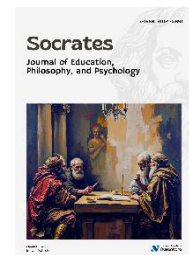




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The Relationship Between Academic Self-Efficacy and Learning Motivation Among Junior High School Students

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Abstract: This research is prompted by the phenomenon of low learning motivation and low academic self-efficacy among students in facing academic demands, as well as deviant behaviors in school. This study aims to determine the relationship between academic self-efficacy and learning motivation among junior high school students. The method used in this research is a correlational quantitative approach. The research sample consisted of 59 active students at SMP Bhineka Tunggal Ika, obtained using the total sampling technique. The instruments used were the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES) and the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS). The results indicated that the majority of students possessed high levels of academic self-efficacy (71.19%) and learning motivation (74.58%). Hypothesis testing confirms a significant positive linear relationship between academic self-efficacy and learning motivation in junior high school students. In conclusion, there is a highly significant positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and learning motivation among junior high school students, proving that these two psychological dynamics are closely intertwined rather than independent.

Keywords: Academic Self-Efficacy, Learning Motivation, Junior High School Students.

INTRODUCTION

Education at the Junior High School (SMP) level represents a crucial transition phase in adolescent development, where students begin to encounter academic demands that are far more complex and diverse. In order for the teaching and learning process to function optimally, internal conditions or psychological factors within the students play a highly decisive role in determining their level of engagement at school, one of which is through the maintenance of academic motivation. According to Vallerand et al. (1993), academic motivation can be understood as an internal drive within students while attending school, characterized by varying levels of autonomy or self-determination across individuals. The dynamics of academic motivation are not merely measured by the strength or weakness of the drive itself, but rather focus on the level of self-determination, which encompasses intrinsic motivation (internal desire), extrinsic motivation (external drives such as rewards or punishments), and amotivation, a state in which students lose direction and purpose in their schooling.

In addition to this internal drive, there is another essential mental component called academic self-efficacy, which according to Zajacova et al. (2005) refers to an individual's subjective assessment of their capacity to resolve academic challenges and demands. Students with robust academic self-efficacy tend to perceive heavy tasks as adaptive challenges, possess good daily stress management, and demonstrate high learning persistence. Conversely, students with low academic self-efficacy are prone to being overwhelmed by self-doubt, withdrawing from classroom activities, and experiencing high levels of academic anxiety. When low academic motivation and diminished academic self-confidence occur simultaneously, the negative impacts can trigger academic avoidance behaviors, such as chronic task procrastination, truancy, juvenile delinquency, decreased competitiveness, and the risk of early school dropout.

This issue is corroborated by empirical data from the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study, which ranked Indonesia's reading literacy and mathematics competence 68th out of 81 countries, noting that intrinsic motivation was identified as a differentiating variable in student performance (OECD, 2023). Based on a preliminary study conducted through observations and interviews at SMP Bhineka Tunggal Ika, indications of low academic motivation and academic self-confidence were found, manifesting as disciplinary infractions and maladaptive behaviors, including using mobile phones during instructional hours, cheating, failing to complete assignments, as well as negative public stigma surrounding school discipline and a past history of student brawls.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific examination of the relationship model between academic self-efficacy and academic motivation at the junior high school level, thereby avoiding the bias of general self-efficacy concepts, which have predominantly been researched using university students as subjects. Based on these phenomena and research gaps, the research problem in this study is whether there is a relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic motivation among junior high school students, with the research objective to determine the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic motivation among junior high school students.

METHOD

The research method employed in this study is a quantitative correlational approach. The subjects of this research comprised all active students at SMP Bhineka Tunggal Ika from grades VII and VIII. Because the population size in this study was limited, the researcher designated all members of the population to serve as the research sample through a total sampling or census technique, yielding a total sample size of 59 active students.

Data collection in this study utilized an instrument in the form of a digital questionnaire (Google Form) that integrated two psychological measurement scales, the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), which was developed based on the continuum concept theory by (Vallerand et al. 1993) using a Likert scale model, and the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES), which utilized a Numeric Rating Scale (NRS) model with a score range of 1–10 adapted from (Zajacova et al. 2005). Before the questionnaire was distributed to the research subjects, a field instrument try-out was conducted at a school with equivalent characteristics, namely SMP Al-Munir, where item validity testing adhered to the psychometric standard criterion of a Corrected Item-Total Correlation value ≥ 0.30 .

Statistical data analysis techniques executed in this study were performed with the aid of JASP (Jeff's Amazing Statistics Program) software version 0.19.3.0. The analytical stages included descriptive statistical analysis to determine the demographic profile, assumption testing (the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test and the linearity test of the relationship), and hypothesis testing utilizing correlational statistical techniques to examine the strength of the relationship between the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research data processing, the demographic profile of the 59 active student respondents showed a gender distribution of 32 male students and 27 female students. The results of comparative significance testing on this demographic data indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the levels of academic self-efficacy or academic motivation when reviewed by grade level and gender, indicating that the psychological conditions of the respondents can be categorized as homogeneous. From the descriptive analysis of variable categorization, it was found that for the academic self-efficacy variable, the majority of respondents fell into the high category, at 71.19% (42 students), which psychologically implies that most students possess a healthy coping belief in managing daily classroom tasks and examinations.

In alignment with these findings, the categorization results for the academic motivation variable also demonstrated that the majority of respondents were in the high category, totaling 44 students (74.58%), indicating that most of the sample possesses a strong psychological drive to support their academic activities. The final hypothesis testing proved that there is a significant, positive linear relationship with a very strong degree of correlation between academic self-efficacy and academic motivation among students at SMP Bhineka Tunggal Ika. This consistent positive direction indicates that the higher the academic self-confidence nurtured within a student's cognitive aspect, the stronger their academic motivation will be to internalize learning activities.

The finding of this very strong relationship validates the psychological mechanism of self-regulation, wherein a student's subjective evaluation of their own capacity acts as the primary foundation driving their commitment and active engagement in classroom learning. When students possess a high level of academic self-efficacy, they experience a healthy fulfillment of their competence needs in completing academic tasks. This condition aligns with the perspective of (Vallerand et al., 1993) regarding Self-Determination Theory in education, which asserts that individuals strictly require a sense of competence so that their intrinsic motivation can develop and endure optimally.

The subsequent psychological impact of well-maintained competence regulation is the emergence of stable learning interests and emotional resilience when encountering obstacles or learning difficulties at school. This finding is also empirically supported by the research of Damayanti & Alwi (2024) and Saidah et al. (2024), which concluded that the fluctuation of learning drives is linearly influenced by students' subjective evaluations of their own capacities. Therefore, the level of a student's academic self-efficacy can be relied upon by educational practitioners as a powerful and accurate predictive indicator to forecast changes in the high or low academic motivation of students in secondary education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion conducted in this study, it can be concluded that there is a significant, positive linear relationship with a very strong correlation between academic self-efficacy and academic motivation among students at SMP Bhineka Tunggal Ika. This positive direction indicates that both variables share a consistent, parallel movement path. This implies that the higher the academic self-efficacy possessed by students in facing various school assignments and demands, the stronger and more optimal their level of academic motivation will be in internalizing daily learning activities in the classroom.

Descriptively, the dynamics of the students' psychological conditions at the school demonstrated positive results, where the majority of active students were in the high academic self-efficacy category at 71.19%, and the majority of students also displayed a high level of academic motivation at 74.58%. Furthermore, additional testing proved that the demographic characteristics of the respondents, both by grade level (grades VII and VIII) and gender (male and female), are homogeneous and do not show any statistically significant differences in the levels of academic self-efficacy or academic motivation.

This study successfully validates that a student's subjective assessment of their cognitive capacity acts as the core foundation that drives the fulfillment of their psychological need for competence. When the need to feel competent is met through high academic self-efficacy, students will automatically activate adaptive self-regulation of their academic motivation, maintain stable learning interests, and demonstrate robust emotional persistence when confronted with academic hurdles at school.

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