

## Moderating role of academic motivation and entitlement between motives of students and academic achievement among university students

Saira Bano<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Naveed Riaz<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

**Objective:** The study examined the moderating role of academic motivation and academic entitlements between students' motives for communication with their instructors and their academic achievements.

**Method:** The descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at the universities situated in Okara and Sargodha, Pakistan, from November 1, 2017 to November 9, 2018. Data were collected using the Students' Motives for Communicating with their Instructors Scale, Academic Motivation Scale and the Academic Entitlement Scale. Data were analysed using SPSS-23.

**Results:** There were 264 students. Academic motivation moderated the relationship between participation motive and academic achievement as well as the relationship between functional motive and academic achievement ( $p < 0.05$ ). Academic entitlement moderated the relationship between relational motive and academic achievement ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** High and moderate level of academic motivation enhanced the effect of students' relational and functional motive for communicating on academic achievement whereas low level of motivation reduced it. High, moderate and low level of academic entitlement enhanced the effect of relational motive on academic achievement. High level of academic entitlement reduced the effect of functional motive on academic achievement whereas moderate and low level of academic entitlement reduced its effect.

**Keywords:** Relational, functional, participation, excuse making, sycophancy, entitlement, motivation, academic achievement. (JPMA 72: 759; 2022) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.01016>

### Introduction

Student's relationships with their teachers have crucially important influence, affecting students' connection to educational institutions, motivation, academic performance and psychosocial well-being. Although students' social adjustment to educational institutions was initially examined primarily through relationships with classroom and peers, modern research increasingly has highlighted the significance of student-teacher relationships.<sup>1</sup>

A study conceptualised students' motives to communicate with their instructors and identified five distinct motives that students utilise including relational, functional, participatory, excuse-making, and sycophancy. Students communicating with instructors for relational purposes hope to develop or maintain a personal relationship; students with functional motive aim to seek more information presented and discussed by instructors; students communicating to explain a lack of responsibility utilise an excuse-making motive; participatory motives demonstrate understanding and interest in the class or course material; and students communicating for sycophantic purposes hope to make a favourable

impression on their instructors or use of intentional flattery to take undue favours in terms of grades and appreciation.<sup>2</sup> A study revealed that students who perceived instructors using more verbal approach strategies were more motivated to communicate for relational, participatory, excuse-making and sycophantic reasons.<sup>3</sup> The student-teacher relationship has more recently been examined as an interpersonal relationship.<sup>4</sup>

In academic settings, the interest in motivation is inspired by various notions which mainly split it into two broader classifications including students' academic motivation for high academic performance and students' perceptions that they deserve grades irrespective of their efforts which is labelled as academic entitlement. Thus, besides the effect of students' communication motives, their academic motivation and entitlement also has impact on their academic achievement. Research<sup>5</sup> explained about academic entitlement that students who experience heightened emotional and materialistic interests perceive that they deserve good grades without efforts or simply they consider it their right. There is considerable interest in the impact that the current generation of students will have on the world. Generally, the outlook is negative; for example, it has been found that narcissistic tendencies, entitled attitudes and uncivil behaviour may be on the rise in the current generation of students.<sup>6</sup>

Student-teacher interaction is highly relevant to the

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Lahore, Pakistan;

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha, Pakistan

**Correspondence:** Saira Bano. e-mail: [sairabano5005@gmail.com](mailto:sairabano5005@gmail.com)

academic achievement of students. Research showed that faculty members' verbal and nonverbal communications leave a lasting positive impression on students' academic performance and their lifestyle.<sup>7</sup> Some teachers do show trust and truthfulness to their students while some do not. General psychological entitlement has been an increasingly popular area in both psychology and popular media.<sup>8</sup> Further, it has been found to have a positive relationship with academic entitlement.<sup>9,10</sup> Academic entitlement and grade orientations were used as reflective measures to represent a latent variable entitled instrumental focus. Instrumental focus was negatively involving affectional learning and expectancy beliefs; each of them were then absolutely involving learning behaviours.<sup>11</sup>

The current study was planned to examine the moderating role of academic motivation in the relationship between students' motives for communicating with their instructors and academic achievement among university students. Further, it was also planned to investigate the moderating role of academic entitlement in the relationship between students' motives for communicating with their instructors and academic achievement.

## Subjects and Methods

The descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at the University of Okara, University of Sargodha and Sargodha Campus of University of Lahore, Pakistan, from November

1, 2017 to November 9, 2018, and comprised of university students. The sample size was calculated using g-power.<sup>12</sup> The sample was collected using purposive sampling technique. Table 1 shows frequency and percentage of participants with respect to gender, residence, family system and class. Greater number of boys 161 (61%) as compared to men 103 (39%), participated in the study. Greater number of urban residents 139(73.1%) as compared to rural residents ,71(26.9% participated in study. Greater number of participants belonged to extended family system 164 (62.1%) as compared to nuclear family system participated in study 100 (37.9%). Majority of participants were from BS / BBA 235(89%) as compared to MBA / MS29 (11%).

After written informed consent from the subjects, three self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data. Students' Motives for Communicating with their Instructors Scale<sup>13</sup> in which the respondents rated a Likert-type scale ranging from 'exactly like me' (5) to 'not at all like me' (1) to indicate the degree of similarity with each of the 28 statements. The Academic Motivation Scale<sup>14</sup> was used to measure academic motivation of students which is a 28-item 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). Academic Entitlement Scale 15 was used to measure academic entitlement which is a 15-item 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (6). Academic achievement was measured through the marks of students.

## Results

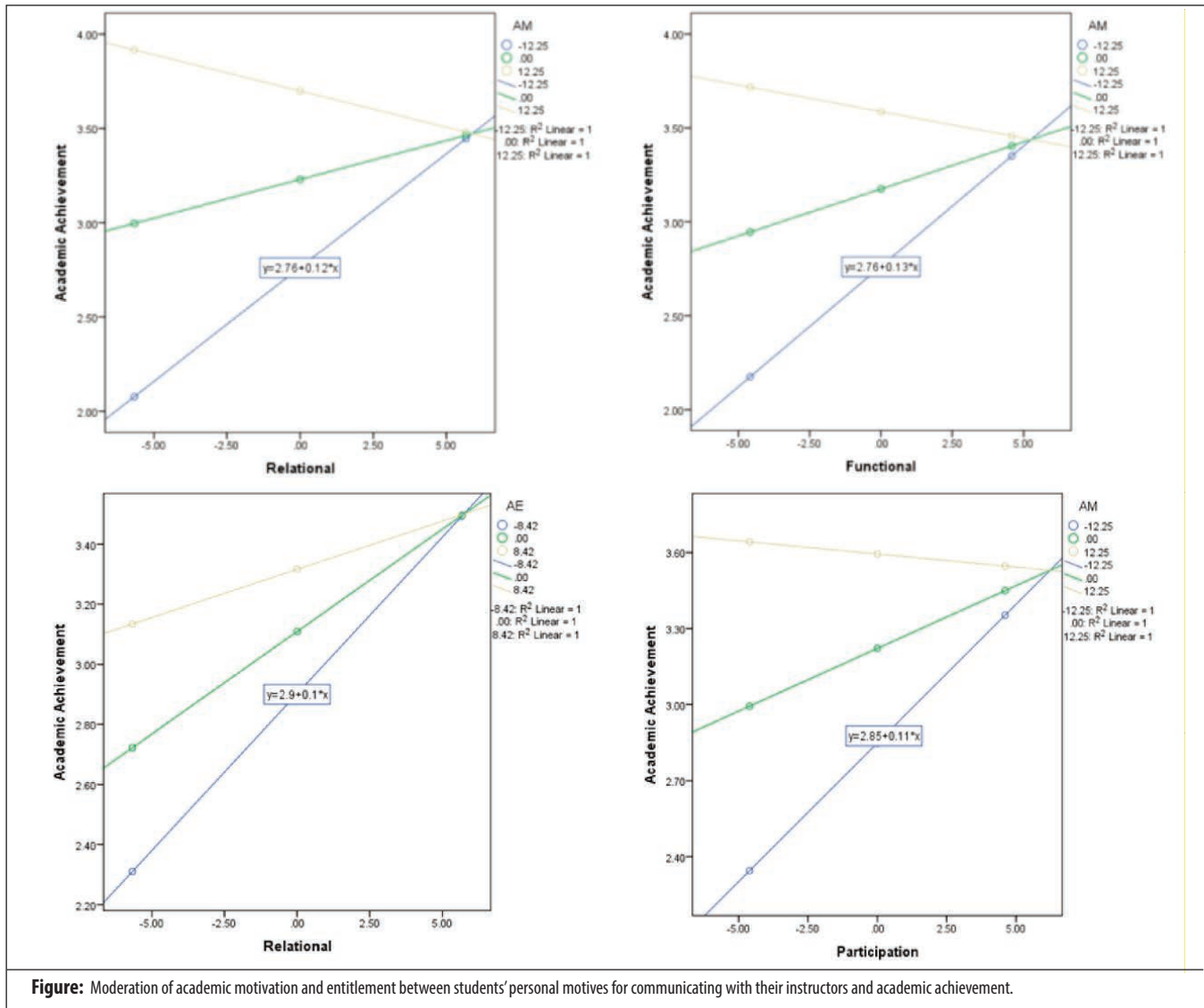
There were 264 students. Data was analysed using SPSS-23. Initially descriptive statistics and alpha reliability coefficients, Pearson correlation among variables were computed for all the scales and the alpha reliability coefficient ranged from 0.70 to 0.78, indicating internal consistency of the all the 3 scales. The value of skewness and kurtosis were less than 1 for all scales indicated that data was normally distributed. Process Macro 3.5 was used for testing the moderation hypothesis regarding the moderating role of academic motivation and entitlement among university students.

**Table-1:** Demographic Characteristics of Participants.

Characteristics	n (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	161 (61.0)
Female	103 (39.0)
<b>Residence</b>	
Rural areas	71 (26.9)
Urban areas	193 (73.1)
<b>Family system</b>	
Nuclear	100 (37.9)
Extended	164 (62.1)
<b>Family system</b>	
BS / BBA	235 (89.0)
MBA / MS	29 (11.0)

**Table-2:** Psychometric Properties and Pearson Correlation among Variables.

Variables	Mean±SD	α	Range				Kurtosis	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
			Potential	Actual	Skewness										
Relational	15.74±5.62	0.78	6-30	6-27	0.01	-0.80	-	0.51***	0.14*	0.27***	0.16*	-0.01	0.26***	0.29***	
Functional	25.22±4.54	0.75	7-35	13-30	-1.49	-0.73	-	0.21**	0.41***	0.10	-0.14*	0.18**	0.27***		
Excuse making	15.55±5.32	0.71	13-65	5-25	-0.35	-0.73	-	0.35***	0.63***	0.36***	0.36***	0.36***	0.35***		
Participation	13.07±4.56	0.78	18-90	4-20	-0.24	-0.90	-	0.22***	0.38***	0.40***	0.40***	0.34***	0.34***		
Sycophancy	11.86±2.60	0.76	22-110	6-15	-0.62	-0.42	-	0.35***	0.48***	0.48***	0.56***	0.56***			
Academic entitlement	43.89±8.34	0.70	15-75	25-75	0.44	1.82	-	0.39***	0.08						
Academic motivation	104.93±12.13	0.71	28-140	71-138	-0.32	1.01	-	0.36***							



**Figure:** Moderation of academic motivation and entitlement between students' personal motives for communicating with their instructors and academic achievement.

Results of moderation analysis (Figure) Students' negative motives for communicating were additively influenced by academic entitlement which is a tendency to believe that they deserved good grades irrespective of their level of effort. Positive motives for communicating enhanced with academic motivation.

**Discussion**

Findings of the present study revealed that high and moderate level of academic motivation enhanced the effect of students' relational and functional motive for communicating on academic achievement whereas low level of motivation reduced it. Thus, the hypothesis that academic motivation is likely to moderate the relationship between relational and participatory motive and academic achievement among university students was supported by the findings shown in the current study. Existing research

reported similar insights.<sup>13</sup> Researchers reported that students who perceived instructors using more verbal approach strategies were more motivated to communicate for relational, participatory, excuse-making and sycophantic reasons.<sup>3</sup> In addition, it was reported that students' motivations to communicate vary depending on levels of instructor-student assertiveness and responsiveness.<sup>12</sup> Students communicating for sycophantic, relational and participatory motives used indirect information-seeking strategies, whereas students communicating for functional communication motive used overt information-seeking strategy and avoided the testing information-seeking strategy.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, high, moderate and low level of academic entitlement enhanced the effect of relational motive on academic achievement. This proved that students with all

levels of academic entitlement, even with its low level, use rational motives to obtain undue favours from teachers. This is the reason that in the present study, high level of academic entitlement reduced the effect of functional motive on academic achievement whereas moderate and low level of academic entitlement reduced its effect. Thus, the hypothesis "academic entitlement is likely to moderate the relationship between relational motive and academic achievement among university students" was supported in the present study. Remaining moderation related findings on the effect of students' motives for communicating with their instructors were non-significant. Teacher-student communication in the instructional context is multidimensional and it includes physical, social, and task related aspects.<sup>15</sup> A study reported students' affective and cognitive learning scores were significantly correlated with sycophancy and excuse-making.<sup>16</sup>

All the three scales used in the present study were not developed with the local educational context, and they were all self-reporting in nature which are limitations of the current study. These scales need to be validated in the local context.

## Conclusion

The study shared insights that varying levels of academic motivation and academic entitlement moderated the effects of students' motives for communicating with their instructors and academic achievement of university students.

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**Conflict of Interest:** None.

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