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Mediating Effects of Positive Academic Emotions in the Relationship between Self-Regulated Learning Strategies and Learning Satisfaction in Mathematics

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Abstract: *The introduction of virtual and hybrid learning environments has altered the educational landscape, especially in mathematics. This study investigates the relationships among self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies, positive academic emotions (PAE), and learning satisfaction (LS) in the context of mathematics education. By examining the impact of these factors, the study aims to inform instructional practices, interventions, and the design of learning environments. Drawing on the Control-Value Theory, the study explores how academic emotions are linked to achievement-related activities, emphasizing the influence of perceived control over learning (SRL) and the subjective value assigned to tasks. The study hypothesizes a mediating effect of PAE on the relationship between SRL and LS. The research employs a correlational design, utilizing the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) for SRL assessment, the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ) for PAE, and a modified survey for LS assessment. The sample consists of 300 Secondary Education students from Bukidnon State University. Descriptive statistics and correlation analyses reveal high engagement in SRL and positive academic emotions in mathematics. The path analysis using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) indicates a significant direct and indirect impact of SRL on LS, with PAE mediating this relationship. The study highlights the complexity of the relationship between SRL, positive academic emotions, and learning satisfaction in mathematics. Despite lower levels of happiness and hope, effective SRL strategies are associated with increased feelings of pride and relief, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of the learning experience. The findings suggest the importance of a holistic approach in educational interventions, addressing both learning skills and emotional well-being. Educators and stakeholders are urged to consider the interdependent relationship between SRL and emotional experiences to create enriched mathematics learning environments.*

Keywords — mathematics education, self-regulated learning strategies, positive academic emotions, learning satisfaction, mediation analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The shift towards virtual and hybrid learning environments has had a profound impact on students, particularly in the realm of mathematics education. This transformation demands a concentrated effort to foster positive academic emotions, such as enjoyment and hope, as they are involved in boosting motivation, engagement, and persistence in learning (Pekrun et al., 2002; Villavicencio & Bernardo, 2016).

Self-regulated learning (SRL), involving internally driven thoughts, feelings, and behaviors geared towards goal achievement, is pivotal in this context (Zimmerman, 2000). Students actively take charge of their learning by recognizing their strengths and limitations, setting personal goals, and employing task-oriented strategies. Those with a sense of self-regulation tend to experience positive emotions, further emphasizing the connection between self-regulation and emotional well-being (Pekrun et al., 2002).

Positive emotions, especially enjoyment and hope, have been identified as key predictors of motivation. Students who derive pleasure from their classes and believe in the achievability of their goals are more likely to approach their coursework with confidence, viewing it as interesting, important, and useful (Kondowe et al., 2017). Enjoyment, in particular, has been linked to effective resource management, indicating that activating positive emotions not only influences cognitive strategies but also encourages flexible learning approaches. These positive emotions contribute to heightened motivation, facilitating the learning process and ultimately enhancing satisfaction with the learning experience.

Learning satisfaction, defined as learners perceiving that their preferences and needs are met within the context of learning activities, is a critical component (Topala and Tomoziia, 2014). It encompasses various aspects, including the learning environment, conditions, activities, and the overall learning experience. Understanding how positive emotions can counteract the negative emotions often associated with learning mathematics enables teachers to leverage technology, implement engaging instructional methods, and foster supportive online communities, creating inclusive learning environments (Dabbagh, 2009).

Furthermore, teachers can use this understanding to provide personalized training that addresses the specific needs of students struggling with low motivation or math anxiety (Pekrun & Goetz, 2006). Encouraging a growth mindset, where students view their abilities as flexible and subject to improvement with effort and perseverance (Dweck, 2006), becomes crucial in this context.

Creating a supportive learning environment that is emotionally stimulating and inclusive is key to student well-being and academic success (Richardson et al., 2017). By fostering a love for learning and cultivating a sense of belonging, educators can unlock the full potential of positive academic emotions to enhance the learning experience for all students in mathematics. This approach not only supports struggling students but also enables the design of effective and enjoyable learning environments that contribute to overall academic achievement.

In the present study, the major purpose is to provide further evidence regarding the complex connection between self-regulated learning, positive academic emotions, and learning satisfaction in mathematics.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to comprehensively investigate the intricate interplay among self-regulated learning strategies, positive academic emotions, and learning satisfaction within the realm of mathematics education. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of positive academic emotions, self-regulated learning strategies, and learning satisfaction in mathematics?
2. Is there a significant relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and learning satisfaction?
3. Is there a mediating effect of positive academic emotions in the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and learning satisfaction in mathematics?

3. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The major concern of the study is to assess the mediating effect of positive academic emotions (PAE) on the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies (SRL) and learning satisfaction (LS) in mathematics. This study aimed to test the following hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and learning satisfaction in mathematics

H0: There is no mediating effect of positive academic emotions on the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and learning satisfaction in mathematics.

4. FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The Control-Value Theory (CVT) serves as a foundational concept revealing the relationship of emotions within the learning process (Pekrun, 2006). This theory suggested that academic emotions are intricately linked to achievement-related activities or outcomes, providing a comprehensive framework for analyzing the root causes and consequences of emotions experienced in academic settings (Pekrun, 2006). Learning satisfaction, within the framework of CVT, is identified as an achievement, encompassing learners' perceptions of the curriculum, learning experiences, and the value derived from education as an educational institution (Ke and Kwak, 2013).

Academic emotions, within this context, are influenced by two primary factors: the perceived control over learning (tied to self-regulated learning strategies) and the subjective value assigned to the learning task. Key elements of students' self-regulated learning, such as interest, motivation, learning strategies, and the internal versus external control of regulation, exhibit a high correlation with emotions. Recognizing students' emotions becomes imperative to gain an accurate understanding of their capacities for self-regulation and academic success. Further research is crucial to deepen our understanding of how emotion management impacts students' ability to regulate their learning effectively (Schutz & Davis, 2000).

In the exploration of the connection between academic emotions and learning satisfaction, a significant influence of academic emotions on learning satisfaction was identified. This suggests that higher levels of academic emotion are associated with increased learning satisfaction (Wu et al., 2021). Additionally, self-regulated learning strategies exhibit a robust positive and statistically significant relationship with satisfaction (Price, 2007).

In the context of the current study, the primary focus is on determining whether there is a mediating effect among self-regulated learning strategies, positive academic emotions, and learning satisfaction in mathematics. The mediation model hypothesis is illustrated in Figure 1, aiming to provide insights into relationships between these variables.

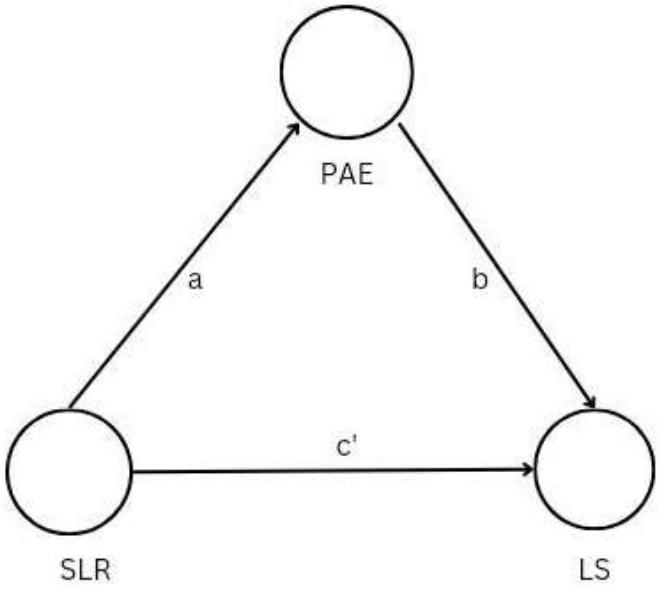

Figure 1. *Proposed model for the role of academic emotions in the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and learning satisfaction*

H1: Self- regulated learning strategies → Learning Satisfaction = c'

H2: Self- regulated learning strategies →Positive Academic Emotions → Learning Satisfaction= ab

5. METHODS

Research Design

The quantitative design methodology employed in this study is correlational research. The design was selected to examine the relationship between learning strategies (LS), positive academic emotions (PAE), and learning satisfaction (LS) in mathematics. The independent variable examined in this study is learning strategies, academic emotions as mediating variable, and learning satisfaction as dependent variable.

Research Locale

The primary focus of this research centered on the students of Bukidnon State University, specifically those enrolled in the College of Education Department pursuing a Bachelor of Secondary Education degree. The study targets students situated in Barangay Casisang, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon. Bukidnon State University, established in 2007, stands as a non-profit public higher-education institution. Nestled in the urban setting of the small city of Malaybalay, the university serves as an academic hub dedicated to providing quality education to its diverse student population.

Research Participants

A total of 300 Secondary Education students from Bukidnon State University, in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, was selected to participate in this study. The survey can be completed in more or less 5 minutes voluntarily and anonymously.

Table 1. *Demographic characteristics of the participants*

	n	%
A. Gender		
Male	83	27.7
Female	217	72.3
B. Academic Year Level		
First year	79	26.3
Second year	106	35.3

Third year	44	14.7
Fourth year	71	23.7
C. Course/ Academic Program		
BSE- English	53	17.7
BSE- Filipino	37	12.3
BSE- Mathematics	77	25.7
BSE- Science	60	20
BSE- Social Studies	73	24.3

As shown in Table 1, majority of the respondents are females (72.3%), and second year (35.3%) in college. About 25.7% took Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Mathematics.

Sampling Techniques

The research utilized the random sampling method, strategically selecting participants based on specific criteria relevant to the study. Before their involvement, potential respondents will receive detailed information about their selection as study participants. A comprehensive explanation of the study's objectives and its potential contributions to the field of mathematics education was provided, ensuring a clear understanding of the research context and motivating participation.

To maintain standardization and clarity in responses, participants received concise instructions on how to navigate and respond to the 5-point Likert scale items incorporated in the questionnaire. This approach aimed to ensure a standardized comprehension of the expectations, facilitating consistent and reliable data collection.

The questionnaire was administered with careful consideration for participants' time and convenience, allowing them ample opportunity to thoughtfully complete the survey. The use of Google Forms as the platform for data collection enhances accessibility and flexibility for participants, as they can respond from various locations and devices.

Data Analysis and Instrument

The study employed the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique through SmartPLS 4.0 software (free trial) to estimate parameters within a simple mediation model. This estimation was carried out using 5000 bootstrap samples, following Hayes's (2009) recommendation. The decision to employ bootstrapping stems from its acknowledged validity and potency in testing the effects of intervening variables, as noted by Mackinnon et al. (2004), Williams and MacKinnon (2008), and Hayes (2009). Additionally, the bootstrapping approach is versatile, applicable to assessing indirect effects in various mediation models, regardless of complexity or the number of paths involved (Hayes, 2009).

The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method stands out as an exceptionally appealing approach for researchers. Its allure lies in its remarkable capacity to effectively estimate complex models that involve numerous constructs, indicator variables, and structural paths. One of the key strengths of PLS-SEM is its ability to accomplish this without imposing stringent distributional assumptions on the underlying data (Hair et al., 2019).

Learning Strategies Assessment

The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), an adaptation of Pintrich and De Groot's work (1990), assesses motivation, cognitive strategy utilization, and metacognition. This questionnaire comprised ten items, each utilizing a five-point Likert-type scale. This condensed format provides a concise yet comprehensive tool for gauging various aspects of learning motivation and cognitive approaches, streamlining the assessment process while retaining the essence of the original instrument developed by Pintrich and De Groot.

Positive Academic Emotions Assessment

The Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ), created by Bieleke et al. in 2021, measured emotions tied to achievement. Respondents used a 20-item questionnaire with a five-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to convey their sentiments. The questionnaire focused on assessing key emotions, including enjoyment, hope, pride, and relief.

Learning Satisfaction Assessment

The researchers modified the measurement of student satisfaction by drawing inspiration from Fieger's (2012) Student Outcomes Survey. The inquiries related to teaching and learning were derived from the Higher Education Course Experience Survey, while the basic skills and learning experience questions were based on the VET student survey conducted by Western Australia, as developed by Bontempo and Morgan (2001). This adapted questionnaire now comprised 15 items and utilizes a 5-point Likert scale, offering a tailored approach to assessing student satisfaction with a focus on key aspects of teaching, learning, and generic skills within the academic context.

Measurement Model

The evaluation of the measurement model for reflective indicators in PLS-SEM is grounded in the assessment of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, as outlined by Hulland (1999).

The construct reliability is significant to ensure that the measures employed in a study accurately and consistently reflect the underlying theoretical constructs (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). According to Gorsuch, (2013), Cronbach's alpha may be prominent due to its widespread utilization as a measure of internal consistency but composite reliability is a more robust alternative in many scenarios.

Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) said that convergent validity is about how two or more measures aim to capture the same thing are correlated. Bagozzi et al. (1991) explained it as the extent to which a specific measure relates to others targeting the same thing. Carmines and Zeller (1979) emphasized it as showing how well measures agree when looking at the same idea. Hair et al. (2009) stressed that convergent validity checks if different measures for the same thing actually mean the same. These perspectives are evidences how important convergent validity is in making sure that diverse measures meant to measure the same thing agree with each other, reinforcing the strength and trustworthiness of the overall measurement framework.

Discriminant validity ensures that measurements represent unique concepts, preventing overlap or confusion in their interpretation. According to Bagozzi et al. (1991), it involves how well a measure stands apart from measures of other constructs. Henseler et al. (2014) highlight its importance in partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), ensuring that constructs within a model are distinctly different from one another. The HTMT criterion, stands out as a robust and superior measure for assessing discriminant validity. According to Hair et al. (2017), it has proven to be more precise and powerful than traditional methods like the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading examination. Ringle et al. (2018) emphasize its reliability, especially in the context of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Dijkstra and Henseler (2015) assert that the HTMT criterion offers a more accurate assessment of discriminant validity, particularly in dealing with complex models featuring numerous constructs.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers commenced the study by obtaining explicit consent from each participant prior to the administration of the questionnaires. The researchers meticulously adhere to the stipulations set forth in the Data Privacy Law of 2012 to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the collected data. It is imperative to note that participants reserve the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any juncture, provided a valid reason is communicated.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the measurement model assessment are presented, providing insights into the reliability, validity, and interrelationships among the variables. The findings from construct reliability, convergent and discriminant validity assessments, as well as descriptive statistics and correlation analyses, lay the foundation for the subsequent path analysis. The path analysis results revealed the total, direct, and indirect effects.

Measurement Model

Table 2a. *Construct reliability, convergent and discriminant validity coefficients*

	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	SRL	PAE	LS
SRL	0.871	0.836	0.405	**0.636**		
PAE	0.929	0.919	0.410	0.598	**0.641**	
LS	0.947	0.940	0.544	0.555	0.635	**0.738**

AVE = average variance extracted; SRL = Self-regulated learning strategies; PAE = Positive Academic Emotions; LS = Learning Satisfaction. Diagonal elements (bold) are square roots of AVE; Off-diagonal elements are the correlations among constructs. For discriminant validity, diagonal elements should be larger than the off-diagonal elements.

Table 2a presents construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity coefficients. Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are generally high for all variables, indicating strong internal consistency. AVE values, while generally meeting the common threshold, are on the lower side, especially for self-regulated learning strategies (SRL) and positive academic emotions (PAE). This suggests that there may be room for improvement in capturing a larger proportion of the variance in the observed variables by the underlying constructs.

For discriminant validity, the diagonal elements or the square roots of AVE should be larger than the off-diagonal elements or the correlation among constructs. The conditions are met in the table 2b, indicating that each construct is distinct from others.

Table 2b. *Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT)*

Variables	No. of items	SRL	PAE	LS
SRL	10		.671	.618
PAE	20			.686
LS	15			

SRL = Self-regulated learning strategies; PAE = Positive Academic Emotions; LS = Learning Satisfaction.

Table 2b presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) analysis for the specified variables. The values in the table represent the ratios of correlations between different constructs (heterotrait) to the correlations within the same construct (monotrait). The HTMT ratios for all comparisons are below 0.90, supporting discriminant validity between SRL, PAE and LS. This reaffirms that these variables are reasonably distinct from others, supporting discriminant validity.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Table 3 presented descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix for key variables related to self-regulated learning strategies (SRL), learning satisfaction (LS), and positive academic emotions (PAE) in the context of mathematics education. The means and standard deviations offer insights into the central tendency and variability of the variables, while the correlation coefficients (1 to 6) showcase the relationships between different aspects of SRL, LS, and specific PAE components, such as enjoyment, hope, pride, and relief.

Table 3. *Variable means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix*

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Self-Regulated Learning Strategies	4.24	0.473						
2. Learning Satisfaction	4.20	0.536	0.555					
3. PAE- Enjoyment	4.031	0.244	-0.374	0.436				
4. PAE- Hope	3.806	0.119	-0.856	-0.371	0.204			
5. PAE- Pride	3.90	0.188	0.812	0.177	0.049	-0.762		
6. PAE- Relief	4.15	0.120	-0.544	-0.639	0.398	0.638	-0.603	

Participants, on average, reported a mean score of 4.24 (SD = 0.473), indicating a relatively high level of engagement in self-regulated learning strategies. Participants, on average, reported a mean learning satisfaction score of 4.20 (SD = 0.536). Positive academic emotions, with a mean enjoyment score of 4.031 (SD = 0.244), students convey a remarkably high level of pleasure derived from mathematical activities, emphasizing a positive and engaging learning atmosphere. Hope, reflected in a mean score of 3.806 (SD = 0.119), signifies a balanced emotional state, showcasing an optimistic outlook and resilience in the face of mathematical challenges (Aranzo et al., 2023). Pride, with a mean score of 3.90 (SD = 0.188), emerges as a powerful motivator, indicating that students derive a sense of accomplishment and self-worth from their academic endeavors. Relief, characterized by a mean score of 4.15 (SD = 0.120), points to a high level of comfort and release experienced by students when overcoming academic challenges.

Increased self-regulation is linked to a decrease in enjoyment (-0.374), a substantial drop in hope (-0.856), and a moderate decrease in relief (-0.544). On the flip side, there's a strong positive link with pride (0.812), showing that students feel a significant boost in accomplishment and self-worth when employing self-regulated learning strategies (Luzano, 2023). These findings emphasize the complexity of how self-regulation impacts both learning satisfaction and positive academic emotions in the learning journey (Nallada et al., 2023; Pang-an et al., 2022).

For the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and learning satisfaction, the data strongly indicates that utilizing self-regulated learning strategies (SRL) is associated with increased satisfaction in learning, supported by a moderate positive correlation of 0.555, thereby supporting H1. The findings suggest that students who actively engage in these strategies are more likely to enjoy their overall learning experience in mathematics (Luzano & Ubalde, 2023; Luzano et al., 2024).

Path Analysis Results

Table 4. *Total, direct, and indirect effects on the endogenous variables*

	Path Coefficient	T-value (bootstrap)	Percentile 95% C.I.	f^2
Total Effect:				
SRL → LS = c	.560***	10.346	[.441, .655]	

Direct Effects:				
SRL → LS = c'	.271***	3.940	[.131, .400]	0.086
SRL → PAE = a	.603***	15.396	[.508, .667]	0.572
PAE → LS = b	.480***	8.290	[.359, .590]	0.271
Indirect Effect:				
SRL → PAE → LS = ab	.289***	7.465	[.211, .365]	

Notes: *** significant at .001. f^2 is the Cohen's (1988) effect size coefficient: .02=small, .15=medium, .35=large.

The total effect from SRL to LS (c) with a path coefficient of 0.560 is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that SRL has a meaningful impact on overall learning satisfaction. The direct effect (c') with a path coefficient of 0.271 remains significant ($p < 0.001$) with a small effect size of 0.086, indicating a direct but relatively modest influence of SRL on LS after considering PAE. The direct effect (a) path coefficient of 0.603 is substantial ($p < 0.001$) with a large effect size of 0.572, suggesting that SRL has a significant impact on promoting positive academic emotions. The direct effect (b) path coefficient of 0.480 is significant ($p < 0.001$) with a medium effect size of 0.271, indicating that positive academic emotions significantly contribute to learning satisfaction. The indirect effect from SRL to LS through the mediation of PAE (ab) with a path coefficient of 0.289 is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). R-squared coefficients, which reflect the proportion of variance explained by the predictors on the endogenous variables, are shown in Figure 2. 36.9% of the variance in the PAE is explained by the SRL and 46% of the variance in LS is explained by the combined effects of SRL and PAE.

The findings reveal that the direct effect from SRL to PAE (a) has the greatest impact, emphasizing the crucial role of SRL in influencing positive academic emotions (Luzano, 2024). The total effect (c) is the second most substantial, highlighting the overall impact of SRL on learning satisfaction. The direct effect (ab) represents the third greatest impact, highlighting the significance of positive academic emotions in mediating the relationship. The direct effect from SRL to LS (c') has the least impact but remains significant, suggesting a direct but smaller influence on learning satisfaction (Romorosa et al., 2023).

These results imply that interventions focusing on enhancing self-regulated learning strategies can directly improve learning satisfaction and, indirectly, enhance it by promoting positive academic emotions, thereby supporting H2. The substantial effect sizes underscore the practical significance of these relationships, emphasizing the importance of addressing both SRL and PAE to enhance the overall learning experience.

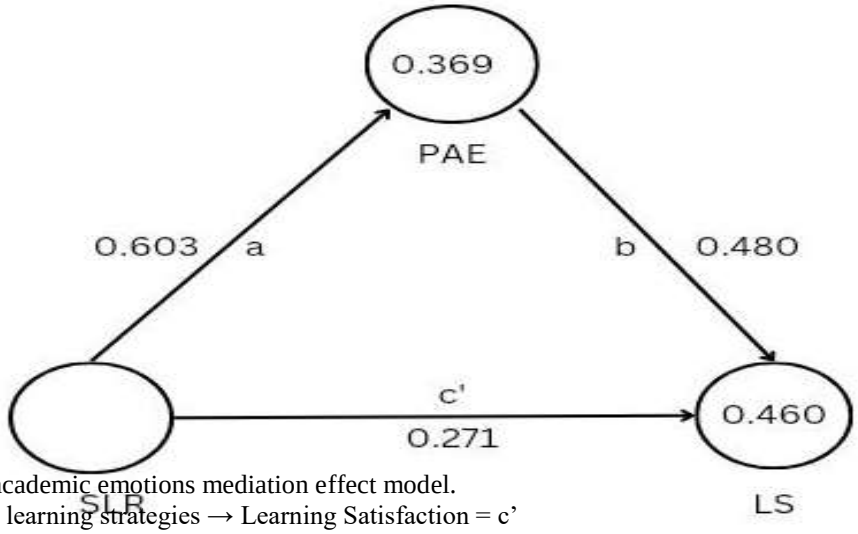

Figure 2. Positive academic emotions mediation effect model.
H1: Self- regulated learning strategies → Learning Satisfaction = c'
H2: Self- regulated learning strategies →Positive Academic Emotions → Learning Satisfaction= ab

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study provides valuable insights into how students approach the learning of mathematics and their emotional experiences in the process. The examination of self-regulated learning strategies, learning satisfaction, and positive academic emotions reveals a nuanced relationship. Students who demonstrate effective self-regulated learning strategies tend to report higher levels of learning

satisfaction. Interestingly, this proficiency in managing learning is associated with lower levels of happiness and hope but correlates with feelings of pride and relief.

The study suggests that interventions aimed at enhancing students' self-regulated learning strategies could potentially lead to greater enjoyment of mathematics and increased learning satisfaction with the overall learning experience. The analysis highlights a dual impact, wherein the influence of improved self- regulated learning strategies on learning satisfaction occurs both directly and through the mediation of positive academic emotions. This implies that teaching students effective learning strategies not only directly enhances their learning satisfaction but also indirectly contributes to a more positive emotional experience in their mathematical journey. Educators and stakeholders in education should take note of these findings, as they underscore the importance of a holistic approach that addresses both learning skills and emotional well-being to optimize the mathematics learning environment for students.AI presents a transformative opportunity for STEM education, offering personalized learning paths, intelligent tutoring, engaging simulations

5. RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the study emphasized the complex relationship between students' self-regulated learning strategies, positive academic emotions, and learning satisfaction in the context of mathematics education. The research revealed a compelling connection wherein students employing effective self-regulated learning strategies tend to express higher levels of satisfaction. This correlation, however, comes with an interesting twist, as proficient learning management is associated with lower levels of happiness and hope but is concurrently linked to feelings of pride and relief. This nuanced dynamic suggests that interventions focused on enhancing students' self-regulated learning strategies have the potential to not only improve their learning satisfaction with mathematics but also contribute to a more complex emotional landscape, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach in educational interventions.

The study's implications extend beyond the immediate realm of mathematics education, urging educators and stakeholders to consider a holistic perspective that addresses both learning skills and emotional well-being. Recognizing the dual impact of improved learning management on satisfaction, both directly and through the mediation of positive academic emotions, emphasizes the importance of creating an optimal learning environment. By integrating strategies that cultivate effective learning habits, educators can not only enhance students' satisfaction with the learning process but also indirectly foster a more positive emotional experience throughout their mathematical journey. These insights should guide educational practices, encouraging a balanced approach that acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between learning strategies and emotional well-being in the pursuit of an enriched mathematics learning environment.

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