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Exploring The Relationship Between Students' Perceptions of School Importance and Academic Achievement

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Abstract

The present paper investigated the effect of high school students' awareness of school value on their academic performance. It examined the linkage between high school students' academic achievements in relation to their awareness of school value in quest of raising their motivation. The variables under consideration were the academic performance (GPA) as a dependent variable and the subjective task value, expectancy for success, self-efficacy, intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, and choice were independent variables. The data were collected from 120 high school students (N=120) in Ouarzazate city through a structured questionnaire using the random selection technique. For analysis, a linear regression model, correlation analysis, and descriptive analysis were carried out. Though many researchers proved that students' awareness of school value has a capital influence on their academic performance, the findings of this study revealed that the independent variables do not influence the dependent one (Grade Point Average), except for choice. Specifically, no relationship was found between either task value, expectancy for success, and goal orientation with GPA. In other words, the value students ascribe to the school and the reasons for doing the different tasks do not impact students' achievement. Finally, and even so, it was recommended at the end that parents and educators should remind students of school value and its worth in order to motivate them and improve their academic achievement.

Keywords: school awareness, subjective task value, expectancy for success, motivation, GPA

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1. Introduction

Starting from the early ages, students are asked to go to school daily. They spend approximately four to eight hours of their time at school daily. As they grow up, they may not recognize the reasons for being at school. Gradually, and at the stage of middle and high school, this lack of cognizance starts to affect their attitudes toward learning. Thus, their motivation decreases, which results in either low academic achievements or, worse, school drop outs. In order to make it clear, the term *motivation* here has given many definitions in the literature. One is by Mitchell (1982), which defines it as, "those psychological processes that cause the arousal, direction, and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal oriented" (p. 81). In the same way, Phares and Chaplin (1997) define it as, "the forces within us that activate our behavior and direct it toward one goal rather than another" (p. 434). However, this is in general; our focus here is on students' achievement motivation that has been the focus of many studies over the last 30 years. It has resulted in many models emphasizing achievement values, goal orientation, interest, and belief (Wigfield, 2010).

1.1. Achievement Value

To begin with, an important issue to focus on is the constructs having to do with the reasons why students should do what they are asked to do at school. That is the point of achievement values. One of its pioneering theories is called the expectancy-value theory. According to (Eccles, 1983), it was developed first by John William Atkinson in the 1950s and 1960s. It "focuses [according to him] on individual differences in the motive to achieve and on the effects of subjective expectancy on both this motive and the incentive value of success" (p. 79). Nevertheless, Jacquelynne Eccles was the one to integrate it into the field of education. Her new expectancy-value model sees two factors to predict students' achievements: subjective task value and the expectancy for success. Subjective task value is "the degree to which the task can fulfill needs, facilitate reaching goals, or affirm personal values that determine the value a person attaches to engaging in that task" (p. 89). Expectancy for success refers to how an individual is confident about the subject he is doing, and the probability to succeed at it. However, these constructs are themselves affected by self-concept, estimation of task difficulty, and cultural factors.

1.2. Goal Orientation

Over the last 30 years, many studies have given more attention to the relationship between students' goal orientation and their academic achievements. They postulate that setting goals

and knowing the purposes of being at school have an adverse effect on students' academic behaviors. It allows them to be self-directed learners to achieve their goals. Moreover, since the absence of goal orientation results in academic failure, setting goals enable students to design their actions, regulate and control their motivation. It is also referred to the relationship between learners and their overall achievements. It is desperately important in forecasting academic achievements (Menon, 2015). Elliot & Murayama (2008) proclaimed that "a goal is conceptualized as an aim that one is committed to that serves as a guide for future behavior" (p. 614).

Additionally, students might set different academic goals. Dweck & Elliott classified them into two types: Learning goals or mastery goals and performance goals or ego-involved goals. First, Learning-Goals demonstrates the acquisition of new knowledge and skills (Nicholls, 1984; Ames, 1992). Second, performance goals focus on increasing learners' favorable evaluations of competence and decreasing their negative evaluations of competence, (Blumenfeld, 1992; Butler, 1993). In another study, Covington (2000) explained that goals motivate cognition, which results in better achievements. Thus, Goal-oriented students are Self-regulated who (a) monitor their understanding of what is being taught, (b) use learning strategies, (c) analyze school demands, (d) are persistent, (e) plan their learning, (f) control the learning process and (g) intrinsically motivated (Ames, 1992; Convington, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Kaplan & Midgley, 1997; Pintrich, 2000; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991; Utman, 1997; Barron & Harackiewicz, 2000).

1.3. Interest

According to interest theorists, interest could be divided into two categories: individual interest and situational interest (Hidi & Baird, 1988; Renninger, 2000). Individual interest is lasting over time. It can be considered a disposition that individuals take with them from one context to another. On the other hand, situational interest "is more momentary and situationally bound; in other words, it can be a specific reaction to something in a situation" (Harackiewicz & Hulleman, 2009, p. 1). Hidi and Renninger (2006) posited that various factors contribute to the development of interests. They delved into the role of the positive emotion, knowledge and personal value and their effects on the development of interest. Thus, what is the importance of interest in the learning process? Hidi (1990) suggested that being interested in your learning results in better achievement and performance. Alongside, both situational and individual interest enhances students' learning (Ainley, et al., 2002). Schiefele, Krapp, & Winteler, 1992 found that there is a correlation between interest and academic achievement ($r = 0.31$ and 0.27,

respectively). In the same way, Harackiewicz & Hulleman, (2009) have shown up in their two longitudinal studies that interest has a crucial and critical role in interpreting students' future achievements and career paths. Their studies also revealed that students' interests could be developed by highlighting the utility value of topics, which results in better academic achievement (Harackiewicz & Hulleman, 2009).

1.4. Belief

The belief students have to do different activities is concerned with achievement motivation. One of the first theories discussing this matter is self- efficacy. (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 1991) state that self-efficacy signifies the certainty an individual or a student has to do an activity and squid on it. Another theory explaining this is the self-worth theory by (Covington 1992, 1998). He gave a definition to self-worth as the person's tendency to establish a good image for themselves. Ultimately, he argued that because students spend lots of time at school, and they are tested all the time, they need to feel they are worthy.

Rather, educators should make them feel that they are academically competent. Alternatively, the attribution theory by Weiner 1992 said that the explanation an individual ascribes to achievement outcomes determines his or her achievement strivings. As a result, it is the key motivator belief (Weiner, 1985). He also mentioned four primary achievement attributions: ability, effort, task complexity, and luck. He rearranged them into three dimensions: controllability, stability, and locus of control. The first one is divided into internal and external locus of control. The stability examines whether or not the causes of success vary over time. Finally, Controllability tries to contrast the causes of success one control, and the ones cannot control. Thus, all these attributions have an impact on the behavior achievements of students (Eccles, & Wigfield, 2002).

1.5. Research Problem and Significance of the Study

The relationship and impact of the perceived value of schooling on the academic performance of high school students is an important area of investigation in Moroccan context. The purpose of this study was to investigate how students perceive the importance or usefulness of going to school and its influence on their academic achievement. The study sought to determine whether positive or negative perceptions of school value are associated with changes in student learning, including their grades.

No one can deny that if a student does not see the purpose of doing an activity at school, he or she will not do it because it affects his or her desire and motivation. That is why the significance

of this study was that everyone is involved when talking about school awareness. It may include parents, teachers, and students. First, parents need to tell their children from the beginning about the worth of going to school so that they have a clear idea of its benefit for them in the near future. As educators, teacher also need to inform students about why they are teaching those subjects in class, for example, math, French and Arabic. By doing this, they will engage the students' value of these subjects and raise their motivation. Finally, students themselves need to think and remind themselves of why they are going to school every day. Is it worth to spend years and years at any level at school without knowing the direction of where they are going? such questions are worth a reflection before heading up to any class.

Understanding how high school students value their education has a significant impact on their academic success. This study looked into this link, giving important insights that go beyond traditional teaching methods. We discovered avenues to improve motivation, engagement, and, eventually, academic performance by investigating students' perceptions toward the importance of schooling. This study has the potential to inform educational policies, interventions, and strategies targeted at creating a more positive impression of the value of school, thereby positively improving students' learning experiences and future chances.

1.6. Research Objectives and Questions of the Study

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the factors influencing high school students' perceptions of school value and examine the impact of their perception of school value on their academic achievement. The study was particularly interested in determining whether characteristics related to high school students' perception of school value has an effect on their GPA. As a result, it speculated three variables, namely, task value, expectancy for success, and goal orientation, which could have a favorable or negative impact on students' grades. The model of Eccles et al. (1983) is used to determine task value and expectancy for success. They were derived, however, from The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire in addition to goal orientation. As a result, the following questions guided the investigation in this paper:

1. How do high school students perceive the value of schooling?
2. How does high school students' perception of school value affect their academic achievements?

2. Research Method

2.1. Design

The present study adopted a quantitative research design in order to find out whether the hypothesis that high school students' perceptions of their school value affect their academic achievements or not through identifying different variables. The most important variables are task value, expectancy for success (independent variables) with students Grade Point Average (dependent variable). However, other variables, such as student's goal orientations (intrinsic and extrinsic), and self-efficacy (all independent variables) are involved to get an overview of what affects students view of their goals and performance at schools. Also, they were added because they play an important role in controlling students' performance. Because of this, the quantitative method is used to collect data about this issue and test it statistically.

2.2. Participants

The sample of this study consists of 120 participants from different high schools in Ouarzazate city, Morocco (N=120; 70 male, 50 female, *Mean age*: 18 years old). They have all volunteered to answer the survey's questions designed for the research.

2.3. Data Collection

A standardized self-report questionnaire was employed to test the participants perceptions of school value. It is divided into two parts. The first collects general information about the sample, such as school level, age, gender, level of education of parents, and grade point average (GPA). The second section includes 27 items. They are based on the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), which was developed by a team of researchers at the National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning (NCRIFFAL). In this study, items related to motivation were used (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeache, 1991). Its questions were answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (4). Another option was added to the scale, which is *no opinion* (5) for respondents who have no idea or do not know the answer. Consequently, the whole scale measures mainly the following constructs: Task value, control of learning belief and self-efficacy (Expectancy) and Intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientation.

The adopted questionnaire has shown strong internal consistency reliability in different investigations. Cronbach's alpha is commonly used to determine the extent to which items on a scale consistently measure the same underlying construct. Its alpha value is 0.80, which regarded adequate for research purposes. The questionnaire underwent rigorous validation

processes to ensure its construct validity. This involves confirmatory factor analysis, which ensures that the questionnaire measures the required constructs. Additionally, criterion-related validity was investigated by determining how well the item scores predict academic success.

2.4. Data Analysis

Once completing collecting data, it was taped and analyzed using the SPSS program to analyze them quantitatively and present them in terms of tables, graphs, and charts. The data was analyzed quantitatively including descriptive and correlational analysis. The descriptive aspect targeted demographical data of the study, while the correlational aspect tested the correlations between dependent and independent variables. Regression coefficient, linear reliability and scatter plot were used as the main statistical analyses which served as the best tools to analyze the data and answer the research questions of this study.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 includes descriptive statistics that determine differences among the variables of the study, depending on the four measures (mean, minimum, maximum and standard deviation). For example, participants' age ranges from 17 to 22 years old. The age range, spanning 17 to 22 years with a standard deviation of 1.494, indicates a diverse sample; that is why its standard deviation is a bit spread; (SD: 1.494). It illustrates the dispersion of age among participants. The mean as shown in the table is diversified depending on the variable considered. Notably, mean values for task value and expectancy for success are closely aligned (M: 1.7302, 1.9722), suggesting potential interrelations. Another important thing to note (see table 1) is students' GPA. The maximum of students' grade point average is 18/20; whereas its minimum is 9/20. It is shown clearly from the standard deviation with (SD: 2.659). It is due the diversification of the student branches. These results provide a nuanced understanding of participant characteristics and underscore the need to consider demographic and academic variations when interpreting study outcomes.

3.2. Correlations

Table 2 illustrates the degree of correlation that exists among the dependent and independent variables. As demonstrated, there is no correlation between GPA and task value ($r = .021$, $p>.05$). It proves that students' academic achievement is not controlled by the task value. Surprisingly, the lack of a substantial correlation between GPA and task value suggests that academic achievement may be influenced by factors beyond perceived task value. The same

goes for students' expectancy for success; it has no effect on the students' GPA (r = .196, p>.05). Additionally, there is no relationship between self-Efficacy and GPA (r = .085, p >.05). This shows that whether students' self-efficacy increases or decreases, their academic achievements will not change. On the other hand, some variables affect each other. The positive correlation between choice and GPA (r = .246, p<0.01) brings an intriguing dimension, highlighting the potential impact of student empowerment in academic decision-making on overall performance. The reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and task value (r = .320, *p<0.05) emphasizes their interconnectedness, requiring a thorough examination of both components in educational interventions. The strong positive relationship between intrinsic goal orientation and self-efficacy (r = 494, **p<0.01) demonstrates the mutual reinforcing of internal drive and confidence. Furthermore, the effect of intrinsic goal orientation on extrinsic goal orientation (r = .370, **p<0.01) highlights the interdependence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational objectives.

Table 1. *Min, Max, Mean and std. Deviation of the Variables of this Study*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Level	*63*	*2*	*3*	*2.27*	*.447*
2. Age	*63*	*17*	*22*	*18.65*	*1.494*
3. Task value	*63*	*1.00*	*3.00*	*1.7302*	*.42800*
4. Expectancy for success	*63*	*1.00*	*4.25*	*1.9722*	*.63834*
5. GPA	*63*	*9*	*18*	*14.00*	*3.059*

Table 2. *The Magnitude of Correlation Among the Main Research Variables with GPA.*

	1	*2*	3	4	5	6	7
1. GPA	*1*						
2. Task Value	*-.021 (.873)*						
3. Self-Efficacy	*.085 (.506)*	*.320* (.011)*					
4. Expectancy for Success	*.169 (.185)*	*.240 (.058)*	*.069 (.593)*				
5. Intrinsic GoalOrientation	*180 (.157)*	*.223 (.079)*	*.494** (.000)*	*.167 (.989)*			
6. Extrinsic GoalOrientation	*.057 (.655)*	*.144 (.261)*	*.162 (.206)*	*.000 (.998)*	*.370** (.003)*		
7. Choice	*.246 (.054)*	*-.112 (.388)*	*.106 (.412)*	*.281* (.027)*	*.2019 (.088)*	*.214 (.096)*	*1*

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*
*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

3.3. Regression Coefficient

In addition to Pearson correlation, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed to find out whether the independent variables of this study can predict its dependent one. In consequence, GPA was regressed on task value, expectancy for success, intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientation, self-efficacy and choice. As a result, the unstandardized coefficient reveals that task value and extrinsic goal orientation, for example, are weak predictors of GPA (see table 3). Their B values are (-0.494) and (-0.160) respectively. Therefore, the predictors' strength is negative. On the contrary, expectancy for success and intrinsic goal orientation have B values of (0.620), and (0.776), respectively. For that reason, their predictive value is positive. Above all, the significance of the independent variables (IV) is bigger than 0.05; ($p<0.05$). Hence, the variability among the variables is different and not correlated. For instance, the P value of task value is (0.635) and (0.368) for expectancy for success. What is more, their Beta is weak: (Beta = 0.028, $p > .05$) for task value and (Beta = 0.128, $p > .05$) for expectancy for success. Consequently, these findings implied that none of the independent variables assessed in the study was able to meaningfully predict changes in the dependent variable, GPA. The intricate details revealed by the regression analysis highlight how complex the interactions are among the components under investigation, calling for a more thorough comprehension of the many variables affecting academic success.

Table 3. *Coefficients*

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
1	*(Constant)*	*11.184*	*2.352*		*4.754*	*.000*
	Task Value	*-.494*	*1.035*	*-.069*	*-.477*	*.635*
	Expectancy for Success	*.620*	*.683*	*.128*	*.908*	*.368*
	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	*-.160*	*.854*	*-.026*	*-.187*	*.852*
	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	*.776*	*.814*	*.151*	*.953*	*.345*
	Self-Efficacy	*.143*	*.789*	*.028*	*.181*	*.857*
	Choice	*.346*	*.288*	*.172*	*1.201*	*.235*

a. Dependent variable: GPA

3.4. Scatter Plot

Figure 1 demonstrates that there is a correlation between the independent variable (Self-efficacy) and the dependent variable (task value). That is how students see themselves as able

to achieve positive outcomes (IV), and how they perceive school as interesting, useful, and important (DV). It is necessary also to note that correlation is imperfect since the scores do not fit on the same line. Besides, it looks that the correlation is positive since when self-efficacy goes up, task value does too. Therefore, the correlation is a moderate positive one. Noteworthy is the acknowledgment that the correlation is imperfect, as the data points do not align perfectly along a single line. This imperfection suggests the presence of other factors influencing the relationship between self-efficacy and task value. The positive trend observed in the scatter plot indicates a moderate positive correlation, emphasizing that, on average, higher levels of self-efficacy coincide with elevated task value perceptions. This nuanced understanding adds depth to the interpretation of the relationship, highlighting the need for further exploration of contributing variables that may influence the observed correlation.

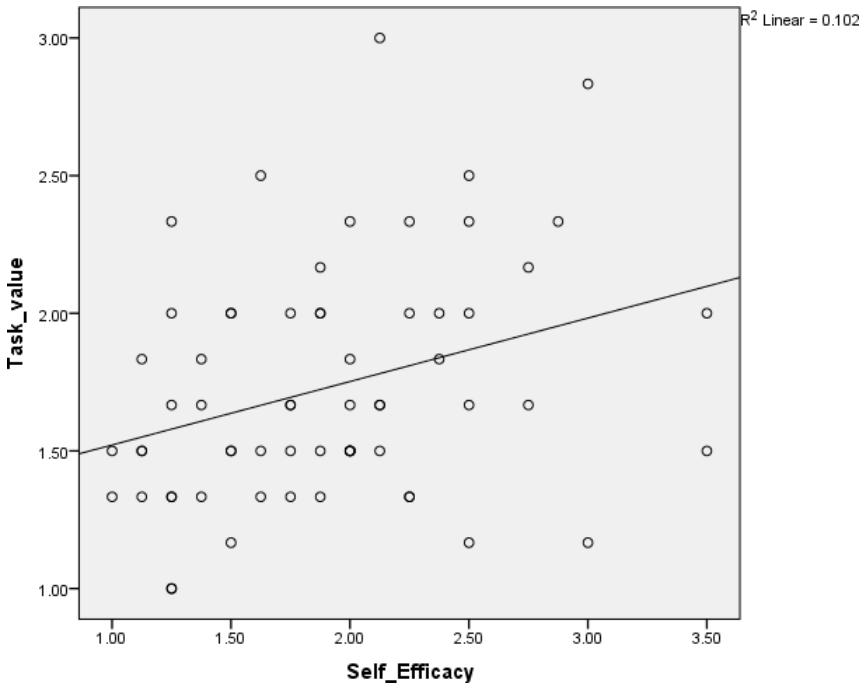

Figure 1. *The Correlation Coefficient Between Self Efficacy and Task Value*

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

The purpose of this study was to look at the impact of high school students' perceptions of school value on their academic performance. It tried particularly to determine whether characteristics related to high school students' perceptions of school value have an effect on their GPA. The thorough examination of the data has provided insightful knowledge about the intricate interactions between a variety of motivating variables and academic achievement.

Although task value, expectancy for success, and self-efficacy were found to have significant relationships with GPA, the results of the regression analysis indicated that these variables, taken separately or in combination, do not significantly predict variations in academic achievement. A more nuanced perspective was displayed by the scatter plot that illustrated the positive and moderate association between task value and self-efficacy. Notably, the correlation's imperfection emphasizes the presence of additional significant variables in this relationship.

According to the findings of correlations and regression no relationship was found between task value, expectancy for success, and goal orientation with GPA. As a result, it might be ascribed to many reasons. The first one is the sample of this study. The sample should have included more students from different majors. Moreover, a possible reason to affect the results is the dependent variable (GPA). Participants were asked in the first part of the questionnaire to provide their grades and it was the factor on which the independent variable measured with. Their GPA should have been obtained officially from the administration. As a conclusion, there was no guarantee that the scores students delivered were the exact marks they got. Eventually, it was left to students' subjectivity; whereas their grade point average should be taken from the administration.

Although this study has succeeded in shedding the light on the students' awareness of school value and its effect on their academic performance, it has some limitations. The hypothesis was evaluated but it was disapproved. Many researchers proved that students' awareness of school value has a capital influence on their academic performance, but this research did not show any relationship between high school students' awareness of school value and their academic performance. The results did not outfit as expected concerning the stated hypothesis. As any research might contain limitations, we can state the following. First, its sample is small, which focused on a small number of high school students (N=120) in Ouarzazate city. Consequently, the samples did not represent the whole population. Second, the research has several aspects to be measured. It did not focus on one aspect; it spotted numerous variables in relation to academic performance (goal orientation with both of its aspects: intrinsic and extrinsic as well as self-efficacy); whereas it should focus only on one construct like subjective task value. Nonetheless, these confines do not weaken the validity and the reliability of this study and its findings.

These findings have practical implications for educators and policy makers. Customized interventions targeted at improving students' engagement and academic success are made possible by an understanding of the complex and interconnected nature of motivational factors. Teachers might concentrate on creating a welcoming atmosphere that emphasizes the significance of both external factors-like perceived task value-and intrinsic motivation. These findings can be used by policymakers to shape educational policies that support self-efficacy, goal orientation, and autonomy. This will help create a more comprehensive and successful educational system. Furthermore, the identification of non-significant predictors might direct the creation of focused treatments, highlighting the necessity of utilizing a variety of strategies to meet the heterogeneous environment of student motivation. Due to the correlation's imperfection, more research into the contextual and individual elements that may have an impact on the associations that have been identified is necessary. This research will help educators and policymakers develop evidence-based initiatives that will support student motivation and achievement.

This study provided numerous significant avenues for future research. Longitudinal studies can reveal the long-term impacts of modifying attitudes beyond the high school stage, shedding light on the lifelong ramifications. Investigating cultural, social, and regional differences holds the possibility of revealing individualized strategies for varied student populations while taking into account the contextual influences on views. Assessing intervention efficacy is critical because it provides insights into tangible approaches to favorably influence views and, as a result, improve academic outcomes. Examining the role of instructors, technological integration, and parental participation reveals complex processes impacting students' views, which is critical for informed policy and practice. Understanding how these perceptions influence postsecondary choices and lifelong learning habits provides a comprehensive picture of education's long-term impact. Furthermore, qualitative research can reveal the intricate findings beneath these impressions, enriching our understanding of underlying motivations. In other words, it would be useful if interviews are conducted with participants to get more insights about the issue at hand and explore more details about it. This would enrich the findings of these constructs with more information. These paths, when taken together, promise comprehensive insights that will not only illuminate the current study's findings but will also guide targeted efforts to maximize students' educational experiences and achievements.

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