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Factors Influencing Grade XI Students' Learning Motivation in the MPLB Program at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa

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ABSTRACT

Factors influencing students' learning motivation are important for increasing their enthusiasm and engagement so that the learning process can proceed optimally. Therefore, these factors need to be analyzed in depth to identify the various elements that contribute to improving students' learning motivation. This study aims to identify the factors influencing the learning motivation of Grade XI students in the Office Management and Business Services (MPLB) program at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa. The study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The informants consisted of the head of the MPLB program, MPLB teachers, and Grade XI MPLB students. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that the factors influencing the learning motivation of MPLB students at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa were generally fairly optimal. Six indicators were identified: students' goals and aspirations, with some students having clear goals that encouraged their enthusiasm for learning; students' abilities, reflected in their mastery of skills and understanding of the material, although differences in ability remained; students' conditions, including physical and psychological conditions that generally supported learning but were not optimal for some students; students' environmental conditions, as family circumstances, peer relationships, and parental support did not fully support motivation; dynamic elements in learning and instruction, reflected in students' interest, attention, enthusiasm, and interaction during lessons, although these were not evenly distributed; and teachers' efforts to facilitate learning, as teachers used varied teaching methods, provided motivation, and created a conducive learning environment.

Keywords: learning motivation, learning environment, teachers' efforts

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of guiding students that continues until they reach maturity. Once they reach adulthood, students are expected to act independently for their own well-being and that of society. Therefore, students need to engage seriously in the learning process. Learning is an individual effort to bring about comprehensive behavioral changes as a result of personal experience and interaction with the surrounding environment in order to meet life's needs. The achievement of educational objectives is strongly influenced by the quality of students' learning experiences. Accordingly, an ideal teaching and learning process needs to be established so that learning activities can be carried out effectively (Andeka et al., 2021).

Education has received particular attention from the Indonesian state, as reflected in the formulation of the following (Undang-Undang RI No. 20 Tahun 2003 Pasal 3 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, 2003) "National education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the life of the nation. It aims to develop students' potential so that they become individuals who believe in and are devoted to Almighty God, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, and independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens."

Education is also a deliberate effort to develop human resource potential through teaching activities. One factor within an individual that determines whether the teaching and learning process succeeds is learning motivation (Arianti, 2018). Education is one of the most important aspects of human life. In addition, it is a strategic means of improving human resource quality and plays an important role in sustaining human civilization around the world (Darwis et al., 2019).

Learning motivation is a psychological aspect that is non-intellectual in nature. Even individuals with high intelligence may experience learning difficulties if they lack a strong drive to learn. Motivation plays a very important role in education, for both educators and students (Djarwo, 2020). Learning motivation is closely related to student engagement and learning outcomes. Students with high learning motivation tend to participate more actively and achieve better learning outcomes. Conversely, low learning motivation can reduce students' attention and limit their achievement of competencies. Recent research also indicates that students' motivation is associated with academic outcomes and is shaped by the quality of support available in the learning environment (Howard et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2024).

At the vocational high school (SMK) level, particularly in the Office Management and Business Services (MPLB) program, learning motivation is especially important because instruction focuses not only on theoretical mastery but also on practical skills that require active student participation. Students therefore need strong learning motivation to master occupational competencies in line with workplace needs and demands. Learning motivation is closely related to practical learning because it affects students' engagement and commitment when carrying out practical activities. Highly motivated students tend to be more active, focused, and responsible, enabling them to develop their skills optimally. In contrast, low learning motivation may result in limited participation and seriousness during practical lessons. Learning motivation is therefore an important factor in the success of practical instruction, particularly in vocational education. Recent evidence further highlights the role of supportive teaching practices and classroom conditions in fostering students' motivation and engagement (Asadpour et al., 2025; Gencoglu et al., 2025).

In education, especially at vocational high schools, the learning process must take into account the characteristics of students who are transitioning from adolescence to adulthood. This requires teaching approaches that can stimulate students' interest and motivation. At this level, students are expected not only to understand theoretical material but also to master practical skills relevant to the world of work. This also applies to Grade XI students in the Office Management and Business Services (MPLB) program at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa, where they study competencies such as office administration, customer service, and business management. Learning motivation is therefore important to ensure that students participate actively and seriously in learning. Low motivation can cause students to lose focus, become passive, and fail to develop the required competencies optimally. A deeper understanding of the factors influencing learning motivation in vocational education is thus needed. From a self-determination perspective, instructional practices that support students' autonomy, competence, and relatedness can help sustain motivation across secondary school years (Parrish et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2024).

This is consistent with the view of (Djarwo, 2020), which states that two types of factors influence learning motivation: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include physical and mental condition, intelligence, attitudes, interests, talents, and emotions. External factors originate outside the student and include family, school, and the surrounding environment, which can provide examples and habits that encourage strong learning motivation. Other external factors include dynamic elements in learning and teaching methods

that remain monotonous, such as asking students to read textbooks and complete exercises in student worksheets without explanation.

Based on preliminary observations conducted in Grade XI of the Office Management and Business Services (MPLB) program at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa, many students were found talking and joking with their classmates during lessons, and some appeared bored with classroom learning. These conditions indicated boredom and learning fatigue, which reduced students' active participation in class. As a result, the learning environment became less conducive and did not support the optimal achievement of learning objectives. This situation suggests that certain factors, both within students themselves and in the learning environment, influence their motivation. Based on this background and these problems, the researchers conducted a study entitled "Factors Influencing the Learning Motivation of Grade XI Students in the MPLB Program at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa."

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach to understand and describe in depth the factors influencing students' learning motivation. According to (Saleh, 2023), "qualitative research is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of statements or actions by the subjects being observed." Accordingly, this study used a descriptive design to obtain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the learning motivation of Grade XI students in the MPLB program at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa.

The study was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa, Jl. Pramuka No. 3, Kalebajeng, Bajeng District, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi. The informants were the head of the MPLB program, two subject teachers, and two Grade XI MPLB students. Properly planned research stages affect the quality of the findings. The stages used in this study were description or orientation, reduction, and selection. Objective data were required to support the findings; therefore, data sources capable of providing information relevant to the study were needed. The study used two types of data sources: primary data from five informants and secondary data obtained indirectly to support or complement the main data collected.

Research instruments are tools used to collect and obtain the data required for a study. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the main instrument for collecting data and information. Supporting tools, such as interview guides, cameras, audio recorders, and others, are used to gather this information. Field notes are also used as a supplementary instrument to record matters observed during data collection. To produce valid and accurate data, this study used observation, interviews, and documentation. An important component of qualitative research is checking data trustworthiness to determine the credibility of the findings. This can involve prolonged engagement, increased persistence, careful observation, triangulation, and member checking. In accordance with the qualitative approach used in this study, data were analyzed using an interactive model comprising four steps: data collection, data display, data condensation, and conclusion drawing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the study of factors influencing the learning motivation of students in the MPLB program at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa, these factors were generally found to be in fairly good condition. This finding was derived from observations, interviews with several informants, and documentation collected during the study. All collected data were analyzed and presented descriptively with reference to Dimyati's theory, which includes six main indicators: students'

goals and aspirations, students' abilities, students' conditions, students' environmental conditions, dynamic elements in learning and instruction, and teachers' efforts to facilitate student learning. The results of the analysis conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa are described below.

Students' Goals and Aspirations

Students' goals and aspirations provide direction for learning because they connect present academic activities with future educational or occupational plans. In this study, observations and interviews indicated that most Grade XI MPLB students had an initial plan for after graduation, either continuing their education or entering employment related to their field of study. Teachers contributed by providing guidance and explaining possible pathways. These findings suggest that aspirations were present among many students, although the evidence describes the existence of plans more clearly than the degree to which those plans translated into consistent learning behaviour.

This pattern is consistent with the motivation framework discussed by (Mayasari & Alimuddin, 2023), in which aspirations can strengthen persistence by giving learning a clear purpose, and with (Suari dkk., 2022), who associate students' goals with commitment to completing learning tasks. However, the findings also indicate that having a future plan should not automatically be interpreted as strong motivation in every lesson. The influence of aspirations appears to depend on whether students receive continuing guidance and can relate classroom activities to their intended future. Thus, teachers' career-related guidance is important not merely to encourage students verbally but to help them see the relevance of MPLB competencies to their personal goals.

Students' Abilities

Students' abilities refer to their understanding of learning materials and their capacity to apply knowledge in practical activities. Interviews, observations, and documentation indicated that students participated in question-and-answer sessions, expressed opinions, and completed practical assignments. Nevertheless, the informants also described differences in learning pace: some students understood the material quickly, whereas others needed additional explanation and guidance. The central empirical finding is therefore not that all students had mastered the competencies equally, but that ability levels varied and shaped how confidently they participated in learning.

This finding can be interpreted through the concept of self-efficacy discussed by (Rizki, 2024): students who believe they can complete a task are more likely to persist, while repeated difficulty may weaken confidence and participation. It is also compatible with (Uno, 2021) explanation that learning is reflected in the development of knowledge and skills. The present findings add a contextual qualification: practical exercises, feedback, and opportunities to ask questions may help students experience progress, but a uniform teaching strategy may not adequately support students with different levels of prior understanding. Differentiated explanations and formative feedback are therefore relevant to sustaining motivation across ability levels.

Students' Conditions

Students' physical and psychological conditions can influence their readiness to participate in learning. The interviews and observations in this study suggested that many students were generally able to participate, while fatigue, illness, personal problems, and lack of confidence could make some students less focused or active. Teachers attempted to create a comfortable

atmosphere through varied methods, audiovisual media, icebreakers, and supportive interaction. These findings show that motivation is not determined by students' willingness alone; it is also affected by their immediate physical and emotional readiness during lessons.

The findings support the account of Dimyati's framework presented by (Mayasari & Alimuddin, 2023), as well as (Simamora & Simamora, 2021), which emphasizes the relationship between physical and psychological conditions and learning concentration. However, the evidence in this study points to an important distinction: a generally supportive classroom atmosphere cannot eliminate individual differences in students' health, emotional state, or confidence. Teacher strategies may reduce classroom pressure and encourage participation, but they should be accompanied by sensitivity to students who appear tired, withdrawn, or unprepared. This interpretation positions student condition as a changing influence on motivation rather than a fixed characteristic.

Students' Environmental Conditions

Students' learning environment includes family support, school facilities, and peer relationships. The findings indicate that the school provided a reasonably supportive setting through comfortable classrooms and a computer laboratory for practical learning. Students who received attention and encouragement from their parents were also described as more enthusiastic. At the same time, peer influence was not consistently positive: some interactions supported collaboration, whereas distraction and lateness could interfere with concentration. The environmental indicator is therefore mixed and, compared with the other indicators, less consistently supportive of learning motivation.

This pattern is in line with the environmental perspective attributed to Dimyati and discussed (Mayasari & Alimuddin, 2023), and with (Faristin & Ismanto, 2023), who explain that students' habits and motivation are shaped by their surroundings. The present findings refine this explanation by showing that the school environment cannot be treated as a single influence: facilities may support practical engagement, while peer behaviour may either encourage or disrupt it; family support may strengthen aspirations, but its availability differs among students. Consequently, improving motivation requires more than providing facilities. Schools also need to foster constructive peer norms and maintain communication with families so that environmental support is more consistent.

Dynamic Elements in Learning and Instruction

Dynamic elements in learning and instruction include students' attention, interest, participation, and interaction during lessons. Observations and interviews showed that group discussions, games, and icebreakers were used to reduce boredom and encourage involvement. Students were reported to participate in group work and complete individual and collaborative assignments, although their attention could still be diverted at times. The empirical pattern therefore indicates that engagement was generally supported by interactive activities but was not continuously uniform across students or learning situations.

This finding is consistent with (Uno, 2021) and (Faristin & Ismanto, 2023), who discuss the potential of simulations and games to make learning more engaging and meaningful. Nevertheless, the current study suggests that the presence of interactive methods alone does not guarantee sustained attention. Their contribution depends on how well the activities are connected to the lesson objectives and whether students are actively involved rather than merely present. Teachers therefore need to select varied activities that are relevant to MPLB competencies and monitor whether these activities lead to deeper participation and understanding, not simply temporary excitement.

Teachers' Efforts to Facilitate Student Learning

Teachers' efforts to facilitate learning were reflected in the use of methods suited to the material, motivational guidance, varied learning media, icebreakers, and praise or rewards for students' effort and progress. Interviews and observations suggest that these practices helped create a more supportive classroom atmosphere and encouraged students to participate. An important feature of the findings is that recognition was reportedly given not only to high-achieving students but also to those who showed effort. This may provide encouragement to students whose performance is still developing.

The findings are consistent with the discussion of teacher–student interaction and appreciation in (Mayasari & Alimuddin, 2023), and with the systematic review by (Asadpour et al., 2025), which identifies teacher support, feedback, and instructional practices as relevant to academic motivation. However, the present evidence mainly describes the strategies teachers used and the positive responses perceived by informants; it does not establish the separate effect of each strategy on motivation. The contribution of teacher support should therefore be understood as an enabling condition that can strengthen students' interest, confidence, and participation, particularly when methods and feedback respond to students' differing needs.

CONCLUSION

The study identified six factors associated with the learning motivation of Grade XI students in the MPLB program at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa. Students' goals and aspirations provided direction for learning, while differences in ability and physical or psychological readiness shaped students' confidence and participation. Interactive learning activities and teachers' efforts—including varied methods, guidance, feedback, and appreciation—helped support classroom engagement. However, the environmental indicator was less consistently supportive: school facilities and family encouragement could strengthen motivation, whereas distracting peer interactions could reduce students' focus. These findings suggest that efforts to strengthen learning motivation should combine relevant vocational learning activities, responsive teacher support, attention to individual student conditions, and constructive collaboration among schools, families, and peers. Given the qualitative and context-specific design, these conclusions describe the experiences and conditions identified in this study rather than establish causal effects.

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