosity and autonomy. In contrast, those who are extrinsically motivated will find it easier to complete their work because they are influenced by their environment. An independent mental state is of great importance in today's world of work, as it greatly increases the likelihood that those who are independent will be able to adapt to their work environment after graduating from school.

Consequently, based on this phenomenon and the existing literature, it can be posited that there is a correlation between academic motivation and student career adaptation. This is because it is assumed that when students are motivated, they have a strong desire to succeed academically and a level of concern for their career. . The following hypothesis is therefore proposed: H₁: There is a positive relationship between motivation and career adaptation. H₂: There is a negative relationship between amotivation and career adaptation.

2. Method

Procedure

Prior to the commencement of data collection, this research received ethical approval from the Faculty of Psychology, Medan Area University. The data were collected cross-sectionally using both print and digital scales. The printed scale is distributed by an enumerator, who then administers it to convenience students. Each sample has consented to the informed consent document that has been prepared, and each respondent acts as a volunteer in responding to the scale that has been provided. The data was collected actively for a period of two weeks, as no further significant additions were made after that point.

Participants

The convenience sample consisted of 151 students from the Kartika Medan school. The majority of students were women (74%) and men (26%). The majority of students did not participate in extracurricular activities (72%), while a minority participated in extracurricular activities (28%) at their school. The sample from Kartika Middle School consisted of 10 students, with grades 7 (0.66%), 8 (3.97%), and 9 (1.99%) represented. The sample from Kartika High School consisted of 141 students, with grades 10 (25.17%) and 11 (23.18%) being the most represented. The sample from Kartika High School consisted of 12 students, representing 45.03% of the total sample. The mean age of the sample is 16.21 years, with the majority of respondents identifying as Muslim (89.40%) and Christian (10.60%).

Measurement

The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) from Natalya (2018) is employed to assess students' academic motivation. The scale comprises three factors that collectively represent motivation. The

first factor, intrinsic motivation, comprises seven items, with the item "I feel pleasure and satisfaction when learning new things" serving as an illustrative example. The second factor, extrinsic motivation, comprises six items, with the item "So that I can get a prestigious job later" serving as an illustrative example. The third factor, amotivation, comprises two items, with the item "I don't know; I feel that school is just a waste of time" serving as an illustrative example. The scale comprises six response options, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." At the outset of the scale, students will be instructed to engage in a guided imagery exercise, wherein they are encouraged to reflect on their academic experiences thus far and to read each item of the questionnaire in the order presented. The exercise begins with the following prompt: "In general, I do this because..." All reliability coefficients for each factor exhibit a Cronbach's alpha value of greater than 0.70 (Natalya, 2018).

The Career Adaptability Scale (CAAS) developed by Khairunnisa et al. (2021) is employed to assess students' career adaptability abilities. The CAAS measuring tool is comprised of four factors: concern ($\alpha = .799$), control ($\alpha = .746$), curiosity ($\alpha = .798$), and confidence ($\alpha = .815$). It has been reported to have a fit model. The CAAS measuring instrument comprises 24 items, with each item rated on a Likert scale from 1 (least strong) to 5 (strongest) (Khairunnisa et al., 2021). The data will be subjected to correlation analysis, with those items that do not complete the provided scale being excluded. In general, all data will be analyzed with the assistance of JASP computer software.

3. Results

In terms of descriptive value, intrinsic motivation is of greater importance than extrinsic motivation. In contrast, amotivation is of low value, as it is derived from only two items. Similarly, the consistency of the constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is reliable, whereas amotivation is still inconsistent due to the limited number of items.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis

	Mean	SD	α	p	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
Intrinsic	34.15	5.84	.83	<.001	-1.044 (0.197)	1.353 (0.392)
Male	34.95	4.79				
Female	33.86	6.17				

Extrinsic	31.29	4.96	.80	<.001	-1.605 (0.197)	2.882 (0.392)
Male	31.93	3.57				
Female	31.06	5.37				
Amotivation	4.83	2.58	.29	<.001	0.594 (0.197)	-0.190 (0.392)
Male	5.20	2.59				
Female	4.70	2.57				
Career adaptability	101.46	14.82	.94	<.001	-1.286 (0.197)	2.578 (0.392)
Male	102.85	12.59				
Female	100.95	15.57				

*p= signifikan, SD= standard deviation, SE= standard error, α = cronbach alpha

The mean score for men was higher than that for women across all constructs, with men also demonstrating higher levels of amotivation. Conversely, women exhibit lower levels of amotivation, indicating that they are more motivated in their academic pursuits than men. However, it is important to note that inconsistencies do occur.

Table 2. Correlation between constructs

		1	2	3	4
1. Intrinsic	rho	—			
2. Extrinsic	rho	0,56***	—		
3. Amotivation	rho	-0,22**	-0,22**	—	
4. Career adaptability	rho	0,60***	0,52***	-0,13	—

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001, r= pearson, rho= spearman

The data exhibits a non-normal distribution, as evidenced by the results of the skewness, kurtosis, Q-Q plot, and Shapiro-Wilk analysis. Spearman correlation analysis was therefore conducted to examine the relationship between intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation motivation and career adaptation. The results of the analysis indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and career adaptability. Similarly, the correlation between amotivation and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is negative. Nevertheless, the correlation between amotivation and career adaptation is known to have a negative and insignificant correlation with a small correlation value. Meanwhile, the largest correlation value was observed in the relationship between intrinsic motivation and career adaptation, which was followed by the correlation between extrinsic motivation.

4. Discussion

The results of this study reject the null hypothesis and the second hypothesis. This implies that in the context of students, it can be guaranteed that those who are academically motivated will also be able to adapt to careers after graduation. These results align with previous research findings which indicate that successful adaptation can occur when individuals possess drive and are able to respond to situations (Tolentino et al., 2014). Indeed, the process of individual adaptation to their work environment is heterogeneous, with some individuals exhibiting rapid adaptation and others exhibiting prolonged adaptation. For those who adapt rapidly, the process has a positive effect on health (Tangkudung, 2014). This is also consistent with the findings that students who are motivated are likely to experience positive effects on their mental health. Career adaptability is contingent upon student motivation. The greater the intrinsic motivation of an individual, the more likely it is that they will exhibit strong behavioural adaptations to their job or environment.

The inclination to adapt to the demands of the professional world is likely to manifest during the high school years. Individuals will endeavor with considerable effort to achieve exemplary performance at work (Ena & Djami, 2020), a phenomenon that is consistent with students in an academic context. In addition, extrinsic motivation may also be beneficial, as encouragement from the workplace will ultimately require students to work optimally (Nawawi, 2011). Extrinsic motivation necessitates the involvement of an external factor to facilitate adaptation to the prevailing context (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Therefore, it can be formed with the support of colleagues, who can provide comfort and encourage the desire to work well (Han & Rojewski, 2015). Conversely, the findings of this study indicate that when students lack motivation during their academic year, their likelihood of successfully adapting to their future careers is diminished.

Thus, any work context will encourage students to remain optimally adapted in the future (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016). Similarly, family is also part of students' extrinsic motivation (Tian & Fan, 2014), and social support from family, friends, and teachers helps students prepare for careers and make the transition from school to work (Han & Rojewski, 2015).

5. Conclusion

The findings indicate that students who are academically motivated have the potential to adapt well to future careers. Thus, upon graduation, students with academic motivation are more likely to

adapt well to their future professional careers. Conversely, students who lack motivation are more likely to experience difficulties in adapting to their future careers.

One limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size, which was selected using probability sampling. Consequently, these findings cannot be extrapolated to a larger population. Consequently, further research must collect data with a sample size that aligns with the recommendations set forth by statistics. Furthermore, the correlation should be expanded to include other variables in order to provide a more comprehensive framework for preventive actions for students in the context of the world of work. It is evident that this research will prove invaluable in the educational context, enabling the improvement of mental conditions with a view to enabling students to flourish in the global competitive environment.

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