



## The Effect of Depression on Motivation to Study

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**ABSTRACT:** To obtain information about the correlation between depression and motivation to study and identify any correlation between the questions in the survey to gain more insight into the studying habits and reasons for secondary students' motivations. Methods: a cross-sectional survey with a structured questionnaire was selected to use for data collection. Recruitment was on a voluntary basis, all participants were randomly selected and in similar age groups; however, there were varieties in gender and school systems. To test whether two variables correlate, we conduct a cross-sectional survey study. Our questionnaire consisted of 20 questions, all which have been approved by 3 experts. The sampling participants were chosen from a range of schools throughout the Bangkok province, including government schools, private schools, and international schools. The sampling participants were in grade 10-12. A total of 180 students participated in the study and completed the survey. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions version 28.0 (SPSS) was used to determine the correlation between depression and achievement motivation in the responses. It revealed that there is a negative correlation between depression and motivation to study,  $r(180)=-.567, p<.001$ .

The general trend illustrates that the traits most commonly attributed to depression cause a general decline in intrinsic motivation, more specifically, motivation to study. Furthermore, there is a clear increasing trend in depression amongst Thai teens during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is crucial to continue monitoring statistics regarding motivation as the data could be significant in designing policies regarding mental health and used for parents to understand their children more completely as well.

**KEYWORDS:** Depression, Depressive syndrome, Motivation, Studying habits.

### INTRODUCTION

Depression can happen everywhere at any time, some say depression is the emotional expression of when the host is hazy and powerless to live up to maintain expectations and self inspiration ("APA PsycNet").

The presence of the common symptoms of depressive syndrome includes long-lasting depressed mood, feelings of guilt, anxiety, and recurrent thoughts of death and suicide (Nestler et al.). Motivation is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviours. It is what causes you to act, and It also involves emotion and social behaviour. There are two types of motivations, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, intrinsic motivations are motivations that arise from the inside such as giving yourself a personal praise after completing a puzzle, whereas extrinsic motivations are those that arise from outside of yourself and often involves awards (Cherry).

Due to the statistical increase of prevalence in depression and other mental health conditions in secondary students over the last few years (พึ่งพาพงศ์ and กัลยาศิริ ิ) the demand to create a survey for mental health was apparent. In Thailand the need for research into this field is especially needed, as an estimated 22% of adolescent Thais are at risk of suicide. ("COVID-19 Pandemic Continues to Drive Poor Mental Health among Children and Young People"). Depression is a common medical illness that negatively affects people's feelings and actions (Torres), thus it is not unlikely to see a decrease in internal motivation in actions such as studying, which can be directly caused by depression (Naranjo et al.).

In the Thai system of healthcare, depression has greatly increased the burden of disease yet it is barely recognised in the country; however, this has changed in recent years with an integrated system being applied to increase accessibility of healthcare from 5.1% to 48.5% over a 6 year period (Kongsuk et al.). Nonetheless, the perceived stigma in various regions of Thailand lead to lack of education and inactivity in seeking help for those suffering from depression (Nattapong Tangjitboonsanga and Chawanun Charnsil). Furthermore, women have a higher prevalence in people who suffer from depression with 2.9% of women being diagnosed compared to 1.7% of men ("Creating Awareness on Prevention and Control of Depression") respectively; the relationship



could have many reasons. The most obvious reason is that the imbalance in housework worldwide can lead to women having less time to themselves and thus women are more likely to have depression. Another explanation could be that the stigma in certain regions of Thailand towards men having depression lead to fewer men seeking aid.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions divided into three sections: general information, depression, and motivation to study. These questions were adapted from established researches from the Journal of counselling psychology. The sampling participants were chosen from a range of schools throughout the Bangkok province, including government schools, private schools, and international schools. The sampling participants were in grade 10-12. We have gathered 180 responses in total.

Section 1 is composed of 5 general questions including the participant's gender, Educational level, Type of schools, Grade and whether or not they have been diagnosed with depression.

Section 2 is about feelings that are the symptoms of depression, and this section consists of 8 items. All questions were arranged using the five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)).

Section 3 is about the motivation to study of participants, and this section consists of 7 items. All questions were arranged using the five-point Likert scale.

The sampling was random and on a voluntary basis. The survey form was distributed through Facebook, Line group chats and Email to the participants.

Furthermore, inputs were provided from research professionals through the format of an Item-Objective Congruence form to ensure the appropriateness of questions. With the pilot study of 30 participants the reliability test Cronbach's alpha is 0.816 which was widely acceptable.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does depression define less motivation in teenagers?
2. What are the effects of depression on students' motivation to study

## DATA ANALYSIS

The Statistical Product and Service Solutions version 28.0 (SPSS) was used to determine the correlation between depression and achievement motivation in the responses.

A five point Likert scale was assigned to each question starting from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The relationship between depression on student's motivation was determined by Pearson's correlation test, and the results indicated that they correlate.

## RESULTS

In the survey, there were five choices in each question starting from one being "strongly disagree" to five being "strongly agree." The data were analysed to determine the correlation between depression and motivation to study by SPSS version 28.



**Table 1:** General Information of Participants

		Valid Percentage(%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	28.3
	Female	65.0
	Nonbinary	6.7
<b>Education Level</b>	Grade 10/Year 11	25.0
	Grade 11/Year 12	60.0
	Grade 12/Year 13	15.0
<b>Type of School</b>	Private	30.0
	Government	38.9
	International	31.1
<b>Grade Point Average</b>	4	46.7
	3.5	37.8
	3	10.6
	2.5	4.4
	2	0
	1.5	.6
	1	0
<b>Diagnosed with Depression</b>	Yes	17.8
	No	82.2

The table 1 shows 65 percent of which were Cis-female, 28.3 percent were Cis-male, and 6.7% were Non-Binary. Along with 3 type of schools and different grade levels.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Derivation	N
<b>Depression</b>	2.77	0.99	180
<b>Motivation</b>	3.11	0.47	180



The table 2 shows that among 180 participants, the mean of depression was 2.77 and the standard deviation was 0.99. The mean of motivation to study was 3.12, where the standard deviation was 0.48. By looking at the standard deviation, it can be seen that answers under the motivation section are more crowded than those under the depression section.

**Table 3:** The Correlation between Depression and Motivation

		Depression	Motivation
<b>Depression</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	1	-.567
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>		.000
	<b>N</b>	180	180
<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	-.567	1
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.000	
	<b>N</b>	180	180

According to table 3, depression and motivation to study correlate. Pearson’s correlation test at the significant level of 99 percent revealed that there is a negative correlation between depression and motivation to study,  $r(180) = -.567, p < .001$ .

**DISCUSSIONS**

We ask a group of students from different types of schools to complete a questionnaire regarding their motivation to study and depression. We aimed to clarify if the negative states created by depression inhibits the intrinsic motivation to study of students. The results strongly supported the hypothesis that depression has an inhibitory relationship with motivation while studying. We found that depression symptoms strongly correlate with a low score for motivation.

The demographic of the survey takers demonstrated that across multiple school systems, the association between depression and motivation to study still stands. Less motivated students were more likely to be affiliated with depression symptoms yet most did not receive poor academic results. This clarifies that despite there being a positive correlation that cannot be measured in a cross-sectional study.

Multiple limitations must be considered for this study given our use of a cross-sectional survey. The method does not allow researchers to revisit data and explore trends over a given time period; thus, the academic results could be exceptional due to chance. Furthermore, there is no long term tracking on whether the depression symptoms were long-standing enough to affect motivation to this degree.

In conclusion, our results supported our general belief that depression plays a part in lowering intrinsic motivation, but low motivation is not necessarily correlated with lower grades. With this research it can be surmised that schools and counselors should not conflate grades with life-satisfaction as motivation would be a greater metric.

In the future, this study should be expanded to other age groups than the final two years of school as the syllabus differs for each year group, so their motivations and maturities also differ. Furthermore, these perspectives must be observed after restrictions due to COVID-19 as studies have shown a decrease in motivation and increase in symptoms of depression (Corpus et al.). Grades are also often inflated in many schools due to the online examinations (Karadag).

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