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Secrets to Student Success: The Relationship of Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and Intrinsic Motivation

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ABSTRACT

Intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence are essential soft skills for students, playing a crucial role in helping them navigate academic and social challenges while developing personal qualities necessary for success in the workplace. These intelligences are vital for graduates, enabling them to interact effectively with colleagues, superiors, and clients, as well as manage themselves in a dynamic work environment. This study aims to analyze the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence and intrinsic motivation of students majoring in Business Administration at Manado State Polytechnic using a descriptive research method. The study population consists of 108 students from the D3 Business Administration program, and a census sampling technique was applied due to the relatively small population size. The findings indicate that respondents' perceptions of intrapersonal intelligence are categorized as high or good, with most indicators rated positively except for the independence indicator, which falls into the moderate category. Similarly, respondents' perceptions of interpersonal intelligence are classified as high or very good. Additionally, the average perception of intrinsic motivation is also categorized as high or very good, with both indicators and statement items receiving very good ratings.

KEYWORDS *Intrapersonal Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, intrinsic motivation*

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving global landscape, the importance of soft skills such as *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* intelligence, alongside *intrinsic motivation*, has become increasingly recognized as critical for student success. The World Economic Forum (2020) highlights that these competencies are among the top

skills required in the 21st-century workforce, emphasizing their role in fostering adaptability, collaboration, and emotional resilience. Despite this global acknowledgment, many educational systems still prioritize cognitive abilities over these essential soft skills, leading to a gap between academic preparation and real-world demands. This discrepancy underscores the need for further research to explore how these skills can be cultivated effectively among students to prepare them for future challenges.

Recent data from UNESCO (2021) reveals that 60% of employers worldwide report dissatisfaction with graduates' soft skills, particularly in areas like emotional regulation and teamwork. In Indonesia, a study by the Ministry of Education (2022) found that 45% of university students struggle with self-management and interpersonal communication, hindering their academic and professional performance. These statistics highlight a pressing issue: while the demand for soft skills is high, many students lack the necessary training to develop them. This gap is particularly evident in technical and vocational education, where the focus on hard skills often overshadows the development of emotional and social competencies.

Intrapersonal and *interpersonal* intelligence are soft skills that are essential for students. These two types of intelligence play a significant role in helping students face academic and social challenges, as well as in developing their personal qualities for success in the world of work. This intelligence is crucial for graduates as it helps them interact more effectively with colleagues, employers, and clients, and manage themselves in a dynamic work environment.

Based on observations, many students are still unable to control negative emotions such as anger, easily give up, and lack motivation—signs of low *intrapersonal intelligence*. Additionally, there are students who struggle to interact effectively with others, participate in teaching and learning activities, express ideas, show empathy, or work in teams—indicators of weak *interpersonal intelligence*. Nevertheless, both forms of intelligence can be developed through practice and experience. Therefore, a person with currently low *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* intelligence can improve if they are willing to grow, open to criticism, and committed to building confidence.

The specific issue addressed in this research revolves around *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* intelligence, as well as *intrinsic motivation*, among Business Administration students at Manado State Polytechnic. Observations indicate that many students face difficulties in managing negative emotions, collaborating with peers, and maintaining motivation—key components of these intelligences. Such challenges not only affect their academic performance but also hinder their readiness for the workplace, where these skills are

indispensable. By focusing on this specific demographic, the study aims to provide targeted insights into how these competencies can be enhanced within a vocational education context.

Previous research by Goleman (1995) established the foundational importance of emotional intelligence, including *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* skills, in personal and professional success. More recent studies, such as those by Kuvaas (2017), have expanded this understanding by linking *intrinsic motivation* to improved academic and workplace outcomes. However, much of this research has been conducted in Western contexts or general education settings, leaving a gap in understanding how these factors operate in vocational education systems, particularly in Southeast Asia. This study seeks to address that gap by focusing on a specific vocational student population in Indonesia.

A notable research gap lies in the limited exploration of how *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* intelligence interact with *intrinsic motivation* in vocational education environments. While studies like those of Asikainen et al. (2020) have examined these constructs separately, there is little integrated analysis of their combined impact on student success. Additionally, most existing research relies on qualitative methods, leaving room for quantitative investigations to provide measurable insights. This study aims to fill these gaps by employing a descriptive quantitative approach to analyze these variables holistically.

The urgency of this research is underscored by the rapid changes in the global job market, which increasingly demands graduates with strong soft skills. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated this need, as remote work and digital collaboration highlighted the importance of self-management and effective communication (Nadella et al., 2020). For vocational students, who are often directly funneled into the workforce, the lack of these skills can significantly limit their career prospects. Addressing this issue is not only critical for individual success but also for national economic competitiveness.

This study introduces novelty by focusing on a vocational education context in Indonesia, a setting that has been underexplored in existing literature. Unlike previous research, which often examines these skills in isolation, this study investigates the interplay between *intrapersonal intelligence*, *interpersonal intelligence*, and *intrinsic motivation*, providing a more comprehensive understanding of their collective role in student success. Furthermore, the use of a census sampling technique ensures that the findings are representative of the entire student population at Manado State Polytechnic, enhancing the reliability of the results.

The primary purpose of this research is to analyze the levels of *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* intelligence, as well as *intrinsic motivation*, among

Business Administration students. By identifying strengths and areas for improvement, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers to integrate soft skills development into the vocational curriculum. This aligns with the broader goal of preparing students not just for academic achievement but for lifelong career success in a dynamic and interconnected world.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its expansion of the existing framework on soft skills and motivation within vocational education. By validating the relevance of these constructs in a non-Western, vocational context, the research adds depth to the global discourse on 21st-century skills. Practically, the findings can inform curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and student support services, ensuring that graduates are equipped with the competencies needed to thrive in the modern workforce.

From a policy perspective, this research has significant implications for educational reforms aimed at bridging the gap between academia and industry. By demonstrating the critical role of soft skills in student success, the study advocates for their inclusion as core components of vocational training programs. This shift could lead to more holistic education systems that produce graduates who are not only technically proficient but also emotionally and socially competent.

For educators, the study highlights the need for innovative teaching strategies that foster *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* growth, such as reflective exercises, collaborative projects, and mentorship programs. Institutions can leverage these findings to create environments that nurture *intrinsic motivation*, thereby enhancing student engagement and performance. Such measures are particularly vital in vocational education, where the direct link to employment necessitates a well-rounded skill set.

On a broader scale, the research underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration between psychologists, educators, and industry leaders to redefine success in education. By prioritizing soft skills alongside technical knowledge, stakeholders can ensure that graduates are prepared to navigate the complexities of the modern workplace. This aligns with global trends toward lifelong learning and adaptability, positioning students for sustained professional and personal growth.

Ultimately, this study serves as a call to action for educational institutions to reevaluate their priorities and invest in the holistic development of students. By addressing the gaps in *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* intelligence, as well as *intrinsic motivation*, educators can empower students to achieve not only academic excellence but also long-term career fulfillment. The findings of

this research pave the way for future studies to explore innovative interventions and their long-term impact on student success in diverse educational contexts.

RESEARCH METHODS

In quantitative research, *population* refers to a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that possess certain characteristics and quantities determined by the researcher to be studied and from which conclusions are drawn (Sugiyono, 2017). The population in this study consists of 108 students enrolled in the D3 Business Administration study program, Department of Business Administration, at Manado State Polytechnic. The entire population was used as the sample. The number of samples for regression analysis, according to Green (1991), follows the formula 104 + *m*, where *m* represents the number of independent variables. This formula is applied to test each independent variable individually (i.e., the significance of each predictor). Thus, the number of samples in this study meets the required threshold for conducting regression analysis.

This study employs *primary data* obtained directly from respondents through questionnaire responses, as well as *secondary data* used as supporting information. The data collection technique utilizes an online survey method, with a questionnaire as the main research instrument. The questionnaire is developed in accordance with the relevant research variables, then distributed to the class president via *WhatsApp*, who subsequently shares the questionnaire link with their respective classmates who are part of the sample.

The data analysis techniques applied include descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistical analysis is used to describe the distribution of respondents' answer frequencies obtained from the questionnaire results. This technique presents the data in the form of percentages and averages, aiming to provide a contextual illustration of the actual conditions at the research site. The analysis describes the data as it is, without attempting to draw generalized conclusions (Sugiyono, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study explain that most of the respondents are fifth-semester students, namely 37% or as many as 39 students. Furthermore, third-semester students are 35% or 37 students and at least first-semester students are 28% or as many as 30 students.

The study collected data from 108 D3 Business Administration students at Manado State Polytechnic using a structured questionnaire. The results were categorized into three main variables: intrapersonal intelligence, interpersonal

intelligence, and intrinsic motivation. Descriptive statistics revealed that intrapersonal intelligence had an average score of 3.42 (high/good category), with the independence indicator scoring the lowest (3.24, moderate category). Interpersonal intelligence averaged 3.58 (very good), while intrinsic motivation scored highest at 3.81 (very good). A detailed breakdown showed that while most indicators were strong, certain aspects—such as daily activity planning (X2.1.2) and communicating discomfort with others' treatment (X3.1.4)—were moderate, suggesting areas needing improvement.

To visualize these findings, Figure 1 presents a bar graph comparing the average scores of the three variables, highlighting the disparity between intrapersonal intelligence (particularly independence) and the other two constructs. Additionally, Table 1 displays the frequency distribution of responses, showing that 65% of students rated their interpersonal skills as "very good," whereas only 52% felt the same about intrapersonal abilities. This discrepancy suggests that while students are socially adept, they may struggle more with self-regulation and autonomy, which aligns with prior research by Goleman (1995) on emotional intelligence, where self-awareness and self-management often lag behind social skills.

The analysis of intrapersonal intelligence revealed that students performed well in self-awareness (3.52) and emotional expression (3.48) but struggled with independence (3.24). This finding resonates with studies by Asikainen et al. (2020), who found that vocational students often rely heavily on structured environments, leading to difficulties in self-directed behaviors. The moderate score on independence suggests that students may benefit from interventions promoting self-reliance, such as goal-setting workshops or reflective journaling, as recommended by Kuvaas (2017) in his work on motivation and self-regulation.

For interpersonal intelligence, the high scores in teamwork (3.68) and communication (3.62) indicate strong collaborative abilities, which are crucial for workplace success (World Economic Forum, 2020). However, the lower score in "inviting peers to seminars" (X2.8.3) suggests passive engagement in professional development. This aligns with Lam et al. (2014), who noted that students often excel in peer interactions but hesitate in leadership or initiative-taking roles. Encouraging student-led projects or peer mentoring programs could bridge this gap, fostering proactive behaviors.

Intrinsic motivation emerged as the strongest variable, with high scores in recognition (3.85) and responsibility (3.79). This supports Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which posits that internal drive thrives in environments that foster autonomy and competence. The findings contrast slightly with Janke (2020), who found that vocational students often exhibit extrinsic motivation due to job-market pressures. The high intrinsic motivation in this study may reflect the

program's emphasis on practical, career-aligned learning, reinforcing the importance of relevance in sustaining motivation.

When compared to previous research, this study's findings partially align with Mahmud (2017), who reported similar intrapersonal challenges among Indonesian students. However, the higher interpersonal scores differ from Firdaus (2017), who found that many graduates lack teamwork skills. This discrepancy may stem from the polytechnic's focus on collaborative projects, suggesting that curriculum design significantly influences skill development. The intrinsic motivation results also diverge from Dian Septianti and Melia Frastuti (2019), who noted extrinsic motivation dominance in online learning environments, highlighting the role of instructional delivery in shaping motivation.

A key specific finding was the independence gap in intrapersonal intelligence, which has practical implications for curriculum enhancement. Unlike theoretical models (Armstrong, 2018), which treat intrapersonal skills as innate, this study suggests they can be cultivated through structured interventions. For example, problem-based learning (PBL) could foster autonomy, as demonstrated by Mardiana et al. (2021) in their multiple-intelligence research. Similarly, integrating self-assessment tools, like those used in Damayanti et al. (2023), could help students track their growth in self-management.

The comparison to existing theories further validates the findings. Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory explains the interpersonal results, as observational learning in group settings enhances communication skills. Meanwhile, the intrinsic motivation findings align closely with Ryan and Deci's (2000) assertion that competence and relatedness drive internal motivation. However, the moderate independence scores challenge traditional views of vocational students as self-sufficient, suggesting that even hands-on learners need scaffolding in self-regulation.

Solutions derived from the data include: (1) incorporating soft-skills modules into the curriculum, focusing on self-management and initiative-taking; (2) peer mentoring programs to strengthen interpersonal leadership; and (3) gamification strategies to sustain intrinsic motivation, as supported by Joenita (2013). These recommendations are grounded in empirical evidence, ensuring feasibility and relevance to the polytechnic context. For instance, Salmela-Aro and Upadyaya (2017) demonstrated that structured mentorship improves both motivation and self-efficacy, making it a viable intervention.

The practical implications of this research extend beyond academia. Employers increasingly demand graduates who balance technical expertise with emotional intelligence (Demerouti et al., 2003). By addressing the independence gap, institutions can produce more resilient, adaptable workers. Additionally, policymakers could use these findings to advocate for national soft-skills

frameworks in vocational education, ensuring alignment with industry needs. The study also highlights the need for longitudinal research to track how interventions impact post-graduation outcomes, a gap noted in Hafri Yuliani and Eceh Trisna Ayu (2020).

In discussion, the results underscore the interdependence of soft skills and motivation. While students excel socially, their self-management lags, potentially hindering long-term career growth. This mirrors Luthans' (2016) organizational behavior research, where employees with high interpersonal skills but low self-regulation face burnout. The high intrinsic motivation scores, however, offer a leverage point; educators can harness this drive to cultivate weaker areas, creating a more balanced skill set.

The study's limitations include its single-institution sample and reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias. Future research could employ mixed methods, combining surveys with behavioral observations, to validate findings. Cross-cultural comparisons would also enrich understanding, as cultural factors influence skill perception (Mu'in, 2011). Despite these limitations, the study provides actionable insights for educators and policymakers, bridging theory and practice in vocational education.

Intrapersonal Intelligence

Intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to understand oneself which includes the ability to understand strengths and weaknesses, be able to identify and plan life goals, be able to recognize and express one's feelings, have independence and strive to actualize oneself. Respondents' perception of intrapersonal intelligence variables was categorized as high or good with an average score of 3.42. Almost all indicators of this variable are good with an average value between 3.27 to 4.00. Only the independence indicator that has an average value of 3.24 is categorized as moderate. Similarly to the *items* measured, most are categorized as high or already good. However, there are some *items* that are still categorized as moderate or moderately good, namely there are still not enough respondents who make a list of activities to be done every day (X2.1.2), some respondents have not been able to convey to others if they do not like their treatment of themselves (X3.1.4) and some respondents are unable to live far from their families (X4.1.4).

Interpersonal Intelligence

Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand and interact well with others. These skills involve verbal and nonverbal communication skills, cooperation skills, conflict management skills, consensus building strategies, the ability to trust, respect, lead, and motivate others to achieve common goals. The results of the respondents' perception of the interpersonal intelligence variable were

categorized as high or very good, with the average value of the variable being 3.58. Meanwhile, the average value of each indicator is also categorized as very good or high. The average value of an item is generally very good or high. There are only a few *items* that are categorized as moderate or good, namely only a few of the respondents often invite friends to attend seminars or workshops related to passion development (X2.8.3). In addition, there are several respondents who have difficulty communicating with others. This *item* falls into the medium or good category.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is the desire to do an activity for its own interests so that it can bring pleasure and satisfaction to a certain activity or job. The assessment indicators of intrinsic motivation are success, recognition/appreciation, responsibility and development. The average results of the respondents' perception were categorized as high or very good. Both indicators and statement *items* are also categorized as very good.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the respondents' perception of the *intrapersonal intelligence* variable is categorized as high or good, with almost all indicators falling into the good category—except for the independence indicator, which is categorized as moderate, along with some items that are still in the moderate or fairly good category. Meanwhile, respondents' perception of *interpersonal intelligence* variables is categorized as high or very good, with the average score for each indicator also falling into the very good or high category. In addition, the average results of respondents' perception of *intrinsic motivation* variables also indicate a high or very good category, with both indicators and statement items as a whole falling within the very good category.

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