International Journal of Social Science and Human Research

ISSN (print): 2644-0679, ISSN (online): 2644-0695

Volume 08 Issue 01 January 2025

DOI: 10.47191/ijsshr/v8-i1-42, Impact factor- 7.876

Page No: 346-349

Examination of the Academic Motivation Levels of Vocational School Students

Cemal Akyol

Kadinhani Faik Icil Vocational School, Electronics and Automation Department, Selcuk University, Konya, Türkiye

ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine the academic motivation levels of vocational school students concerning various demographic variables. A descriptive survey model was utilized. The sample consisted of 407 vocational school students enrolled at Konya Selçuk University. Data collection tools included the "Student Information Form" and the "Academic Motivation Scale." Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software, employing independent sample t-tests and ANOVA analyses.

The findings revealed that vocational school students generally exhibit low academic motivation levels. Male students were found to have significantly higher academic motivation scores compared to female students. Additionally, students employed in full-time jobs scored significantly higher in academic motivation compared to those not working.

KEYWORDS: Academic Motivation, Vocational School, Associate Degree

I. INTRODUCTION

Vocational schools are a critical educational model designed to train qualified personnel capable of meeting the demands of the labor market, prioritizing practical training alongside theoretical knowledge. These institutions aim to equip students with in-depth theoretical understanding and intensive hands-on experience in specific professions. Vocational schools have become an indispensable part of the educational system due to their contributions to individual career development and their support for societal and economic growth. However, the effectiveness of these institutions and their alignment with labor market demands remain topics of debate, necessitating improvements through educational policies and practices (Aypay, 2003; Supriyadi et al., 2020).

Vocational schools present a practical and career-oriented alternative to traditional academic education. These institutions are particularly appealing to individuals seeking direct entry into the workforce after secondary education. They provide students with vocational skills and knowledge that enable them to integrate quickly into specific sectors (Supriyadi et al., 2020). In developing countries, vocational school graduates play a pivotal role in enhancing economic development and labor market competitiveness (Aypay, 2003).

The increasing number of vocational schools in Turkey has led to a dramatic decline in educational quality. While these schools are vital in addressing the need for intermediate staff in industrial and social institutions, institutions established in underdeveloped regions often serve to expand university numbers rather than meet regional labor demands. New departments and programs within vocational schools tend to prioritize quantitative growth over training qualified personnel. This misalignment undermines the core mission of vocational schools, leading to deficiencies in infrastructure and instructional quality.

In Turkey, reforms have been implemented to improve the alignment of vocational schools with labor market demands and to enhance graduate employment rates. However, the adequacy of these reforms remains debatable. For example, only 10% of vocational school graduates in Turkey pursue higher education, highlighting the restrictive impact of vocational education on career advancement (Aypay, 2003).

Motivation is a critical factor influencing individuals' academic success, effort, and engagement in learning processes. Academic motivation refers to an individual's interest, value, and commitment to educational activities. For vocational school students, who often have specific career goals, motivation becomes even more significant. Motivation levels influence not only individual success but also the formation of the qualified workforce that society needs (Utvær & Haugan, 2016).

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) conceptualizes motivation in two dimensions: intrinsic (autonomous) and extrinsic (controlled). According to this theory, the fulfillment of basic psychological needs such as competence, autonomy, and relatedness enhances the quality of motivation, leading to improved educational outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the context of vocational

school students, designing learning processes that address these fundamental needs can strengthen students' commitment to education and ensure successful completion of their studies (Utvær, 2014).

Motivation manifests in various forms that shape students' attitudes toward education. Intrinsic motivation arises from the satisfaction and enjoyment of the learning process itself, while extrinsic motivation relates to external factors such as rewards, penalties, or social expectations. Additionally, amotivation describes a state where students perceive no meaning in learning and disengage from the educational process. Research demonstrates that intrinsic motivation and identified regulation are positively correlated with academic success, whereas amotivation significantly increases dropout rates (Vallerand et al., 1997; Utvær & Haugan, 2016).

Understanding the dimensions of academic motivation—intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation—is essential for developing strategies to enhance the academic performance of vocational school students. This study aims to investigate the academic motivation levels of vocational school students in Turkey and analyze them in relation to various factors. Gaining insight into the unique motivational dynamics of vocational school students can contribute to the development of more effective support mechanisms for this group.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Model

This study adopts a descriptive survey model to determine the academic motivation levels of vocational school students and to examine these levels concerning various factors.

B. Population and Sample

The study population comprises vocational school students enrolled at Selçuk University during the Fall semester of the 2021–2022 academic year. The sample includes 407 students from Selçuk University's vocational schools. Demographic variables of the sample are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic distribution of the sample

Variable	Category	f	%
Gender	Male	234	57,5
	Female	173	42,5
Academic Year	1st Year	197	48,4
	2nd Year	210	51,6
Employment Status	Unemployed	344	84,5
	Full-time Employment	41	10,1
	Part-time Employment	22	5,4

C. Data Collection Tools

To collect demographic data, a personal information form developed by the researcher was utilized. This form includes questions about gender, age, academic year, and employment status.

The "Academic Motivation Scale (AMS)" developed by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000) and adapted into Turkish by Karagüven (2012) was used to measure academic motivation. The AMS comprises 28 items scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "does not correspond at all" to "corresponds exactly." The scale includes the following sub-dimensions: intrinsic motivation to know, intrinsic motivation to accomplish, intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and amotivation. Higher scores indicate higher academic motivation.

D. Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through self-administered surveys. The responses were organized and analyzed using SPSS. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to present the demographic characteristics of the participants. Independent sample t-tests and ANOVA analyses were conducted to examine variations in academic motivation concerning demographic variables.

III.FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

The academic motivation scores of vocational school students are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Academic motivation levels of vocational school students

	N	min.	max.	$\bar{X}$	Sd
Academic Motivation Levels	407	59,00	194,00	108,6978	31,2301

The scores ranged from 59.0 to 194.0, with an average score of 108.70 and a standard deviation of 31.23. Given that the maximum possible score on the AMS is 196, the students' motivation levels can be considered below average.

The results of t-tests for gender differences are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Gender differences in academic motivation

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	t	p
Male	234	118,41	34,21	7,823	<,001
Female	173	95,55	20,36		

Male students had significantly higher motivation scores ($\bar{X}$ = 118.41) than female students ($\bar{X}$ = 95.55), and this difference was statistically significant (t = 7.823; p < .001).

The t-test results for academic year differences are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Motivation by academic year

Academic Year	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	t	p
1st Year	197	111,38	29,50	1,686	,093
2nd Year	210	106,17	32,63		

While first-year students had higher motivation scores ($\bar{X}$ = 111.38) than second-year students ($\bar{X}$ = 106.17), the difference was not statistically significant (t = 1.686; p > .05).

The differences in motivation by employment status are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5. Academic motivation by employment status

Employment Status	N	min	max	$\bar{X}$	Sd
Unemployed	344	59,00	190,00	106,6279	29,9295
Full-time Employment	41	77,00	194,00	122,7802	40,1020
Part-time Employment	22	69,00	139,00	114,8182	25,7933

The ANOVA results (Table 6) revealed a significant difference in motivation levels by employment status (F = 5.464; p < .05). Post hoc Bonferroni analysis indicated that students with full-time employment had significantly higher motivation levels than unemployed students.

IV. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the academic motivation levels of vocational school students and analyze the impact of demographic variables on these levels. The results revealed that the overall academic motivation levels of vocational school students were low. This finding reflects the students' low commitment and motivation toward their educational goals. Similarly, prior research also highlights that vocational school students tend to have low motivation for academic goals (Korkmazer, 2020; Karagüven, 2012; Vallerand et al., 1992). Contributing factors include uncertainties in career expectations and the misalignment between education and workforce demands (Vallerand et al., 1992).

The study found that male students scored significantly higher in academic motivation than female students. This result aligns with studies indicating the influence of gender on academic motivation (Korkmazer, 2020; Karagüven, 2012; Sarımehmet et al., 2021). For instance, male students are often more influenced by external motivational factors, which may enhance their drive for academic performance. Additionally, the desire for early workforce entry and career ambitions among male students could serve as a motivating factor (Sarımehmet et al., 2021).

The findings showed no statistically significant difference between the academic motivation levels of first-year and second-year students. However, first-year students exhibited slightly higher motivation levels. This trend suggests that maintaining motivation throughout the educational process might be challenging. Second-year students may experience decreased motivation due to concerns about job prospects after graduation (Karagüven, 2012). However, the lack of statistical significance could also point to individual differences in students' responses to academic and career pressures.

The study further revealed that students working full-time had significantly higher motivation scores than those not working. This result indicates that the responsibilities and discipline associated with employment may enhance students' motivation. Additionally, the findings support previous studies suggesting that work environments can positively influence students' academic goals (Vallerand et al., 1992). Conversely, students who were not employed scored the lowest in motivation, suggesting that work experience may act as a catalyst for setting tangible academic and career objectives.

In conclusion, several strategic measures can be implemented to enhance the academic motivation levels of vocational school students. First, career counseling programs can be introduced to support students' career planning. Additionally, updating curricula to align with industry demands could significantly boost students' motivation. Flexible programs tailored to support working

students' academic success should also be considered. Finally, motivational interventions should address individual differences to ensure tailored support for each student's needs.

REFERENCES

1) Aypay, A. 2003 The tough choice at high school door: an investigation of the factors that lead students to general or vocational schools. International Journal of Educational Development, 23(5), 517–527. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-0593(03)00040-3
2) Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. 1985 Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior. Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-2271-7
3) Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. 2000 The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior. Psychological Inquiry, 11(4), 227-268.
4) Karagüven, M. H. Ü. 2012 Akademik Motivasyon Ölçeğinin Türkçeye Adaptasyonu. Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Bilimleri, 12(4), 2599-2620
5) Korkmazer, F. 2020 Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Akademik Motivasyon Algılarının İncelenmesi: Bir Alan Çalışması. Dicle Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi, 10(20), 502-515
6) Sarımehmet, D., Candaş Altınbaş, B., Gümrükçüoğlu, N., & Uzun Duran, S., 2021 Students' Professional Motivation Levels, Factors Affecting Their Motivation, and Their Views Regarding Their Professions: A Vocational School of Health Services Example. Journal of Education and Future , no.19, 75-84.
7) Supriyadi, E., Indro, Y. H., Priyanto, E., & Surwi, F. 2020 Students' evaluation on teaching in vocational and technical schools. International Journal of Instruction, 13(2), 621–636. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13242a
8) Utvær, B. K. S. 2014 Explaining health and social care students' experiences of meaningfulness in vocational education: The importance of life goals, learning support, perceived competence, and autonomous motivation. Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 58(6), 639–658.
9) Utvær, B. K. S., & Haugan, G. 2016 The Academic Motivation Scale: Dimensionality, reliability, and construct validity among vocational students. Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 6(2), 17–45. https://doi.org/10.3384/njvet.2242-458X.166217
10) Vallerand, R. J., Blais, M. R., Brière, N. M., & Pelletier, L. G. 1992 The Academic Motivation Scale: A Measure of Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and Amotivation in Education. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 52(4), 1003-1017.
11) Yurt, E., & Özsaraç, E. N. 2015 Akademik Motivasyon Ölçeğinin Türkçeye Uyarlanması. Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences, 14(3), 669-685