

Assessing the Effect of Quality of School Life on Learning Motivation of Vocational Boarding School Students

Amarissa Sara Allodatu Siahaan*, Shinta Oktaviani Adilla, Jhosef Nanda Putra,
and Christa Vidia Rana Abimanyu

Faculty of Psychology, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Semarang, Indonesia

**allodatuamar12@gmail.com*

Abstract

Boarding schools offer a unique educational experience. However, students face numerous challenges. They have to go through not only academic difficulties but also need to live away from family in a structured and controlled community environment. These difficulties can contribute to a decline in learning motivation. This study aimed to analyze the influence of the quality of school life on students' learning motivation in vocational boarding school students. The study participants were 277 male (49.5%) and female (50.5%) students from SMK Bagimu Negeriku Semarang, aged 14-21 years, in grades 10-12. Most of them were from outside Java Island. The data were collected using the QoSL Scale and the Learning Motivation Scale developed by Istiqomah et al. (2024) and Anugraheni et al. (2019). The data were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis. The results showed that the quality of school life has a positive effect on students' learning motivation ($F = 110.292$; $p < .01$) and $R\text{-squared} = 0.286$, indicating that the learning motivation of boarding school students can be explained by 28.6% of the quality of their school life.

Keywords: Quality of school life, learning motivation, vocational boarding school

INTRODUCTION

The quality of school life is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in influencing students' learning motivation, particularly in unique educational environments such as vocational boarding schools (Zajda, 2023; Tiarani et al., 2021). Boarding schools present a distinctive learning environment where students live away from their families, face academic demands, and adapt to the structured, often controlled, community life that contributes to intense psychological pressure (Fathonah et al., 2017).

According to Uno (2016), motivation is an internal or external drive within an individual to make changes in behavior that are better than before. Learning, on the other hand, is defined as a change in behavior that occurs after students engage in a teaching and learning process, resulting in the mastery of specific abilities or skills (Uno, 2016).

Hence, learning motivation is an internal and external drive that pushes students to change their behavior for the better. Similarly, Anugraheni et al. (2019) describe learning motivation as the efforts individuals make to engage in learning activities, characterized by feelings and reactions that enable them to achieve goals by utilizing their various abilities. There are four aspects of learning motivation: Willingness to understand and master what's being learned; commitment to learn the tasks; initiative to learn; and optimism about the learning outcomes (Anugraheni et al., 2019).

A comparative study by Ningtias and Sholeh (2013) identified differences in the learning motivation of students who live in dormitories versus those who do not. Dormitory students benefit from scheduled study times and additional lessons from teachers. These factors boost their learning motivation. Habibie (2020) also found that

72.8% of boarding school students were categorized as highly motivated learners. This was primarily due to the availability of teachers and peers, both in school and in the dormitory, as well as boarding school policies that encourage scheduled study times. Despite these promising results, not all boarding schools employ structured schedules and additional lessons, resulting in variations in students' motivation.

The case of SMK Bagimu Negeriku highlights a different scenario. According to interviews with the school staff, the school has students from diverse backgrounds—culturally, ethnically, and religiously—with the majority coming from outside Java Island. Despite having comprehensive learning and practice facilities, which theoretically could support the learning process, the students' learning motivation is likely to be low. Students often study only to meet the minimum completion criteria in each subject, demonstrating little initiative to study proactively. When given the freedom to use their cell phones at night, students often do not use them for learning or completing their assignments, but instead watch videos on platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, or play online games late into the night.

Perhaps another cause of their low motivation is the monotonous one-way teaching methods employed by some teachers, which don't effectively include the students in the learning experience (Sadeghi, 2014). According to interviews with the students, students at SMK Bagimu Negeriku also often expressed dissatisfaction with their teachers' teaching methods, which further reduced their motivation to learn. As a result, the students interviewed feel less emotionally engaged in the learning process. As noted by Barberos et al. (2018), the use of rigid, one-size-fits-all teaching styles can lead to disengagement, as students are unable to connect the material to their personal interests or needs. This dissatisfaction is critical because student satisfaction is a significant factor in improving academic performance (Suswanto et al., 2017). A study published by Blazar and Kraft

(2017) emphasized that effective teaching involves fostering a positive emotional connection to the material, which encourages greater participation and motivation among students. Teachers need to adapt their teaching strategies and methods to meet the individual strengths and expectations of students, which could improve their learning motivation (Chao et al., 2015).

Student motivation in boarding schools is dynamic and influenced by various factors, including social support, self-efficacy, goal orientation, and achievement anxiety (Hidajat et al., 2020). One crucial factor is the learning environment, which, when well-designed, includes a good physical and social atmosphere that can enhance student motivation (Cayubit, 2022). However, the learning environment at SMK Bagimu Negeriku is far from ideal, as defined by Gratez (2006), where students' participation plays a key role as one of the primary factors.

External factors, such as the socio-economic status of students' parents, also play a significant role in shaping learning motivation (Muali & Mazida, 2018). Students' general satisfaction with the school environment, including facilities, curriculum, and social interactions, impacts their self-adjustment and academic optimism (Islami et al., 2020; Nathania et al., 2018). The quality of the school's physical features may affect teaching Effectiveness, such as lighting, sound, and temperature (Wang & Degol, 2016). Social interactions can impact students' self-adjustment through the socioemotional support they receive from teachers and other students, including assistance and information provided to them (Zee & Koomen, 2016; Nasution et al., 2019).

Additionally, a positive relationship between teachers and students has a significant impact on students' interest in learning. When students feel connected to their teachers, they are more likely to ask questions, engage with the subject matter, and take the initiative to understand better what they are learning (Zifullah et al., 2021). These aspects combine into a single variable named Quality of

School Life (QoSL). QoSL reflects students' contentment with how learning is conducted, the Effectiveness of teaching strategies, the quality of communication among stakeholders such as teachers, staff, and peers, and other valuable experiences that contribute to student success and the fulfillment of emotional and psychological needs. It involves balancing both positive and negative school experiences, which play a critical role in shaping students' overall well-being and academic outcomes. The QoSL has six dimensions: students' general satisfaction; student-teacher relationship focusing on how they communicate with their teachers; students' status in class, which is reflecting their involvement in class; students' identity formation at school, including self-awareness, perceived importance, and confidence; optimism about obtaining achievements; and student's negative affect at school, which includes dissatisfaction feeling with their learning and peer interaction (Istiqomah et al., 2024).

Several studies found a correlation between the dimensions and aspects of quality of school life and learning motivation. A previous study by Engels et al. (2016) found that the student-teacher relationship and students' status, which is popularity, could affect students' behavioral engagement, such as attention and effort in class. Khajavy and Ghonsooly (2017) found that the immediate learning environment (teachers, classmates, task) could affect students' willingness to learn English. Students' belief in their own competencies, as part of their identity formation, could also contribute to their desire to learn (Khajavy & Ghonsooly, 2017).

The alternative hypothesis of this study posits that the quality of school life (QoSL) has a significant effect on the learning motivation of students at SMK Bagimu Negeriku Vocational Boarding School. Therefore, the primary objective of this research is to analyze the impact of QoSL on the learning motivation of students at SMK Bagimu Negeriku, aimed at determining whether the school environment plays a critical role in fostering students' motivation to learn.

METHOD

This research used a quantitative method. The participants of this study were the students of Boarding Vocational High School Bagimu Negeriku Semarang (SMK Bagimu Negeriku Semarang). The students who participated in this study consisted of 277 male (49.5%) and female (50.5%) students from SMK Bagimu Negeriku Semarang, aged 14-21 years old, in grades 10-12, with most of them coming from outside Java Island.

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 277 respondents involved in this study. Based on age group, the majority of respondents were in the 16-year-old age range, comprising 32.85% (n=91). The distribution of respondent sex was relatively balanced. The majority of participants came from outside Java Island, with a percentage of 63.9% (n = 177). Meanwhile, in terms of education level, 11th-grade students comprise the largest group, at 39.7% (n=110). There are five majors: Residential Construction Engineering, Software Engineering, Visual Communication Design, Welding Engineering, and Culinary Arts.

The data were collected using the Quality of School Life Scale and the Learning Motivation Scale developed by Istiqomah et al. (2024) and Anugraheni et al. (2019). The Quality of School Life Scale comprises 29 items, organized into six dimensions: general satisfaction, teacher-student relationship, students' status in class, identity in class, achievement and opportunity, and negative affect. The Learning Motivation Scale consists of 24 items, each based on one of four aspects of learning motivation: willingness to understand and master what's being learned, commitment to learning the tasks, initiative to learn, and optimism about the learning outcomes.

Classic assumption tests used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, the linearity test, and the heteroscedasticity test. The data were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis to assess the effect of QoSL and its aspects on learning motivation. All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS.

Table 1. Demographic Data (N=277)

Participants' Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age		
14 y.o.	5	1.81
15 y.o.	79	28.52
16 y.o.	91	32.85
17 y.o.	66	23.83
18 y.o.	25	9.03
19 y.o.	7	2.53
20 y.o.	3	1.08
21 y.o.	1	0.36
Sex		
Male	137	49,5
Female	140	50,5
Hometown		
Java Island	100	36.1
Outside Java Island	177	63.9
Grade		
10	109	39.4
11	110	39.7
12	58	20.9
Major		
Residential Construction Engineering	48	17.3
Software Engineering	37	13.4
Visual Communication Design	79	28.5
Welding Engineering	40	14.4
Culinary	73	26.4

RESULT

The normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method found the data to be normally distributed ($p = 0.884 > 0.05$). The linearity test and heteroscedasticity test also confirmed the existence of a linear relationship between QoSL and learning motivation (sig. Deviation from linearity = $.69 < .05$) and the absence of heteroscedasticity ($p = .845 > 0.05$).

Based on the result from simple linear regression analysis, the quality of school life has a positive effect on students' learning motivation ($F = 110.292$; $p = .000 < .01$) and R Square = 0.286, indicating that the learning motivation of boarding school students can be explained by 28,6% of the

quality of their school life. We also used simple linear regression to analyze the effect of each QoSL's dimensions independently on learning motivation.

Students' general satisfaction also has a positive effect on their learning motivation ($F = 105.545$; $p < .01$), with an R-squared value of 0.277. This result indicates that the learning motivation of boarding school students can be attributed to 27.7% of their overall satisfaction with school. The teacher-student relationship has a positive effect on learning motivation ($F = 34.302$; $p < .01$), with an R-squared value of 0.11. This result indicates that the learning motivation of boarding school students can be attributed to 11.7% of their

relationship with teachers. Students' status in class also has a positive effect on their learning motivation ($F = 40.326$; $p < .01$) and R Square = 0.128, indicating that the learning motivation of boarding school students can be explained by 12.8% of their status at school. Students' identity formation at school also has a positive effect on their learning motivation ($F = 35.295$; $p < .01$). The R Square value of 0.114 indicates that 11.4% of the variance in learning motivation can be explained by students' identity in class. Feeling optimistic about achieving and obtaining opportunities also

has a positive effect on students' learning motivation ($F = 71.775$; $p < .01$) and R-squared = 0.207. This result indicates that the learning motivation of boarding school students can be attributed to 20.7% of their belief in their ability to succeed at school. Negative affect harms students' learning motivation ($F = 15.684$; $p < .01$), with an R-squared value of 0.054. This result means that the learning motivation of boarding school students can be explained by 5.4% of their negative affect. The higher the students' negative affect, the lower their learning motivation.

Table 1. Simple Linear Regression Result of QoSL (and Its Aspects) and Learning Motivation

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
QoSL-LM	.535	.286	.284	7.852
GS-LM	.527	.277	.275	7.901
TSR-LM	.333	.111	.108	8.763
SC-LM	.358	.128	.125	8.679
IC-LM	.337	.114	.111	8.749
AO-LM	.455	.207	.204	8.276
NA-LM	.232	.054	.051	9.040

Note: QoSL: Quality of School Life; LM: Learning Motivation; GS: General Satisfaction; TSR: Teacher-Student Relationship; SC: Students' Status in Class; IC: Identity in Class; AO: Achievement and Opportunity; NA: Negative Affect.

DISCUSSION

Results demonstrated that the Quality of School Life has a positive effect on students' learning motivation ($F = 110.292$; $p < .01$) and R Square = 0.286, indicating that the learning motivation of boarding school students can be explained by 28.6% of the quality of their school life. This study supports other studies that also found QoSL to be related to students' learning motivation (Kosterelioglu & Kosterelioglu, 2015; Prasastianingrum & Rusmawati, 2014).

Most of the participants came from outside Java Island. There are still inequalities in the quality of education in Indonesia, especially in Java Island and outside Java Island (Khoiriyani et al., 2023). SMK Bagimu Negeriku is a vocational boarding school that has the courage to give students from outside Java Island the opportunity to receive a better education in Java. For this

aspiration to be achieved, they need to evaluate how much effort they put into improving the quality of school life.

Results showed that every aspect of QoSL contributed to students' learning motivation. Students' general satisfaction and optimistic feelings about their achievements and opportunities are the most significant factors contributing to their learning motivation. Other studies have also emphasized the importance of students' satisfaction with their academic achievements through their learning motivation (Ritonga et al., 2023). The teachers' efforts to boost students' optimistic attitudes improved their feelings of optimism about their achievements. The efforts include correcting students' negative self-statements, providing examples of successful classmates, praising students for their earlier performance, and offering instructional support to

help them solve their problems (Vehkakoski, 2019).

The teacher-student relationship also plays a significant role in the quality of students' school life, thereby influencing their learning motivation. Teachers need to treat students fairly, listen to their concerns, help them do their best, and award them the marks they deserve (Istiqomah et al., 2024). Teachers' intrinsic motivation for teaching may influence students' intrinsic motivation for learning (Zou et al., 2024).

In addition to the three aspects that previously affected learning motivation, this study also identified three other aspects that significantly impact learning motivation. There are significant effects of students' identity formation and status in class on learning motivation. An increase in students' social status or recognition raises their serotonin levels, while students' relationships with peers, which are part of identity formation, may increase their oxytocin levels. The serotonin and oxytocin hormones that are present in a person's brain trigger the creation of positive feelings, which can then motivate a person to learn and sustain their motivation (Yagishita, 2020). Furthermore, Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2006), in their book called 'Evaluating Training Programs', also explained that a person's positive reaction to a learning situation makes them able to understand the lesson. Other studies also found that depression and loneliness have a negative influence on learning motivation (Zhan, 2023; Yildirim et al., 2024). It is therefore not surprising that this study also found a negative influence between negative affect and learning motivation. This means that the more students experience good feelings about the quality of their school, the higher their learning motivation will be.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the Quality of School Life significantly positively affected students' learning motivation. Students' motivation to learn is likely to rise with the quality of their

educational experience. The QoSL aspects that most affect learning motivation are students' general satisfaction and optimistic feelings. Students' negative affect plays the least part in the factors that contribute to learning motivation. This study can serve as a valuable source of reference and provide insight for teachers and educators regarding students' motivation. The suggestion for the subsequent research is to continue this research in an experimental direction to test the Effectiveness of ways to improve QoSL aspects that can lead to better learning motivation.

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