

The Effect of Learned Helplessness and Self-Efficacy on Academic Motivation Among Mizo Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

This research dives into studying the connecting link between self-efficacy, academic motivation and learned helplessness among Mizo young adults. The study intends to examine how these psychological factors interact and affect academic motivation within distinct cultural setting of Mizoram, drawing on theoretical framework from psychology. Learned helplessness and self-efficacy are two important psychological construct that have been extensively researched in the context of academic motivation, but there is a lack of studies that specifically focus on the Mizo community. Data was collected from 120 participants age 18- 25 using the Learned Helplessness Scale, Short Academic Motivation Scale, and General Self-Efficacy Scale. Statistical analyses included t-tests and Pearson correlations. Results indicated that there are no noticeable differences in Learned Helplessness, self-efficacy and Academic Motivation among Mizo females and young male adults. Additionally, relationships were found between learned helplessness and self-efficacy, learned helplessness and academic motivation, and self-efficacy and academic motivation among Mizo young adults. These findings shed light on the intricate dynamics of psychological factors influencing academic motivation in the Mizo Community.

Keywords: Learned Helplessness (LH), Self-efficacy (SE), Academic Motivation (AM)

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The interaction of learned helplessness, self-efficacy and academic drive creates a compelling story that influences people's educational journey within the complex fabric of human behavior and achievement. These psychological concepts serve as the foundation for our comprehension of how people approach problems, overcome obstacles and ultimately decide their level of academic success.

Learned Helplessness

Learned Helplessness was first described in 1967. A concept explored by Martin E.P. Seligman delves into the profound impact of uncontrollable traumatic events on behavior and psychology. A psychological condition known as "learned Helplessness" is the conviction that one has no control over one's environment, leading to a passive and helpless response to a negative events or stressors. (Maier & Seligman, 1976, Leonard, J. 2023). Seligman conducted an experiment focusing on the phenomenon of learned helplessness on animals especially dogs. The study involved subjecting dogs to uncontrollable

electric shock in a Pavlovian hammock before testing their behavior in an escape-avoidance training setup, known as a shuttle box. The results showed that dogs who experienced uncontrollable shocks before the training exhibited passive behavior, such as sitting or lying quietly, whining, and accepting the shock without attempting to escape. This contrasted with the typical active response of naive dogs in the same situation. The experiment highlighted how prior exposure to uncontrollable trauma can lead to learned helplessness, affecting the animals' ability to initiate responses to alleviate trauma and learn that their actions can control the outcome (Seligman, 1972).

Seligman's model however expanded the definition of learned helplessness beyond animal behavior to encompass a wide range of human behaviors, such as depression, old age problems, illness susceptibility, and child development (Seligman, 1975). This phenomenon sheds light on the detrimental effects of experiencing trauma that is perceived as beyond one's control.

The psychological idea of "learned helplessness" has received a lot of attention in studies on education, especially in relation to distance learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Research had indicated that adolescents who experience acquired helplessness display emotions of powerless, lower drive, and inferior academic outcomes. Educators and legislators are becoming increasingly concerned about the effects of learned helplessness on kids' emotional health and academic performance. (Xue et al, 2023)

Self-Efficacy

Motivating students and enhancing their academic performance has been a focal point for educators worldwide. One key factor that has been identified as crucial in determining student's motivation is self-efficacy. (Husain, U. K 2014)

Self-efficacy, a concept introduced by Albert Bandura in the 1970s, has become a central focus in psychology, education, and various other fields. Bandura's Social Learning Theory emphasizes the significance of self-efficacy in shaping the motivation levels of a person. Self-efficacy is the conviction that one can complete activities and reach objectives. (Bhatt, S. 2018) This belief in one's capacities plays a significant role in shaping motivation levels and ultimately influencing academic outcomes. The self-efficacy beliefs are mainly influenced by: social persuasion, physiological and affective states, mastery experiences, and vicarious experiences. Particularly, mastery experiences are extremely important in influencing people's self-efficacy views. Bandura, overcoming obstacles successfully can greatly increase one's sense of self-efficacy (Bandura & Stanford University, 1994).

Bandura highlights the significance of one's own ability to influence their behavior and performance. Research has indicated a favorable correlation between academic motivation and self-efficacy. (Shengyao et al., 2024).

When students believe in their capacities to succeed, they are more likely drive them to pursue academic goals and all way to face the challenges. A person with a high level of self-efficacy tends to be more stubborn and engage in a aim-oriented behavior, experiences less stress, and achieve better outcomes in academics, professional, and personal domains (Bandura & Stanford University, 1994). Students who believe in their own abilities are more inclined to participate in their classwork, seek help when needed, and exhibit greater resilience in the face of the setbacks. Furthermore, optimistic self-beliefs are associated with greater well-being and psychological adjustment (Hilmi, et al, 2022).

Academic Motivation

Academic Motivation, plays a crucial role in determining students' engagement and steadfast in academic workload, it encompasses the drive and desire to engage in learning activities, pursue academic goals, and strive for excellence (Cerino, 2014). Extrinsic Motivation (Identified, Introjected, External Regulation), Intrinsic Motivation (to know, completion, to experience Stimulation), and Amotivation were the three types of academic motivation that Vallerand and Bissonnette defined. Intrinsic Motivation behaviors are carried out just for enjoyment of the behavior; they are brought forth spontaneously with awareness of no external advantage or reward (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992). Intrinsic Motivation to know denotes motivation derived from the fulfillment of acquiring new knowledge. IM Toward Accomplishment denotes motivation derived from the satisfaction of accomplishing a goal. Desiring both mental and physical sensory stimulations is what drives people to experience stimulation.

On the other hand, extrinsically motivated behaviors and ideas are driven by objectives or benefits that transcend the act itself (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992). EM The incentive to identify comes from the beliefs that one will get something in the future. EM When anything is motivated by internalized emotions such as pride in finishing a task or remorse for not doing it, it is said to be injected. EM When someone external applies a limit or an incentive to an action, it is said to be externally regulated. According to Valland and Bissonnette (1992), Amotivated activities are defined by a lack of self-determination, purpose, and concern for rewards from within or outside of the body.

Self-Determination Theory posits that intrinsic motivation, driven by internal factors such as interest and enjoyment, is associated with better academic outcomes compared to extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2015). Therefore, fostering intrinsic motivation among students is crucial for long-term academic success.

Studies have shown that academic motivation can vary among college students based on their majors. Factors such as perceived competence, interest in the subject matter, and career aspirations can influence students' motivation levels (Hilmi, et al,2022).

Rationale

A young adult's academic achievement and well-being are largely dependent on their level of academic motivation enthusiasm. It affects how engaged persistent, and successful they are in their academic work. Learned helplessness and self-efficacy are two important psychological construct that have been extensively researched in the context of academic motivation, but there is a lack of studies that specifically focus on the Mizo community. The Mizo community is a unique cultural group with its own language, customs, and traditions, which may influence the academic motivation of young adults. The study of the relationship between LH, SE and AM among Mizo young adults is a crucial investigation that aims to understand the complex interplay between these psychological constructs and their impact on academic motivation. A psychological state in which a person has an idea that they have no authority over the outcomes of their actions, leading to a lack of motivation and effort in academic pursuits is known as "learned helplessness". Self-efficacy is concept where a person's confidence in their capacity to fulfill their aims, which is a significant predictor of academic motivation. Academic motivation is critical factor factors that influences students' academic achievement, persistence and engagement in learning. Therefore, it is essential to understand the specific factors that affect the academic motivation

of Mizo young adults, which can inform the development of culturally appropriate interventions to promote academic success.

Methodology

Objectives

1. To see the difference in learned helplessness between Mizo females and young male adults.
2. To see the difference in Self-Efficacy between Mizo females and young male adults.
3. To see the difference in Academic motivation between Mizo females and young male adults.
4. To see the relationship between learned helplessness and self-efficacy among Mizo young adults.
5. To see the relationship between learned helplessness and academic motivation among Mizo young adults.
6. To see the relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation among Mizo young adults.

Hypothesis

H1- There will be a significant level of difference in learned helplessness between Mizo females and young male adults.

H2- There will be a significant level of difference in self-efficacy between Mizo females and young male adults.

H3- There will be a significant level of difference in academic motivation between Mizo females and young male adults.

H4- There will be a relationship between learned helplessness and self-efficacy among Mizo young adults.

H5- There will be a relationship between learned helplessness and academic motivation among Mizo young adults.

H6- There will be a relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation among Mizo young adults.

Sample

A total of 120 participants were recruited to participate in this study. The sample comprised 60 females and 60 males, from the ages 18 to 25 years old. To ensure participant well-being, individuals with a history of clinically diagnosed physical or mental health conditions were excluded from the study. Convenience/snowball method of sampling was used.

Variables

Independent variables

IV1 -Learned helplessness

IV2- Self-Efficacy

Dependent Variable

DV1- Academic Motivation

Operational Definitions

Learned Helplessness. A psychological condition known as “learned Helplessness” is the conviction that one has no control over one’s environment, leading to a passive and helpless response to a negative events or stressors. (Maier & Seligman, 1976, Leonard, J. 2023)

Self-Efficacy. Self-Efficacy is a psychological concept that describes a person's confidence in their capacity to accomplish tasks (Shengyao et al., 2024).

Academic Motivation. Academic Motivation, acts as an important drive and desire in determining students' engagement in performing their academic tasks, it encompasses the drive and desire to engage in learning activities, pursue academic goals, and strive for excellence (Cerino, 2014).

Measures

General Demographics

Demographic Information Form included: name, age, sex, education qualification, family annual income, family structure was asked.

Learned Helplessness Scale

Developed in 1988 by Quinless and Nelson the scale has been used to measure the learned helplessness of the participants. The Learned Helplessness Scale was developed on a review of literature, with 20 items selected. Higher scores on the scale, which often spans from 20 to 80, indicate higher levels of learned helplessness. It utilizes a Likert scale for grading responses and has shown good internal consistency with a standardized alpha reliability coefficient of .85. Additionally, the scale's scores have been found to correlate positively with Beck's Hopelessness Scale scores and negatively with Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale scores, aligning with theoretical expectations.

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)

GSE was administered to measure the self-efficacy of the participants. Developed by Dr. Ralf Schwarzer and Dr. Matthias Jerusalem early 1980s. They developed the scale based on Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. The scale originally consisted of 20 items, each rated in a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all true" to "exactly true". Cronbach's alphas ranged from .76 to .90 with the majority in the high .80s.

Short Academic Motivation Scale (SAMS)

To assess the academic motivation, the SAMS or Short Academic Motivation Scale was applied. This scale was designed to assess academic motivation among students. Cronbach's alphas ranged from .63 and .85.

Research Design

The present study is a correlational, quantitative comparative exploratory research.

Statistical Analysis

Pearson's Correlation and T test were used to scrutinize the link between Learned Helplessness, Self-Efficacy and Academic Motivation. Data analysis is done with the help of SPSS.

Results

120 individuals participated in the study, and they were further divided into sub categories of male and female. The p value 0.585 is greater than the significant level 0.005, so we fail to reject the null hypothesis indicating the discrepancy between male and female in learned helplessness. (see Table 1.1). The p value 0.133 is greater than the significance level 0.05, so we fail to reject the null hypothesis indicating the discrepancy difference between male and female in self-efficacy (see Table 1.2). The p

value 0.776 is greater than the significance level 0.05, so we fail to reject the null hypothesis indicating the discrepancy difference between male and female in academic motivation (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.1 Comparison table for Learned Helplessness between Mizo female and male young adults

	Group	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean	t	Sig
LH	Female	60	50.4833	2.07888	.26838	-.547	.465
	Male	60	50.7000	2.25719	.29140		

Table 1.2 Comparison table for Self-efficacy between Mizo female and male young adults

	Group	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean	t	Sig
Self-efficacy	Female	60	27.3833	4.79085	.61850	-1.513	.712
	Male	60	28.6667	4.49733	.58060		

Table 1.3 Comparison table for Academic Motivation between Mizo female and male young adults.

	Group	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean	t	Sig
Total-AM	Female	60	63.3500	14.00947	1.80861	.285	.238
	Male	60	62.6667	12.19011	1.57374		

These findings imply that, while there is a weak positive association between learned helplessness, academic motivation and self-efficacy, these relationships are not statistically significant. However, a significant positive linkage exists between academic motivation and self-efficacy, suggesting that higher levels of self-efficacy may contribute to increases academic motivation among participants in the study (see Table 2)

Table 2 Pearson’s Correlation Analysis Results

		Learned Helplessness	Academic Motivation	Self-Efficacy
Learned Helplessness	Pearson Correlation	--		
	N	120	--	
Academic Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.159	--	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.083		
	N	120	120	
Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.164	.283**	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	.002	

	N	120	120	120
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Discussion

The goal of this study is to explore the relationships between learned helplessness, self-efficacy, and academic motivation among Mizo young adults. Among Mizo young people, our study revealed a marginally positive relationship between learned helplessness and academic motivation. These associations point to a possible link between motivation for academic activities and helplessness, even though they were not statistically significant. This is consistent with earlier studies showing how acquired helplessness affects students' participation and effectiveness in learning environment.

Similarly, we found that participant self-efficacy and academic motivation had weak positive relationships but academic motivation and self-efficacy were found to be significantly positively correlated, suggesting that individual with higher levels of self-efficacy may be more motivated to pursue academic goals. This result aligns with the body of research highlighting the importance of self-efficacy beliefs on the academic motivation and performance of the students.

The comparison table for learned helplessness (see Table 2.1), Self-efficacy (see Table 2.2) and Academic motivation (see Table 2.3) revealed that there was no level of significant difference in learned helplessness, self-efficacy and Academic Motivation levels between the two groups. Despite a slightly higher mean level of learned helplessness, self-efficacy and academic motivation in the male group compared to the female group, the statistical analysis indicated that this difference was not significant. This suggests that both Mizo females and young male adults may experience similar levels of learned helplessness and self-efficacy in the academic context. These study findings contribute to our understanding of how learned helplessness manifests across gender groups within Mizo community.

Conclusion

The study on the Effect of Learned Helplessness and Self-efficacy on Academic Motivation Among Mizo Young Adults has given valuable understanding of the complex interplay between psychological factors and academic motivation with the unique cultural setting of Mizoram. Through the examination of learned helplessness, self-efficacy, and academic motivation among 120 Mizo young adults aged 18-25, several key findings have emerged.

The study revealed a marginally favorable correlation between learned helplessness, self-efficacy and academic motivation although these associations lacked statistical significance. However, a strong positive correlation was observed between academic motivation and self-efficacy, suggesting that higher level of self-efficacy may contribute to increased academic motivation among Mizo young adults.

In conclusion, the finding of this study emphasizes self-efficacy as a significant predictor of academic motivation among Mizo young adults. While the link between learned helplessness and academic motivation was not statistically significant, the positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic motivation highlights the chance for interventions aimed at enhancing self-efficacy to promote academic success and motivation in this population.

Implications of this study extend to educational practices and interventions targeted at improving academic motivation among Mizo young adults. By recognizing the role of self-efficacy in shaping academic motivation, educators and policymakers can design culturally appropriate strategies to enhance students' belief in their abilities and goal-setting.

skills. Additionally, the study emphasizes the need for further research the exploration of the nuanced relation between learned helplessness, self-efficacy, and academic motivation in diverse cultural contexts and population

Limitation And Future Scope

The study's sample size of 120 Mizo young adults may have hampered the generalizability of the results in the study. Research on the future with larger and more diverse sample sizes might enhance the external validity of the findings. Future research in this area could look at how interventions to reduce learned helplessness and increase self-efficacy affect academic motivation, which can advance our understanding of the complex relationships between learned helplessness, self-efficacy, and academic motivation among Mizo young adults which can contribute to the improvement of effective interventions and strategies to support their academic growth and well-being.

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