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EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF EXISTENCE, RELATEDNESS AND GROWTH ON LEARNER'S MOTIVATION

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ABSTRACT

The motivation of learners is strongly related to their fundamental needs, particularly in the realms of psychology and safety factors such as mindfulness and emotional exhaustion. Burnout has attracted significant attention in recent years because of its detrimental effects on individual's psychological well-being and general productivity. This study aimed to apply the ERG theory (existence, relatedness and growth) as a framework to examine the implication of burnout to learner's motivation. Employing a quantitative survey using five Likert scales was used for 207 respondents in various studies disciplines in Malaysia. The survey consisted of four distinct sections: first, an assessment of the demographic profile, followed by an assessment of relatedness based on value motivational components, third, an analysis growth needs by analysing expectation and affective components and lastly, an evaluation on existence by assessing exhaustion and disengagement. The Pearson correlation analysis demonstrates a moderate positive and significant relationship between the existence, relatedness, and growth in learning motivation. The finding shows that learners exhibited a strong learning motivation however, the feeling of tiredness, anxiety and frustration contributed to burnout and lowering motivation. Learners' motivation levels vary in tandem with their burnout experiences, suggesting a potential interdependence between these variables. Thus, to prevent the prolonged cause of burnout that can have a negative impact on learning, a supportive learning environment, restructure of syllabus and assessment task, addressing learner's emotion and physical well-being need to be emphasized.

Keywords: learner's motivation, existence, relatedness, growth, burnout.

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INTRODUCTION

Clayton Alderfer's ERG theory explores the interplay between three core human needs; Existence (E), Relatedness (R) and Growth (G) needs, which are closely aligned with Maslow's psychological hierarchy of needs. Existence needs are the fundamental and essential requirements for human survival and physical health similarly to Maslow's physiological and safety levels. These include not only protection from fear, anxiety, and tension but also essentials like rest, physical activity, and access to resources such as food and clothing (Anjanaben & Amit, 2019; Elujekwute et al., 2021). Satisfying these needs is essential before individuals can shift their attention to higher-order concerns like social connections or personal advancement (Alderfer, 1969). Without meeting these fundamental needs, people often struggle to concentrate on learning or actively participate in various activities (Belal, 2024).

In ERG theory, relatedness needs refer to the human drive to establish and maintain meaningful social relationships (Anjanaben & Amit, 2019; Elujekwute et al., 2021). This includes seeking security through mutual trust, fostering a sense of belonging to prevent isolation and earning respect to feel appreciated and gain social standing (Yang et al., 2011). When they feel they are part of a supportive learning environment where they are valued, their engagement in learning tasks tends to increase. Growth needs focus on aspiration for self-improvement, covering aspects like self-esteem and the pursuit of self-actualization (Kamarulzaman, 2023; Elujekwute et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2011). These needs encourage individuals to develop their abilities, push their own boundaries, and strive toward becoming their most authentic selves. Often, this drive is fuelled more by internal (intrinsic) motivation than by external rewards (Ismail et al., 2023). As Kamarulzaman et al. (2023) pointed out, when learners experience a sense of belonging, take ownership of their learning, and recognize their own progress, their internal motivation grows. Likewise, research by Yu and Hsu (2022) suggests that existence and growth needs have a stronger influence on intrinsic motivation than on extrinsic factors, demonstrating that ERG theory significantly shapes personal behavior.

Similarly to Maslow's framework, ERG Alderfer's theory suggests that individuals are best positioned to pursue achievement and personal development when their psychological needs, health, safety, and life stability are adequately met. A deficiency in any of these fundamental needs can lead to reduce concentration, attention and disengagement from academic or personal goals. Such a condition may culminate in prolonged exhaustion which constitutes a significant indicator of burnout (Pham Thi & Duong, 2024).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research indicates that remote learning severely undermines students' basic psychological needs, increasing frustration and reducing motivation (Müller et al., 2021). Studies have explored relatedness as a buffer against burnout (Hoferichte et al., 2023) and the role of workload and self-efficacy in learning burnout (Pham Thi & Duong, 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated burnout among Malaysian undergraduates, with rising levels of depression, anxiety, and stress linked to financial strain, abrupt transitions to online learning, and policy-driven academic pressures (Wong et al., 2023; Jackson & Konczosné Szombathelyi, 2022). However, existing research has yet to adequately investigate how simultaneous deprivation of existence, relatedness and growth (ERG) needs directly affect learner's motivation. This study addresses this gap by investigating how unfulfilled needs contribute to burnout and subsequent declines in

learning motivation, using ERG theory to propose targeted interventions. Understanding these relationships, this study hopes to contribute to improvising the psychological well-being and learning persistence in academic environments.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTION

This study is done to explore perception of learner's motivation on their use of learning strategies. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions.

- How does existence influence learning motivation?
- How does relatedness influence learning motivation?
- How does growth influence learning motivation?
- Is there a relationship between all factors in learning motivation?

LITERATURE REVIEW

MOTIVATION TO LEARN

Motivating learners to learn is an important goal for teachers and educators in achieving fruitful learning in Malaysia's education system. Motivation is a critical component for effective and successful learning. However, this aspect is not simple or easy as numerous things influence learners to learn regardless of their academic and social lives. Psychology identified two major factors influencing learners' motivation to learn: Endogenous motivation refers to innate interest, curiosity, or the drive to attain a goal. Exogenous motivation, on the other hand, is prompted by external rewards or penalties, such as the dread of failing tests (Xiang et al., 2024). Learning motivation had a significant positive impact on learning effectiveness; learning motivation had a significant positive effect on learning engagement; learning engagement had a significant positive impact on learning effectiveness; and learning engagement had a partial mediation effect on learning motivation and learning effectiveness. Personality factors moderated the connection between learning motivation and efficacy (Lei et al., 2024).

A few research studies highlighted the important of designing online learning environments that fulfill existence, relatedness and growth needs, can help to sustain learner's motivation and reduce learning burnout (Xiong, 2025; Elshareif & Mohamed, 2021); Popovska & Kuvmanovska, 2019). According to Elshareif & Mohamed (2021) which examined the relationship between major characteristics of e-learning and learners' motivation to learn. The study found that learners were highly motivated by e-teaching materials and tests that address the existence needs. However, the learners showed less engagement towards the relatedness need as in e-discussions, grade checking, and feedback. Similarly to Mu & Guo (2022), studied on impact online learning towards learning burnout. This study investigated the impact of e-learning burnout on students' academic performance and explores the potential benefits of game-based assessments in mitigating this issue. The findings revealed that incorporating game elements into online learning environments may reduce burnout and enhance educational outcomes, providing useful implications for optimizing digital education strategies.

Beyond online learning, researchers have examined how different the learning or pedagogical approach affect learner's motivation. Cooperative learning (student-centered) and lecture-

based learning (teacher-centered) were tested on high education students at a university in Vietnam to evaluate the motivational levels. The research found that learners were more motivated in cooperative learning compared to the conventional lecture-based approach highlighting how relatedness needs influence the way they learn (Tran, 2019). Digital learning approaches such as Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) and Online Distance Learning (ODL) have also gained attention as an innovative educational strategy. Yen Chaw & Meng Tan (2019) found that learners using MOOCs, were motivated by their flexibility times, free or low-cost enrollment and recognition of their high-quality learning provided by reputable institutions. It was also agreed by Hendriks et al. (2024) and Mansoor et al., (2024) that learners in integrated MOOCs and ODL learning were motivated by self-motivation, faith in their instructor (the relatedness needs), a positive perception of themselves and cost reduction. These findings show that both growth and relatedness needs are important in keeping them motivated Overall, sustaining motivation in learning requires addressing not just basic needs but also fostering meaningful relationships and supporting students' personal development as per articulate by Maslow's needs theory.

BURNOUT AMONG LEARNERS

Burnout among learners has emerged as a significant concern, reflecting the demanding nature of academic pursuits and the pressures associated with academic achievement. Reyes-de-Cózar et al., (2023) revealed that burnout is a major issue in higher education, leading to a drop in students' academic performance. A widely used tool for assessing burnout, individuals experiencing burnout may exhibit symptoms such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

Numerous studies have shedding light on its prevalence, contributing factors, and implications for student well-being and academic performance indirectly encompassing aspect of ERG theory. Daud et al. (2020) assesses the prevalence of burnout among 200 medical students at a new public medical school in Malaysia and indicated that the level of burnout among these students was average when compared to other universities in Malaysia and internationally. The study also found that burnout was associated with several academic factors, such as students' satisfaction with their program, their belief that they had made the right choice in pursuing medicine, and their thoughts about potentially dropping out of the program. Hence, Ye et al., (2021) examined how social support affects academic burnout among university students at Chinese university. Results showed that higher social support was linked to lower academic burnout. The similar finding also reported by Tee at al., (2022) which revealed the significant of anxiety and burnout experience among the learners in clinical undergraduates' students at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The finding suggested that the non-conducive learning environment and lack of technical support highlighting the unmet of fundamental needs may undermine the learning motivation and negatively impact to their personal growth. The motivated students were less likely to experience burnout, with higher motivation levels correlating with lower burnout levels. This suggests that motivation plays a crucial role in preventing burnout, which in turn helps enhance learning and academic performance among students (Atifah et al., (2024). Therefore, findings from several studies reflect the significant role of ERG theory in influencing burnout risk, which can either decrease or increase learners' motivation (Afifah et al, 2024; Pham Thi & Duong, 2024).

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. This study investigates the influence of existence on learners' motivation. According to Rahmat et al. (2021), learners' motivation is derived from the environment they are in. This environment will determine if the learners' needs are met. In the context of this study, Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory is used to explain learners' needs. According to Alderfer (1969), learners need relatedness, growth and existence. Alderfer's (1969) needs are then scaffolded with Pintrich & De Groot's (1990) motivational constructs as well as causes of burnout by Campos, et al. (2011). In the contest of this study, Relatedness is measured by value components. Next, growth is measured by expectancy and affective components. Finally, existence is measured by burnout causes.

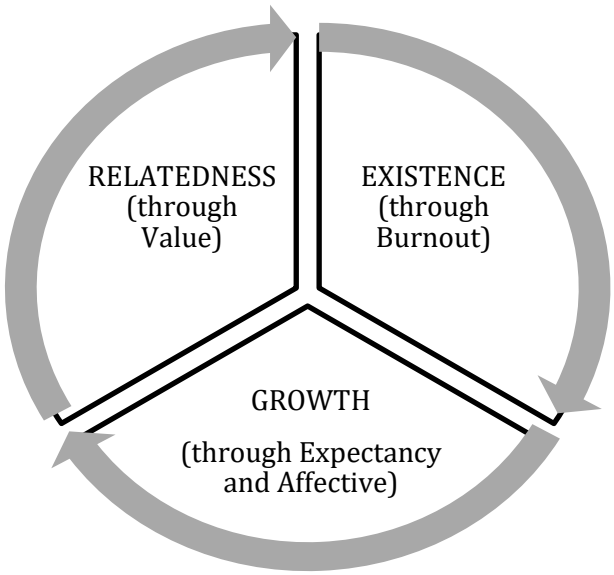


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study the influence of existence on learners' motivation.

METHOD

This quantitative study was conducted to explore the learner's motivational factors influencing learning among undergraduate students in Malaysian universities. A purposive sample of 207 participants, exceeding the minimum target of 150 respondents. The survey was distributed via Google Forms and distributed through email and lecturer networks and remained open for response over a period of one month. The instrument employed was a 5-point Likert scale survey adapted from Alderfer (1969), Pintrich & DeGroot (1990), and Campos et al. (2011), consisting of four sections. Section A captured demographic information meanwhile the three key components aligned with Alderfer's ERG framework illustrated in Table 1. Section B assessed Existence by burnout through 8 items on exhaustion and disengagement which reflect students' unmet basic needs related to mental, emotional, and material well-being. These components provide a structured way to examine how students' needs influence their motivation and engagement in learning. Section C refers to the Relatedness, divided into intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, and task value belief which capture learner's sense of connection,

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belonging and meaning in their learning activities. Meanwhile section D contained 7 items on the expectancy component, focusing on self-efficacy and control beliefs for learning, along with 5 affective component items which represent students' drive for personal development, mastery, and competence. Reliability analysis of the instrument yielded Cronbach's alpha values of .907 for all survey items, confirming good internal consistency. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS to generate descriptive and inferential statistics, addressing the research questions of the study.

Table 1. Distribution of items in the survey

Section	ERG theory (Alderfer, 1969)	Construct	Variable	No of items
B	Existence (E)	Burnout (Campos et al., 2011)	(i) Exhaustion	8
			(ii) Disengagement	8
C	Relatedness (R)	Value components (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990)	(i) Intrinsic goal orientation	4
			(ii) Extrinsic goal orientation	3
			(iii) Task value beliefs	5
D	Growth (G)	Expectancy component	(i) Students' perception of self- efficacy	5
			(ii) Control beliefs for learning	2
		Affective components		5
			Total no. of items	40

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RESULTS

FINDINGS FOR DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Figure 2 displays the gender-based distribution of the demographic profiles of the survey respondents. Among the 207 participants, 45% were male students and 55% were female students. The respondent's age group is displayed in Figure 3. The data indicates that 76% of the respondents belong to the age range of 20-29 years, while 22% belong to the age group of 17-19 years. The percentage of respondents in the age categories above 29 years old is 1%.

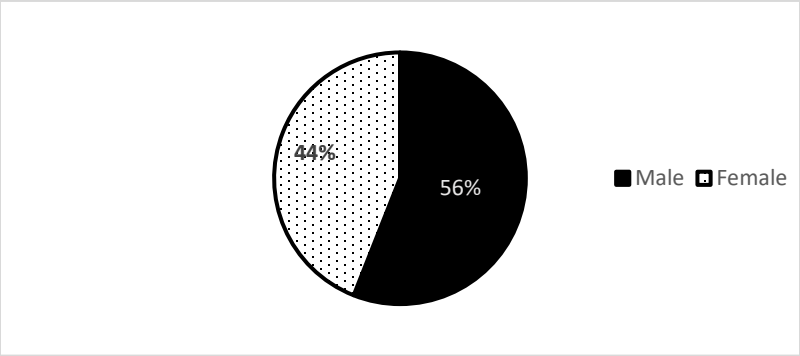


Figure 2. Respondents 'gender.

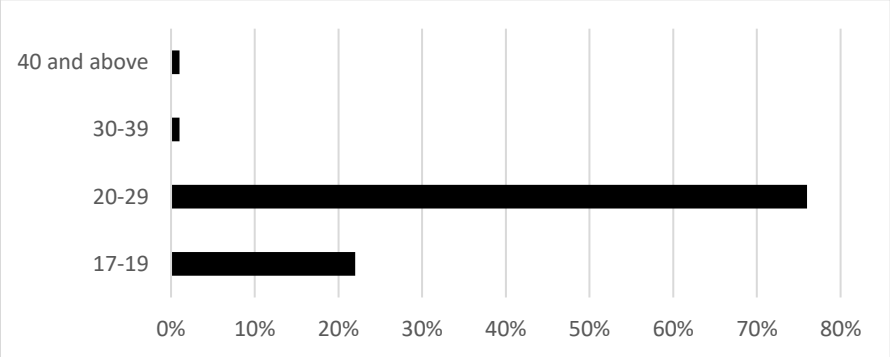


Figure 3. Respondents' age group.

Figure 4 shows that out of 207 survey respondents, 92% are from the Science & Technology field and 8% are from the Social Science discipline. Meanwhile Figure 5 presents the categorization of participants according to their educational attainment. The data indicates that 54% of the respondents had a diploma level education, while 34% had a bachelor's degree. In addition, 10% of the participants were from the matriculation/foundation/certification level, while 2% were postgraduate respondents.

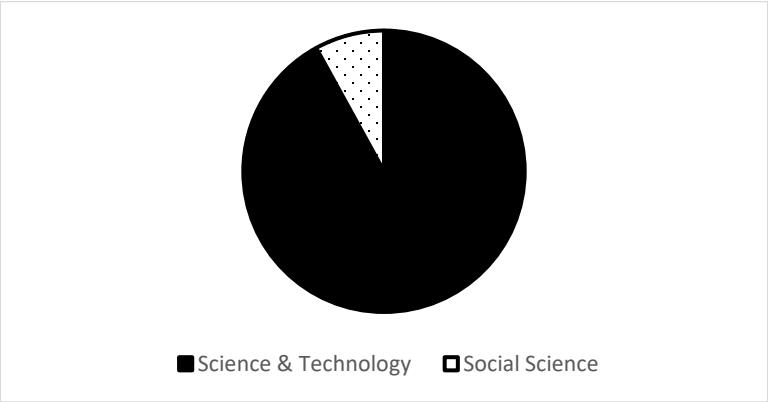


Figure 4. Respondents' education discipline.

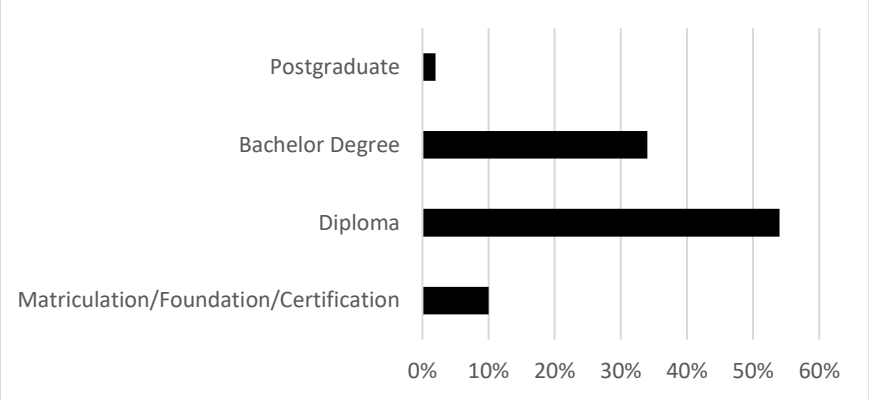


Figure 5- Respondents' education level.

FINDINGS FOR EXISTENCE

This section presents data to answer research question 1 – How does existence influence learning? In the context of this study, existence is measured by the causes of burnout among learners.

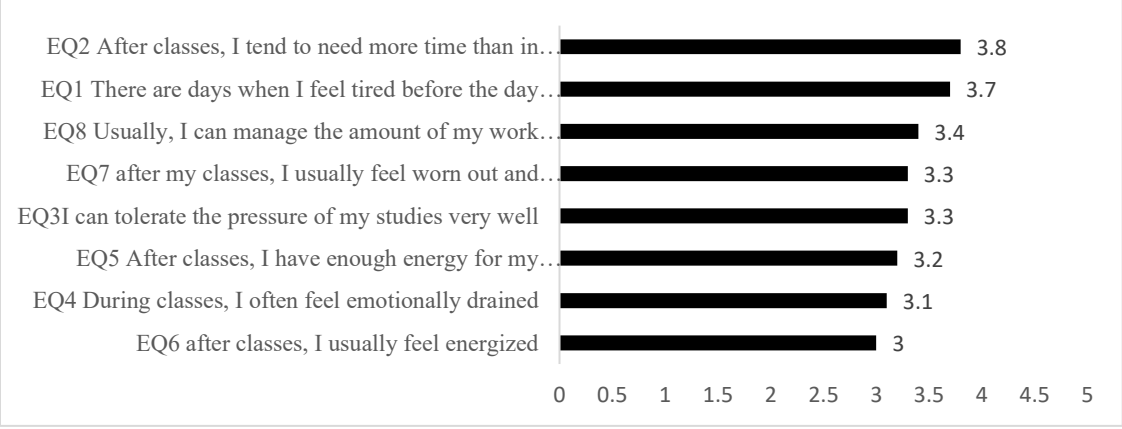


Figure 6. Mean value for burnout (exhaustion).

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Based on the mean score obtained in Figure 6, the learners feel they need more time to relax and feel better as well as they feel tired before the day begins. Those two items scored the highest mean values of 3.8 and 3.7. This data suggests that learners do feel the exhaustion even before the learning session begins and need more time to recover. The questions EQ8, EQ7 and EQ3 scored mean values of 3.4 and 3.3 respectively, where the learners moderately agree that they can manage the amount of work and tolerate the pressure very well. They also feel worn out after the class quite often. Furthermore, the learners sometimes feel that they have enough energy for their leisure activities, feel emotionally drained and feel energized. This can be seen from EQ5, EQ4 and EQ6 with the mean score of 3.2, 3.1 and 3.0 respectively. Study has shown that burnout can make learners feel exhausted in their daily lives after attending classes. It has also been confirmed that burnout negatively affects learners' motivation levels in class, which supports the existing theory on the impact of burnout on academic engagement.

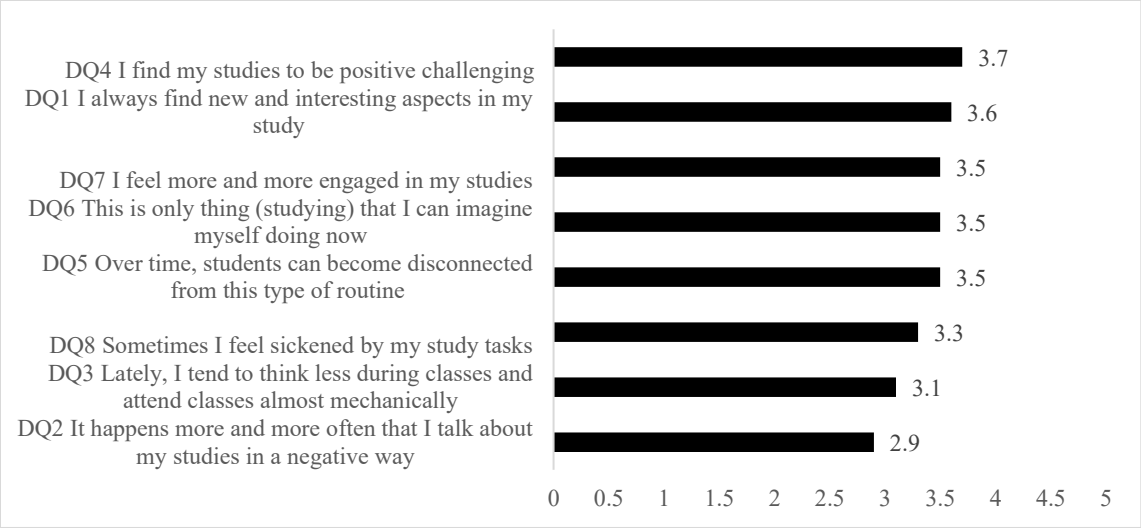


Figure 7. Mean value for disengagement.

Based on Figure 7, the learners agree that their studies possess a positive challenge to them and always find interesting aspects in their studies. Those two items scored the highest mean values of 3.7 and 3.6 respectively. DQ5, 6 and 7 scored the same mean value of 3.5 where learners feel more and more engaged in their studies and can become disconnected from the studies routine. They also agree that studying is the only thing that they can do. Furthermore, learners slightly agree that they sometimes feel sickened by the study task and tend to think less during classes and attend classes almost mechanically. These questions scored mean values of 3.3 and 3.1, respectively. Finally, learners disagree that they talk about their studies in a negative way as shown by a mean score of 2.9. The positive feedback indicates that they remain motivated in their learning despite the challenges they face. However, there are some minor, non-dominant signals suggesting that they occasionally experience tiredness and fatigue during their engagement.

Looking at the scores for existence needs based on Figure 6 and Figure 7, the findings suggest that although learners experience emotional and physical fatigue, they are still able to encourage and pursue themself to learn. However, the strong sense of exhaustion may lead to sustained burnout if left unaddressed, which could ultimately result in decreased motivation and performance.

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FINDINGS FOR RELATEDNESS

This section is dedicated to addressing Research Question 2: What is the influence of relatedness on learning? In the scope of this study, relatedness is gauged through value components categorized into (i) intrinsic goal orientation, (ii) extrinsic goal orientation, and (iii) task value beliefs.

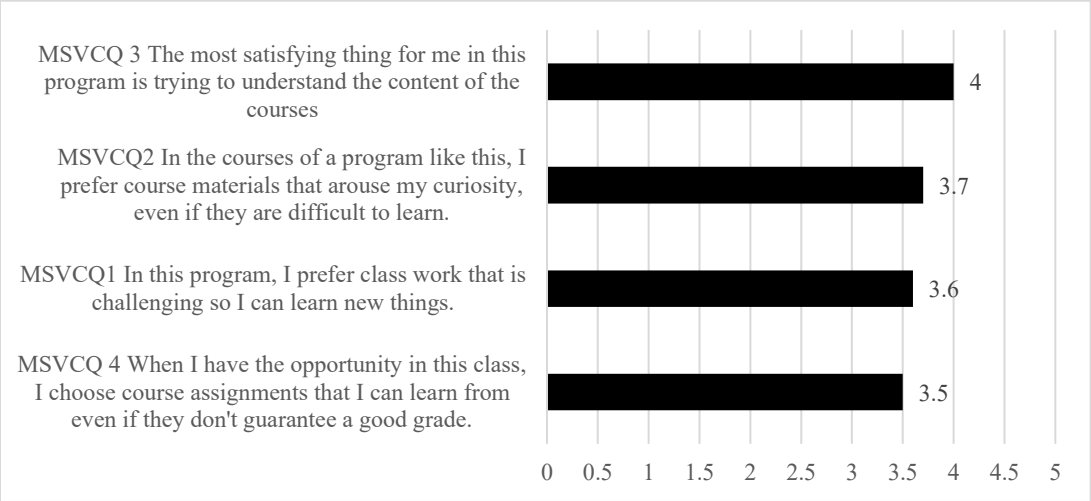


Figure 8. Mean value for Intrinsic Goal Orientation (IGO).

The mean scores obtained from the Measurement of Student Value of Course Questionnaire (MSVCQ) shed light on the significant role of intrinsic goal orientation in learning as depicted in Figure 8. Across the four items assessed, participants expressed a strong inclination towards seeking challenging classwork (MSVCQ1, mean score = 3.6) and course materials that pique their curiosity, even if they are difficult to grasp (MSVCQ2, mean score = 3.7). Moreover, the highest mean score was recorded for the statement indicating satisfaction derived from attempting to comprehend course content (MSVCQ3, mean score = 4). This suggests a profound emphasis on the intrinsic value of learning for its own sake. However, it's noteworthy that while participants generally prioritize learning over grades, as indicated by their preference for assignments that facilitate learning (MSVCQ4, mean score = 3.5), the mean score for this item is slightly lower compared to others. This discrepancy could indicate a nuanced balance between intrinsic motivation and external incentives, warranting further exploration into how individuals navigate the tension between learning for personal growth and meeting external expectations.

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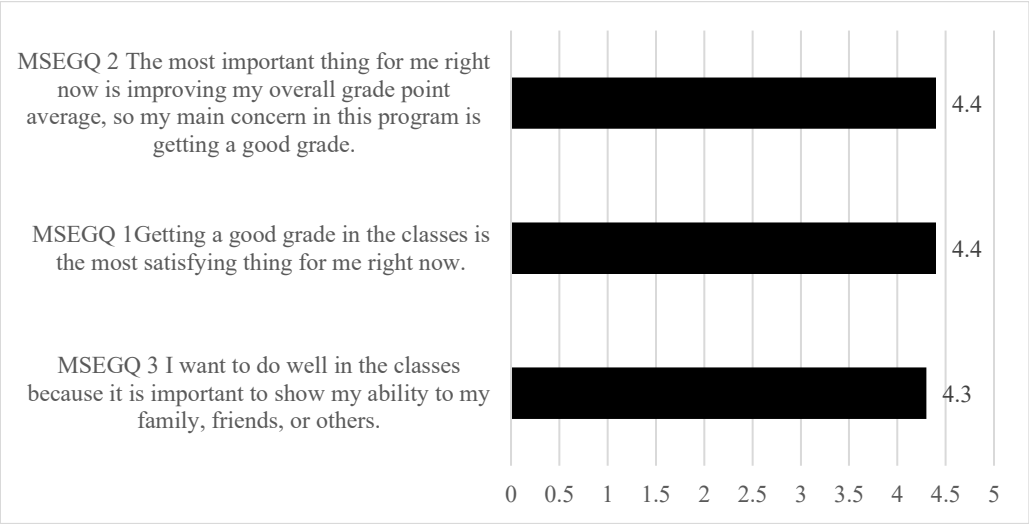


Figure 9. Mean value for Extrinsic Goal Orientation (EGO).

The mean scores for extrinsic goal orientation (EGO) items reveal a clear focus on external rewards, with participants showing strong agreement towards statements emphasizing the importance of grades as shown in Figure 9. Across all three items, the mean scores were notably high: MSEGQ1 ("Getting a good grade in the classes is the most satisfying thing for me right now") and MSEGQ2 ("The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade point average, so my main concern in this program is getting a good grade") both received a mean score of 4.4, while MSEGQ3 ("I want to do well in the classes because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, or others") garnered a mean score of 4.3. This suggests a strong orientation towards academic achievement driven by external validation. However, this heavy focus on grades may potentially overshadow intrinsic enjoyment of learning and deeper engagement with course content. Striking a balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation could be pivotal for fostering sustainable and fulfilling learning experiences. Future research could explore interventions promoting intrinsic motivation to enhance both academic achievement and genuine love for learning.

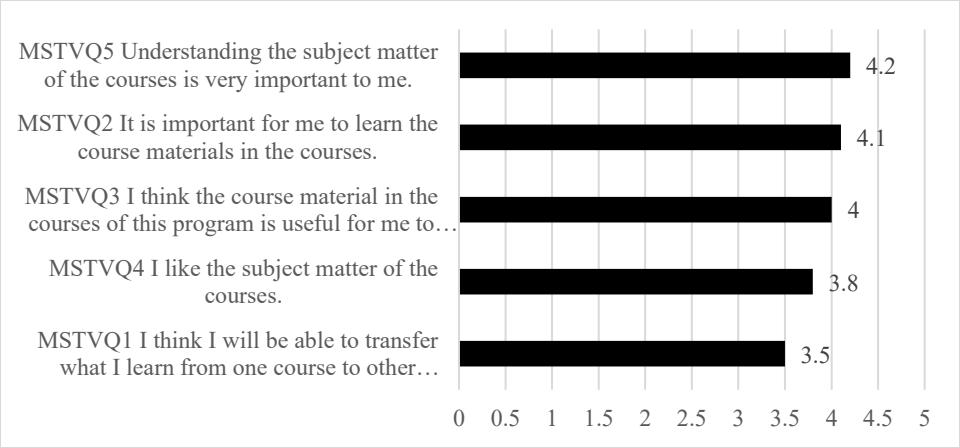


Figure 10. Mean value for Task Value Beliefs (TVB).

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The mean scores for Task Value Beliefs (TVB) items as mentioned in Figure 10 reveal participants' generally positive attitudes towards the value and relevance of course materials. While there is a moderate confidence in knowledge transferability, indicated by a mean score of 3.5 for MSTVQ1, participants strongly emphasize the importance of mastering the course material, as evidenced by a high mean score of 4.1 for MSTVQ2. Moreover, participants perceive the course material as highly useful for learning (MSTVQ3, mean score = 4), express a liking for the subject matter (MSTVQ4, mean score = 3.8), and stress the importance of understanding it, with a mean score of 4.2 for MSTVQ5.

The data presented in Figures 8, 9, and 10 strongly support the ERG theory, particularly the relatedness component, which is associated with intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and students' value-belief systems. Furthermore, their willingness to select assignments that enhance learning, even without a guaranteed high grade, reinforces the presence of deep learning strategies and self-determined motivation. In contrast, extrinsic goal orientation appears to be even more dominant among students. This suggests that external validation and academic performance outcomes significantly influence student behavior, potentially driven by competitive academic environments or institutional expectations. In terms of value belief, this reflects a strong alignment with the growth and relatedness needs described in the ERG theory, as they not only seek personal development through knowledge acquisition but also aim to apply their learning in broader academic contexts.

Overall, the combination of high extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, along with positive value beliefs, affirms that students are driven by a complex interplay of internal satisfaction and external rewards. These findings validate the theoretical assertion that motivation in learning environments is multifaceted and that both personal interest and goal-driven ambition are crucial for sustained engagement in higher education.

FINDINGS FOR GROWTH

This section presents data to answer research question 3 –How does growth influence learning? In the context of this study, growth is measured by expectancy and affective components. Expectancy components are sub-categorised into (i) students' perception of self-efficacy, and (ii) control beliefs for learning.

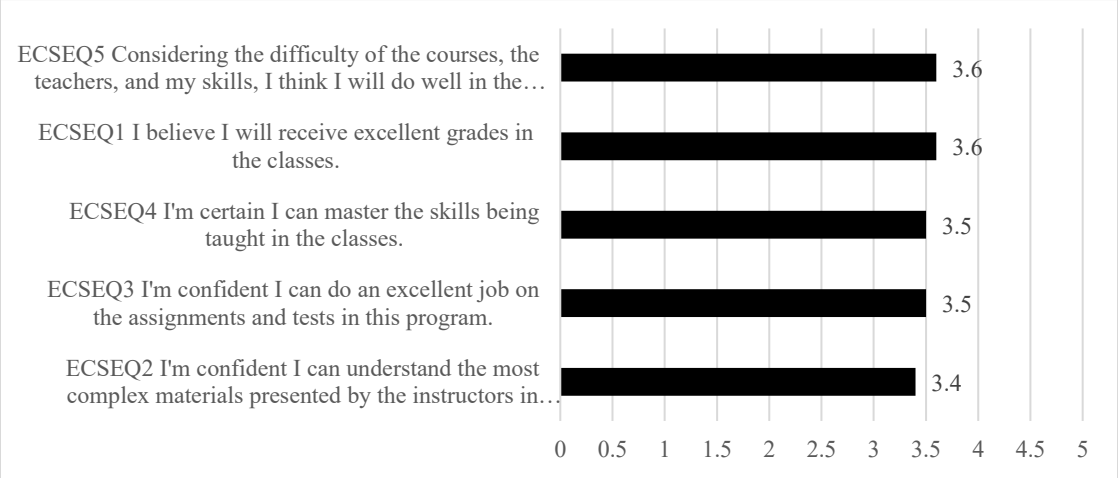


Figure 11. Mean value for students' perception of self-efficacy.

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The mean score for Students' Perception of Self-Efficacy tabulated in Figure 11 shows that the participants have a positive motivation which shows the highest score (3.6) for ECSEQ1I and ECSEQ5. It suggests that participants have a high level of confidence in their academic performance and ability to do well in their classes, regardless of the perceived difficulty of the courses or their own skills. The mean score for ECSEQ3 (" I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this") and ECSEQ4 ("I'm certain I can master the skills being taught in the classes) both received a mean score of 3.5. While the mean score of 3.4 shows that participants believe they understand the most complex materials presented by their lecturer in the class. This consistency in confidence across different aspects of academic performance indicates a strong sense of self-efficacy among the participants.

The survey indicates a generally high and consistent level of self-confidence among participants across various academic dimensions. This includes confidence in hands-on learning activities, as well as the recognition that peer support and guided instruction from lecturers can significantly enhance their understanding during class. Overall, the data suggests that students possess a strong and healthy sense of self-efficacy, which is likely to positively influence their academic engagement and performance.

To further strengthen this positive outlook, targeted strategies, particularly those that build confidence in tackling complex cognitive tasks. It is hoped that lecturers will continue to promote active, experience-based learning environments that engage undergraduate students meaningfully and support their ongoing academic development.

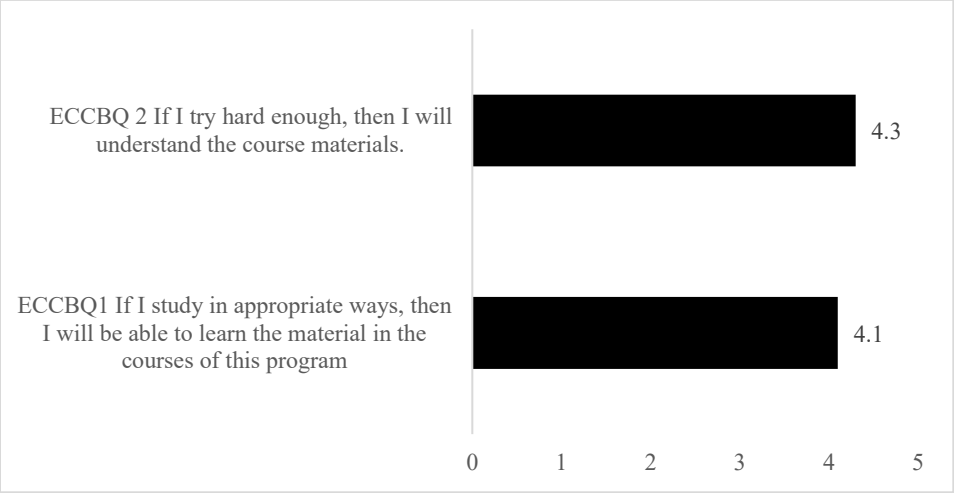


Figure 12. Mean value for (ii) control beliefs for learning.

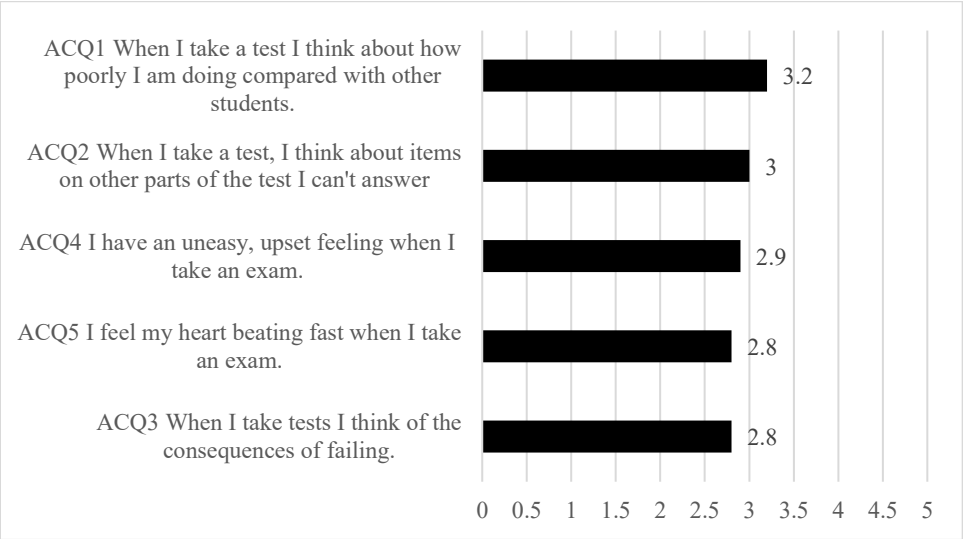


Figure 13. Mean value for affective component.

The mean score for Control Belief for Learning (CBL) and Affective Component (AC) are listed as shown in Figure 12 and 13, respectively. Generally, control belief is an individual's impression of their ability to control events or outcomes in their lives. Control belief influences various aspects of behavior, motivation, and well-being. In the context of learners, control belief psychology typically refers to a learner's perception of their ability to exert control over their academic outcomes and experiences such as test score, grades and overall performance.

As stated in Figure 12, the mean scores indicate the average level of agreement with each statement among the participants. In this case, both statements received high mean scores, suggesting a strong agreement among respondents regarding their control beliefs for learning. A mean score of 4.1 for ECCBQ1 indicates that, on average, respondents moderately agree that studying in appropriate ways leads to effective learning of course material. Similarly, a mean score of 4.3 for ECCBQ2 suggests a higher level of agreement that putting in effort leads to understanding course materials.

Overall, these findings show that participants have a positive perception and confidence in their capability to influence their academic success through action and efforts. In education, the affective component refers to the emotional or feeling dimension of learning and academic experiences. The affective components in education are essential to promote holistic development as they can enhance students' motivation and emotional well-being leading to academic achievement. These findings reflect the affective experiences of students during test-taking situations, including feelings of anxiety, concern about performance relative to peers, and physiological symptoms such as increased heart rate. The mean value scores indicate the average level of agreement with each statement among the participants. A mean score of 3.2 for ACQ1 suggests that, on average, participants moderately agree that they think about performing poorly compared to other students during tests. Like ACQ2 which has a mean score of 3.0. A slightly low mean data value also shows that participants think about the consequences of failing (ACQ3, mean score = 2.8), upset (ACQ4, mean score = 2.9) and fast heart beating (ACQ5, mean score = 2.8) during the examination session.

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FINDINGS FOR RELATIONSHIP EXISTENCE, RELATEDNESS AND GROWTH

This section presents data to answer research question 4 –Is there a relationship between all factors in learning? To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between all factors in learning, data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in Table 2, 3 and 4 below.

Table 2. Correlation between Existence and Relatedness

		EXISTENCE	RELATEDNESS
EXISTENCE	Pearson Correlation	1	.499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	207	207
RELATEDNESS	Pearson Correlation	.449**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	207	207

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

Table 2 shows there is an association between existence and relatedness. Correlation analysis shows that there is a moderate significant association between existence and relatedness (r=.449**) and (p=.000). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a moderate positive relationship between existence and relatedness.

Table 3. Correlation between Relatedness and Growth

		RELATEDNESS	GROWTH
RELATEDNESS	Pearson Correlation	1	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	207	207
GROWTH	Pearson Correlation	.457**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	207	207

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

Table 3 shows there is an association between relatedness and growth. Correlation analysis shows that there is a moderate significant association between relatedness and growth (r=.457**) and (p=.000). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a moderate positive relationship between relatedness and growth.

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Table 4. Correlation between Growth and Existence

		GROWTH	EXISTENCE
GROWTH	Pearson Correlation	1	.472**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	207	207
EXISTENCE	Pearson Correlation	.472**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	207	207

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

Table 4 shows there is an association between existence and growth. Correlation analysis shows that there is a moderate significant association between existence and growth (r=.472**) and (p=.000). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a moderate positive relationship between existence and growth.

The correlation analysis between existence, relatedness, and growth needs reveals moderate positive associations across all dimensions, as shown in Tables 2, 3, and 4 (existence–relatedness: $r = .449$, relatedness–growth: $r = .457$, existence–growth: $r = .472$, all $p < .001$). While these findings demonstrate that the three needs are interconnected and tend to increase together, they do not by themselves clarify how these relationships influence learners' motivation or burnout, which is the central aim of this study. Therefore, although the correlations provide foundational evidence of ERG associations, further analysis (e.g., regression or mediation) is necessary to explain the predictive or causal pathways relevant to the research objectives.

CONCLUSION

This study is to explore perception of learners on their use of learning strategies by identifying the significant influence of existence, relatedness and growth in learning. In investigating the existence of influence through causes of burnout in learning, it is being measured on exhaustion and disagreement. From the exhaustion survey, the students almost feel tired before the day begins and require time for relaxing before learning. For disengagement surveys, they feel their studies are to be positively challenging and they are always finding new and interesting aspects in their study. This shows positive engagement in learning. Despite the previously described good indicators of engagement, some negative indicators of disengagement also surfaced. Sometimes students also feel negative manner in learning and are less mentally engaged during class. The findings are consistent with the studies conducted by Muhammad et al. (2004), Kaharudin et al. (2023), Mustafa et al. (2023), and Fuller et al. (2020). Kaharudin et al., (2023) indicate that students may become disengaged from learning due to factors such as academic pressure, heavy workloads, long study hours, and a lack of balance between their academic pursuits and other aspects of life. Mitigating exhaustion, disengagement and improving overall well-being can be achieved by addressing these factors through improved sleep hygiene, burden adjustments, relaxation and self-care activities, and better stress management.

In the study of the influence of relatedness on learning (RQ2), it was being measured through the value component (intrinsic goal, extrinsic goal and task value belief). The finding shows that the individual finds satisfaction in the learning process itself, specifically in understanding the course content, satisfying in achieving a good grade and having strong belief in improving the grade point in the learning. It reveals that the individual derives their main fulfilment and motivation from internal and external factors such as obtaining excellent grades and enhancing their grade point average (GPA). Jagodics and Szabó (2022) observed that academic burnout is influenced by various external and internal elements, such as academic workload, time restrictions, academic resources, academic expectations, and social support.

Finding for RQ3 indicates that for the students who have a higher score in affective and expectancy aspects, both are growth related where they tend to perform well academically. The more they believe in themselves and expect good results, the more likely it is that their grades will be fantastic. This accentuates the need for nurturing self-belief and positive attitude as they play a major role in academic performance. It is however important to note that fostering a growth mindset which allows students to think of improvement through effort and lots of practice makes sense. Additionally, the affective component, which includes students' feelings about tasks and their confidence in completing them, is linked to anxiety. The survey indicates that stress and anxiety are common among students, potentially harming their motivation to learn if not addressed. According to Chen et al. (2021), students that experience anxiety during studying performed poorly in terms of proficiency. Meanwhile Yusof et al., (2003) stated that students sometimes can feel mentally exhausted, stressed and anxious due to pressure in learning which can come from self-determination like demand for high grades.

Lastly, from the Pearson correlation analysis, there is a moderate positive relationship between existence, relatedness, and growth factors in the learning context, indicating that satisfying fundamental needs and social needs moderately enhances the pursuit of personal development. Once people have satisfied their basic physiological and safety needs, their social needs start growing steadily with a greater tendency of pursuing relations. Then from this point, strong and supportive relationships help one concentrate on self-development, actualizing the potential in them and engaging in practical and creative activities. Consequently, fulfilment of existence needs (lower-level needs) paves way for individuals to address higher order needs for growth.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The influence of existence on learners' motivation has important implications for educational practices and the development of learning environments. Preventing burnout requires close monitoring of basic psychological requirements and the enhancement of self-determined motivation. To help students grow personally and academically, teachers should make sure that their basic and social needs are met. For example, teachers should care about their students' physical and emotional health and help them feel like they are part of a group in the classroom. When making a curriculum, things that help people get to know each other and grow as people should be included. Group projects, collaborative learning, and peer guidance can help people meet their needs for connectedness while also helping them grow and become their best selves. For further research, to find out more, a continuous investigation should be done to see how students' determination and learning improve over time as their basic needs are met. This can help us understand how Existence needs and motivation are linked in a meaningful way.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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