



Factors Determining the Academic Satisfaction among the Undergraduate Students in Kerala

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the key factors that influence academic satisfaction among undergraduate students in Kerala. Academic satisfaction is defined as a student's personal evaluation of their overall educational experience, based on how well their expectations match reality. It is considered an important factor in understanding both student success and common academic challenges. The research adopts a cross-sectional design and follows a positivist approach. Data were collected from a representative sample of 191 undergraduate students from various colleges across Kerala, using an Academic Satisfaction Scale developed by the researcher. Factor analysis was employed to identify the main elements contributing to academic satisfaction. The findings provide insights into the factors that shape students' academic experiences and can help improve educational planning and student support services.

1 Introduction

Academic satisfaction (AS) is defined as the subjective evaluation of students' overall educational experience, reflecting the degree to which their academic expectations are met (Darawong & Sandmaung, 2019). It is a psychological state influenced by both internal and external factors and is considered a key predictor of academic success and student well-being (Bhatt & Bahadur, 2018; Hajovsky et al., 2023).



AS plays a vital role in motivating students, enhancing academic performance, and fostering a sense of accomplishment (Doménech-Betoret et al., 2017). In the context of higher education in Kerala, where access to education is widespread and highly valued, understanding AS is crucial for improving educational quality and student support services (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017). This study aims to explore the factors influencing academic satisfaction among undergraduate students in Kerala.

2 Need and Significance of the Study

Academic satisfaction is a critical factor influencing students' engagement, motivation, and success in higher education (Hajovsky et al., 2023). In Kerala, with its advanced education system and high literacy rate, understanding academic satisfaction is essential due to the competitive academic environment that often leads to stress and pressure among students. Promoting academic satisfaction can enhance mental well-being, reduce dropout rates, and improve retention by creating a supportive and student-centered learning atmosphere. Moreover, satisfied students tend to perform better academically, exhibit greater confidence, and achieve higher career success (Chen & Lin, 2019; Sverdlik et al., 2018). Despite Kerala's strong educational reputation, limited research exists on the specific factors that determine academic satisfaction among its undergraduate students. Identifying these factors is crucial for informing policy decisions, improving curriculum design, and enhancing institutional practices to foster a more inclusive and effective higher education system in Kerala.

3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to analyse and identify the factors determining the academic satisfaction of undergraduate students in Kerala.

4 Methodology

The studies quantify and analyse the factors that contribute to academic satisfaction among undergraduate students in Kerala. The study is an empirical one. The study is based on primary data. Cross-sectional study design has been used for the study. Stratified sampling technique has been employed to select the required sample. The sample size selected for the study is 191 undergraduate students of various institutions of higher education in the state of Kerala.

5 Tool Used for Data Collection

The primary data required for the study has been collected with the help of Academic Satisfaction Scale (Arekkuzhiyil and Annlin, 2024). Academic Satisfaction Scale is a Likert type five-point scale



which includes items to assess the different dimensions of Academic Satisfaction of students. The content validity and face validity of the scale were ensured through the systematic plan and procedures adopted for the construction of the scale. The overall reliability of the Academic Satisfaction scale is high with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.930.

6 Results and Discussion

Exploratory factors analysis has been performed to classify the items into different groups. Principal component analysis (PCA) method was selected to generate the initial solutions for the EFA. Table 1 indicates that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy worked out to 0.85, clearly establishing the reliability of the constructs (Malhotra, 2007) and indicate that the relationship with the items is statistically significant and is suitable for EFA to provide the parsimonious set of factors (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant which indicates that the correlation among the measurement items is higher than 0.3 and are suitable for EFA (Hair et al., 2006). Table 2 presents the factor loadings of academic satisfaction.

Table 1

KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin(KMO)	MSA	0.85
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	χ^2	3218
	Df	496
	P	<.001

Table 2

Factor Loadings of Academic Satisfaction

Factor	Factor						Uniqueness
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Q1							0.75
Q2					0.556		0.561
Q3	0.664						0.425
Q4	0.686						0.466
Q5	0.778						0.27



Q6	0.626					0.529
Q7				0.471		0.622
Q8				0.641		0.493
Q9	0.62					0.529
Q10	0.402					0.646
Q11			0.373			0.647
Q12	0.562					0.592
Q13	0.33			0.346		0.557
Q14	0.435					0.617
Q15		0.724				0.321
Q16		0.624				0.473
Q17		0.568				0.557
Q18		0.594				0.439
Q19					0.723	0.397
Q20					0.589	0.553
Q21		0.6				0.462
Q22	0.489	0.316	0.341		0.34	0.406
Q23				0.452	0.356	0.59
Q24				0.495	0.435	0.52
Q25				0.693		0.443
Q26				0.875		0.132
Q27	0.358			0.496		0.52
Q28			0.703			0.347
Q29			0.558		0.402	0.488
Q30			0.516	0.319		0.485
Q31			0.626	0.301		0.354
Q32		0.458	0.521			0.403

The exploratory factor analysis was performed with maximum probability approach to identify the rate of loading of variables recognized in the component, and Varimax orthogonal approach was used to interpret the variables. The number of factors that contributed Eigenvalue greater than one was only significant and remaining was disregarded (cf. Hair et al., 2006; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).



Table 3 presents the total variance explained by each component. The results showed that 6 factors came out from the ‘Academic Satisfaction’ component with Eigen values bigger than 1. These factors explained 13.12, 9.1, 8.67, 8.33, 6.08 and 5.95 of the total variances respectively. Therefore, these 6 factors explained 51.3% of the total variances of variables.

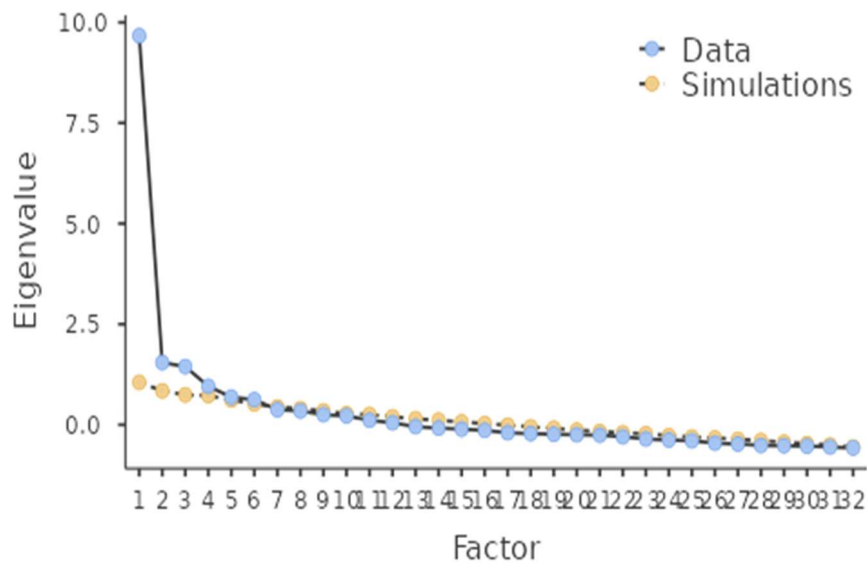
Table 3
Percentage of variance explained of Academic Satisfaction

Factor	SS Loadings	% of	
		Variance	Cumulative %
Academic Experience	4.2	13.12	13.1
Institutional Support and Infrastructure	2.91	9.1	22.2
Student Enrichment	2.77	8.67	30.9
Peer and Familial Support	2.67	8.33	39.2
Student Engagement	1.95	6.08	45.3
Academic self-efficacy	1.91	5.95	51.3

Source: calculated from Primary Data

Figure 1

Scree plot of Academic Satisfaction





Based on high loadings and low uniqueness (Yong & Pearce, 2013), the above items were divided into the following 6 factors. They are listed in table 4.

Table 4
Factors and Items included

Factors	Name of the Factor	Items
1	Academic Experience	3,4,5,6,9,10,12,13,14,22,27
2	Institutional Support and Infrastructure	5,15,16,17,18,21,22,32
3	Student Enrichment	11,22,28,29,30,31,32
4	Peer and Familial Support	23,24,25,26,27
5	Student Engagement	2,7,8,13,24,30,31
6	Academic self-efficacy	19,20,22,23,29

Source: calculated from primary data

After the detailed examination and scrutiny of the available literature on Academic Satisfaction, and after thorough discussion with experts, six dimensions were selected to measure the Academic Satisfaction of undergraduate students.

7 Factors of Academic Satisfaction

The various factors that determining the academic satisfaction of the undergraduate students in Kerala have been briefly described below.

(i) Academic Experience

Academic experience contributes about 13.12% of the variance in academic satisfaction (AS) among undergraduate students in Kerala. It includes interactions with coursework, teaching quality, learning resources, and faculty relationships, shaping students' perceptions of their academic



environment. Academic satisfaction refers to students' evaluation of their academic experiences, fulfilling their expectations and needs (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017; Astin, 1993). As a multidimensional construct, it involves motivation, engagement, learning outcomes, and instructor relationships (Annamdevula & Bellamkonda, 2016). A positive academic experience fosters student fulfillment, success, and benefits both institutions and society.

(ii) Institutional Support and Infrastructure

Institutional support and infrastructure contribute approximately 9.1% to the variance in academic satisfaction among undergraduate students in Kerala, underscoring their significant role in higher education outcomes. Academic satisfaction is influenced not only by instructional quality but also by the availability of essential resources such as modern classrooms, digital tools, well-equipped libraries, and reliable internet access (Wilson & Lee, 2023). Students' perceptions of institutional support through professional and approachable faculty, transparent administrative processes, and a socially engaging environment positively impact both their academic performance and satisfaction (Chen & Lin, 2019; Balkis & Duru, 2017). A holistic approach that integrates physical infrastructure with policy fairness and community support is vital for promoting sustained student engagement and achievement (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017).

(iii) Student Enrichment

Student Enrichment contributes approximately 8.67% to the variance in Academic Satisfaction among undergraduate students in Kerala. It plays a key role in shaping students' overall academic experience by addressing both health and psychological factors. Unhealthy behaviours like smoking and alcohol use negatively affect satisfaction and retention (Cox, 2009), while psychological factors such as motivation, effort, and anxiety also significantly impact academic outcomes (Sargent et al., 2011, as cited in Sweeney, 2016). Enrichment programs that promote healthy lifestyles, foster motivation, manage anxiety, and offer supportive learning environments can significantly enhance academic satisfaction and student success.

(iv) Peer and Familial Support

Peer and familial support play a crucial role in shaping academic satisfaction among undergraduate students, contributing approximately 8.33% to its variance. Parental education and involvement are positively associated with students' academic engagement and attitudes toward learning (Eun-Kwang, 2021; Zhao, 2021). Socioeconomic status further influences academic satisfaction by affecting access to resources and learning environments (Ding, 2018; Liu, 2022). Financial stability, in



particular, reduces academic stress and enhances performance (Adams et al., 2023). Additionally, peer relationships and supportive campus environments marked by a sense of community and fair academic policies contribute significantly to students' academic well-being (Chen & Lin, 2019). Together, these supports create a foundation for academic motivation, persistence, and satisfaction.

(v) Student Engagement

Student engagement contributes approximately 6.08% to the variance in academic satisfaction (AS) among undergraduate students in Kerala. It plays a vital role in enhancing both academic performance and satisfaction. Research by Adams, Baker, and Collins (2022) emphasizes that engaging and relevant course content improves student outcomes. Similarly, Wilson and Moore (2023) found that higher student satisfaction boosts motivation, which in turn enhances academic success. These findings highlight a cyclical relationship between engagement, satisfaction, and performance, underscoring the need for institutions to adopt strategies that actively promote student engagement.

(vi) Academic Self-Efficacy

Academic self-efficacy refers to students' belief in their ability to successfully complete academic tasks and overcome challenges (Doménech-Betoret et al., 2017). It significantly influences motivation, persistence, and academic performance. Research indicates that self-efficacy indirectly affects academic satisfaction and achievement through students' expectancy-value beliefs their perceived likelihood of success and task value (Doménech-Betoret et al., 2017). The Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) theory supports this relationship by highlighting how students with higher self-efficacy are better able to set goals, monitor progress, and adjust learning strategies (Alonso-Mencía et al., 2020). Additionally, academic satisfaction, linked to self-regulation, is associated with better academic outcomes (Gray & DiLoreto, 2016; Liem et al., 2018). Thus, academic self-efficacy fosters self-regulated learning behaviors, contributing to improved academic satisfaction and performance

8. Conclusion

Academic Satisfaction of undergraduate students in Kerala is influenced and determined by a number of factors. The factors determining the Academic Satisfaction of undergraduate students in Kerala are Academic Experience (AE), Institutional Support and Infrastructure (ISI), Student Enrichment (SE), Peer and Familial Support (PFS), Student Engagement (SE), Academic Self-efficacy (ASE). The identified factors together explain 51.3% of the Academic Satisfaction of undergraduate students in Kerala.



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