

Problems Encountered and Motivation Among Maritime Students in Davao City

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ABSTRACT

This study dealt with the problems encountered and motivation among maritime students. The primary goal of this study was to determine which domain of problems encountered significantly influences the motivation of Bachelor of Science in Maritime Transportation (BSMT) students utilizing a quantitative descriptive-correlational design with 335 students from all year levels in DMMA College of Southern Philippines during the academic year 2025–2026. A structured questionnaire was used in gathering the data on problems encountered in terms of health, family, self-concerns, and studies, and motivation in terms of family influence, financial goal, and career or professionalism. Mean, Pearson product-moment

correlation, and regression analysis were the statistical tools used for data treatment employing correlational technique. Results showed that students had different degrees of issues in the listed areas, and their motivation towards their studies remained high in general. A significant negative relationship was found between the overall problems encountered and students' motivation. This indicates that as the level of problems increases, students' motivation tends to decrease. The results indicate that helping students overcome personal, academic, and social difficulties is crucial in maintaining their motivation and aiding their academic achievements in maritime education.

Keywords: *Problems Encountered, Motivation, Maritime Students, Descriptive-Correlational, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Motivation in maritime education was identified as an important factor that impacts student motivation, or the desire to learn and succeed in challenging marine programs (Mendoza et al., 2024). Motivation is important because it impacts students' abilities to overcome academic obstacles and stay committed to their marine education. However, declining motivation among students at marine schools around the world is considered a major problem that marine schools should identify and address (Turan et al., 2023). Additionally, research also showed that students who had less money available to them tended to have lower motivation to study and thus suggested that money problems could impact students' motivation to learn (Palomares et al., 2024). Students in higher education in China are still experiencing low interest and motivation, along with declining engagement and decreased effort in their schoolwork. Research from a meta-analysis shows that while many students experience high motivation, some are

particularly challenged to maintain it, especially when there is a great deal of diversity in the learning environment and/or in the demands of the course materials. When students do not have enough interest in what they are doing, this typically results in passive learning, a lack of participation, and/or the inability to maintain long-term commitment to their academic pursuits. In addition, most lessons based on the repetition of routine school tasks will likely not spark students' interest and therefore may further decrease their motivation and negatively affect their academic performance and continued pursuit of education. As a result, low motivation is seen as a serious issue in Chinese higher education (Mirzaei et al., 2025).

In the Philippines, student motivation remains a significant concern that affects active participation and the quality of the learning process. A recent investigation into why some students have low interest, motivation to learn, and low participation in class found that while many students experience high levels of motivation, others experience varying degrees of motivation that can influence their level of participation in classroom activities. The data collected during the study showed that students' interest in and motivation to learn are not always optimal, resulting in limited participation and highlighting the need for targeted interventions to help increase motivation. The results of this study indicate that while there are already initiatives being put into place to support students' motivation, motivation continues to be a problem in Philippine schools that prevents students from being engaged and successful in their schooling (Rone et al., 2023). In the local context, particularly in Davao City, college students face various challenges that significantly affect their academic engagement and motivation. Rosello et al. (2023) studied how students in Davao City faced several challenges, such as poor health, mental and emotional problems, family problems, economic problems, and academic challenges. These challenges prevent students from focusing and participating in their studies. The study also highlighted that how students respond to challenges, including motivation to continue to learn and to actively engage with their coursework, is an important aspect of understanding how students behave academically. This study demonstrated that the relationship between the challenges students face and their motivation is crucial to understand students' academic behaviors and the educational experiences in Davao City.

After reviewing prior studies, the authors were able to identify some major gaps, especially regarding the connection between the challenges faced by maritime students and the motivations of those same students. Even though prior literature lists several of the challenges maritime students face, including a lack of hands-on experience, an overwhelming academic workload, and low engagement with course materials, much of what was found is often general in its application and does not take into consideration how the challenges students face actually impact students' motivation. Little research exists that compares how various types of challenges affect motivation, and very little attention has been paid to how motivation develops as students' progress through their maritime training program. Given the demands placed upon students by the maritime programs offered by DMMA College, there is a serious need for evidence-based interventions that will enhance students' motivation and ultimately support their persistence in maritime education and professional readiness.

Prior research indicates that the problems students face is directly tied to their academic motivation. For example, Moneva et al. (2020) found that students experiencing fewer financial resources had lower levels of motivation to learn. This finding suggests that financial difficulties can decrease students' motivation to study. Also, Duong et al. (2025) found that students experiencing increased levels of anxiety, depression, and poor quality of life had lower levels of academic motivation. Therefore, the findings suggest that when students experience problems such as financial difficulties or health-related challenges, their motivation to engage in academic activities will be reduced and will negatively affect their ability to persist in their academic pursuits and ultimately their academic success.

The problems students face as a result of their experiences within their academic and training environment have a direct link to their motivation. The challenges students experience will influence their desire to engage in academic activities, their ability to persist in their academic pursuits, and their ability to succeed. Dewi et al. (2021) found that psychological challenges such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and fear

of failure affected students' participation and learning performance and are therefore indicative of students' motivational behaviors within the classroom. Similar to the findings of Dewi et al., Diocos (2022) found that students who were challenged with learning-related difficulties, such as managing their time effectively, accessing resources necessary to complete their assignments, and being distracted from academic activities due to social interactions, were less likely to be actively involved in academic activities, which further supports the idea that the presence of these challenges will negatively affect their motivation to learn. In the context of maritime education, Mendoza et al. (2024) found that students remain highly motivated when they have clear career goals and high expectations of success in their chosen maritime profession. Overall, the findings from Dewi et al., Diocos, and Mendoza et al. provide additional evidence that the problems encountered by maritime students have a significant connection to their motivation, as challenges may hinder their academic drive and, conversely, the existence of strong professional aspirations can positively influence their motivation to continue their academic pursuits despite encountering the aforementioned challenges.

The dissemination of this study follows the guidelines of the Davao Merchant Marine Academy (DMMA) for research outputs. The research will be presented at the DMMA Research Office to facilitate academic staff, students, and other education stakeholders engaging in a meaningful discussion of the results. Upon completion of the final defense and subsequent approval of the study, multiple copies of the study will be made available to the school library, maritime department, and research office for reference and future use. Additionally, the study's results will be shared with both maritime students and faculty members to assist them in understanding the common challenges students experience and the factors that affect their motivation. By facilitating this process, the study seeks to contribute to improving the instructional strategies used by educators, the student support systems implemented for maritime students, and the learning environments provided to maritime students to enhance their motivation, academic achievement, and overall development.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Edward L. Deci Richard M. Ryan (2000), Self Determination Theory explains that Self-determination was influenced by accomplishing the three basic concepts including autonomy, competence, and relatedness. According to the self-Determination theory, autonomy refer to the sense of an individuals to control Ove their actions and decisions to make. In the context of maritime students encounter various academic challenges such as broad technical subjects, practical training, and onetime requirements. If these problems make them feel inadequate or unsuccessful to comply, their sense of competence may decline, which can negatively affect their motivation to continue their studies. Relatedness refers to the need to feel connected, belong and supported by others. Maritime students may feel and experienced homesickness, peer competition lack of support from instructions. When students feel isolated or unsupported, their sense of belonging decreases, which may also reduce their motivation. Self-Determination Theory provide a strong foundation for understanding the relationship between challenges experienced by students and their motivational outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

Problems Encountered and Motivation of Maritime Student in DMMA College Southern Philippines. The independent variable is problems encountered, comprising five indicators adapted from Atienza et al. (2017) which includes the following indicators: health problems, problems with family, problems as they relate to others, problems on self-concerns, and problems on studies. Health problems include physical or mental conditions that affect attendance, focus, and academic performance. Problems with family involve conflicts, financial issues, or lack of support that affect students emotionally. Problems as they relate to others refer to difficulties with peers, classmates, or instructors that impact social interaction

and engagement. Problems on self-concerns include low self-esteem, lack of confidence, or emotional struggles that affect motivation and coping. Social issues as they are related to other people are those problems with classmates, peers, or instructors that affect the process of social interaction and engagement. Issues in self-concerns are low self-esteem, feeling of insecurity or having emotional problems that influence motivation and coping. Problems on studies entail learning challenges like excessive workload, challenging subjects or poor study habits, which impede learning. Combined, these indicators reflect the personal, social and academic barriers that could affect student motivation and performance.

The dependent variable refers to motivation, the three indicators of which are turned into an adaptation of the questionnaire of A cabal et al. (2024) which also includes the following indicators: family influence, financial goal, and career/professionalism. family influence is a support, guidance, and encouragement provided to the students by their family, which can inspire them to continue their studies and work on their academic achievement. financial goal is a desire A combination of these indicators is the individual and external factors that influence the motivation of students to succeed in their studies and careers.

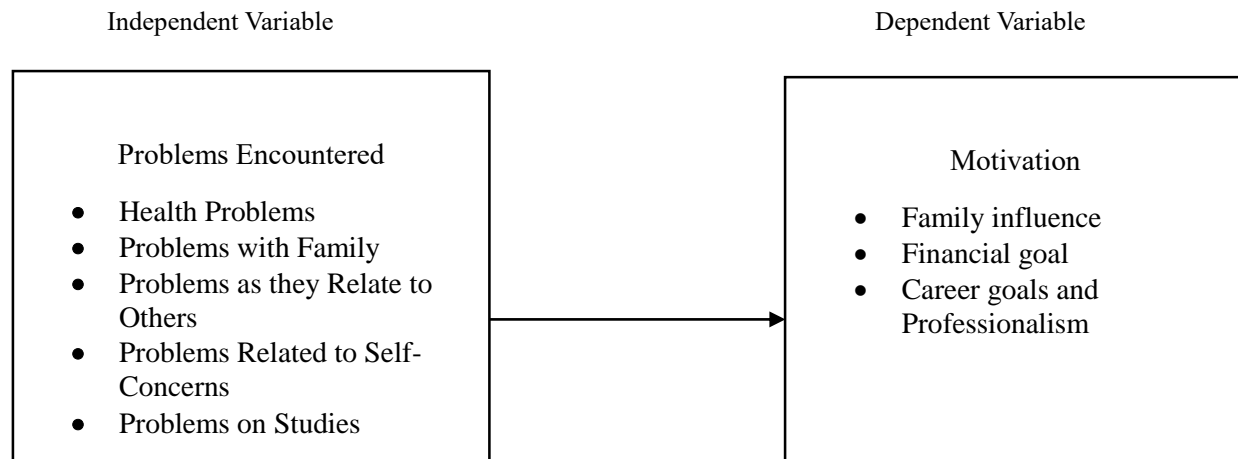


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study*

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to explore the role of motivation in helping maritime students cope with the challenges of their education and training. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To determine the level of problems encountered in terms of:
 - 1.1. health problems;
 - 1.2. problem with family;
 - 1.3. problems as they relate to others;
 - 1.4. problems on self-concerns; and
 - 1.5. problems on studies?
2. To determine the level of motivation in terms of:
 - 2.1. family influence;
 - 2.2. financial goal; and
 - 2.3. career/professionalism?
3. Is there significant relationship between problems encountered and motivation?
4. What domain of problems encountered significantly influence motivation of the maritime students?

Literature Review

This part presents the readings relevant to the study. The order of the presentation is in accordance with the variables of the study, which are problems encountered. Problems Encountered, according to Atienza (2017), have the following indicators, namely, health problems, problems with family, problems as they relate to others, problems with self-concerns, and problems with studies. Motivation, according to Acaba (2024), has the following indicators, namely, family influence, financial goals, career goals, and professionalism.

Problems Encountered

Demirel (2022) also stated that a number of obstacles or difficulties faced by students can also have an effect on their academic performance, well-being, and motivation. The problems and challenges experienced by students studying at maritime institutions will be different than those experienced by students at other educational institutions; they will face physical, academic, interpersonal, and personal problems during both classroom instruction and practical training (Alday & Paet, 2023). There is evidence that problems associated with high levels of workload, insufficient practical experience, and difficulty adapting to the maritime environment all reduce students' engagement, motivation, and achievement (Sari & Sari, 2022). Consequently, it is essential to address these types of problems in order to ensure students continue, remain healthy, and succeed in their challenging maritime programs.

The research completed by Raba and Aquino (2022) demonstrated that maritime students who were experiencing financial difficulties were likely to have a negative impact on their ability to perform academically and maintain motivation. Maritime education programs demonstrate that students typically have difficulty comprehending complex subject matter, managing heavy academic work loads, and maintaining satisfactory grades on practical assessment exercises. These difficulties will likely create additional stress for students, reduce their engagement in academic activities, and result in poorer academic performance (Alamsyah et al., 2023). Overall, the results of these studies illustrate the need for identifying and resolving the academic challenges faced by maritime students to assist them in achieving academic success, remaining in their maritime program, and succeeding in their demanding maritime education programs.

Health Problems

Maritime students' health-related problems involve both physical and psychological problems that interfere with their well-being, academic performance, and desire to persist in their demanding maritime programs. According to Alday and Paet (2025), maritime students typically develop hypertension, musculoskeletal disorders, fatigue, and other health-related problems during onboard training that is exacerbated by environmental factors such as noise, vibration, and climate variability. As a consequence of these physical stresses, students may find themselves lacking the energy and motivation to participate actively in their course work. In like manner, Sakan (2020) noted that occupational stress and prolonged periods of engaging in physically demanding occupations can result in psychological stress, sleep disturbances, and a decrease in resilience, all of which can reduce a student's intrinsic motivation to learn and participate in academic and practical activities. In accordance with this, Thompson and Lee (2022) pointed out that maritime cadets often suffer from a variety of physical complaints, along with mental health-related problems, resulting in less engagement in their coursework, less enthusiasm for learning, and a reduction in their commitment to their maritime training.

Furthermore, studies focusing on seafarers provide relevant insights into the health challenges also experienced by maritime students. Svetina et al. (2024) on seafarers provides important information about the health-related challenges that students studying at a maritime university also face. The researchers determined that environmental factors like excessive noise, excessive vibrations, extended periods of time spent at work, and physical and/or social isolation have been shown to cause anxiety, depression, and other

forms of emotional stress in individuals. It is likely that this will ultimately impact an individual's motivation to pursue a career and ultimately their motivation for continuing to pursue a degree in a field of study related to maritime education. The study conducted by Lefkowitz and Slade (2021) also found that prolonged separation from family members, excessive fatigue, and high-performance expectations create psychological distress and reduce an individual's well-being. In addition, Jonglertmontree et al. (2022) identified that poor mental health, stress, and sleep disorders in maritime environments all negatively affect motivation and engagement. Although these studies are based on professional seafarers, the study results are still relevant to maritime students as they experience similar types of pressure while attending school and gaining experience aboard a ship. Therefore, health problems may negatively influence students' motivation, academic performance, and persistence in pursuing a maritime education.

Problems with family

Work-life conflicts, and other family-related challenges have a significant effect on the well-being, motivation, and academic experiences of students studying at a maritime university. Work-family conflict and the inability to balance maritime duties with family responsibilities can increase stress levels and negatively affect performance for seafarers, according to research by An et al. (2020). Similar to An et al., Garciano and Garciano (2023) stated that personal/family-related concerns (e.g., homesickness, long-distance relationships, and marital difficulties) can also negatively affect the motivation and job continuation decisions of Filipino seafarers. Furthermore, Toygar et al. (2023) indicated that family separation and conflict can lead to emotional exhaustion and work alienation; therefore, there is a direct relationship between family-related stressors and the motivational and mental health of students. Thus, family-related problems can negatively affect students' motivation, mental health, and ability to complete their maritime education.

In addition, family-related problems are strongly related to students' mental health and academic engagement in maritime contexts. Toygar, Nart, and Yıldırım (2023) indicated that long-term separation from family and unresolved family responsibilities can result in emotional exhaustion and work alienation, resulting in lower student motivation and participation. Brooks et al. (2022) also emphasized that homesickness, loneliness, and concerns about family are also directly related to depressive symptoms, higher levels of stress, and lower levels of satisfaction. As such, these family-related problems may also negatively affect maritime students' well-being, motivation, and academic performance.

Problems as They Relate to Others

Interpersonal and social difficulties are also strongly related to students' motivation and participation in both academic and group activities. Richmawati et al. (2024) reported that students who experienced difficulties in forming friendships or felt left out of social groups reported lower levels of self-efficacy and were less motivated to participate in classroom activities. Additionally, Yaxin (2024) indicated that positive peer interactions and supportive networks were also highly correlated with students' willingness to participate in collaborative projects and take on leadership roles; therefore, difficulties in social relationships (i.e., shyness, having trouble getting along with classmates, etc.) can also negatively impact motivation. Thus, interpersonal problems and challenges in social interactions can negatively impact students' motivation, participation, and overall persistence in academic and group-based learning settings.

Furthermore, a great deal of research supports the idea that problems relating to students' social lives (interpersonal issues) will directly relate to an individual's motivation for engaging in both academic and social activities. Shao et al. (2024) found that when individuals have strong relationships with their peers, they have higher levels of learning motivation and academic engagement than individuals who have weak social connections. When students have difficulty connecting socially, they may be unwilling to participate in class or take initiative, which can lead to poorer academic outcomes. Additionally, Putri et al. (2024) also demonstrated that positive social interactions with peers increase a student's achievement motivation. Conversely, when students face social difficulties, it can decrease a student's desire to excel

academically. As well, Tikkanen et al. (2024) demonstrated that when students encounter peer conflict or have a negative social environment, they will demonstrate lower engagement and have lower academic well-being due to their struggles with interpersonal relationships.

Problems Related to Self-Concerns

Students' self-concerns, such as low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, and self-criticism, can also negatively affect students' motivation and engagement in academic activities. Students with lower self-esteem have been shown to have reduced motivation and engagement in academic activity. Therefore, a lack of faith in oneself can result in students being less likely to participate in classroom activities and learning opportunities (Acosta Gonzaga, 2023). Similar results were obtained by Sabaratnam (2025), demonstrating that a student's self-confidence has a direct relationship to their interest in learning, and thus, if a student has high self-confidence, they are much more likely to be enthusiastic and participate in academic activities. In addition, Khawwaf et al. (2024) demonstrated that self-esteem indirectly affects academic motivation through psychological capital; therefore, students who have lower self-esteem are at a disadvantage for having motivation and confidence in their ability to learn. Therefore, self-concerns can hinder students' motivation and engagement in academic activities.

Furthermore, self-related challenges, such as low self-esteem, weak self-concept, and lack of confidence, contribute to developing students' motivation and academic engagement. The findings from Rubab et al. (2024) demonstrated that students with a stronger academic self-concept are more confident, make more of an effort to learn, and show more engagement in the learning process than students who have a weaker self-concept. In contrast, students with a lower self-concept have fewer motivations to learn and to participate in the learning process. Similar results were obtained by Hussein et al. (2024) that indicated that self-efficacy and self-esteem are closely associated with intrinsic motivation. Therefore, when students believe they can accomplish something, they are more likely to develop stronger engagement in academic activities. Moreover, Ghasempour et al. (2024) observed that students who have lower self-esteem are more likely to procrastinate and exhibit lower academic motivation, indicating that challenges in students' self-perception can undermine students' efforts to achieve. Therefore, both interpersonal problems and self-related concerns, such as social difficulties, feelings of inadequacy, and low confidence, can negatively affect students' motivation and engagement and ultimately their academic and social development.

Problems in studies

Academic struggles—particularly those connected with learning habits and stress—may cause significant harm to student motivation and engagement. Students who have less-than-ideal or unsteady learning habits, such as poor time management and irregular learning schedules, report less academic motivation, according to Jolly and Sethi (2024). These findings indicate that less-than-ideal learning habits provide students fewer opportunities to maintain interest in and to commit to learning. Additionally, Zhang et al. (2024) reported that academic stress generated by difficult coursework and high expectations has been shown to decrease both motivation and general well-being among students; these researchers highlight the psychological effects of the challenges of studying. Furthermore, Garcia (2025) reported that students with poorer learning habits—including less organizational skills and less persistence in learning—will be more likely to struggle in academics. As a result, students' academic success — along with their motivation and engagement — can all be affected by the types of problems they experience while studying (e.g., learning habits that do not allow for adequate study time).

Moreover, problems with study habits and academic stress will continue to affect students' motivation and academic performance. Zhao et al. (2022) noted that students who report experiencing high levels of academic stress report having poor learning habits—indicating that students' academic pressures can prevent them from learning effectively. Kahu and Nelson (2021) reported similar findings in terms of students exhibiting less-than-effective learning habits (i.e., poor study strategies, lack of focus during study sessions, etc.) that result in decreased academic motivation and engagement. Additionally, Alsulami and

Hamdi (2024) reported that students who have weak learning routines, little persistence in completing learning tasks, and inadequate organizational skills in learning tasks will also experience academic difficulties—thus illustrating that study-related difficulties can negatively affect motivation and performance.

Motivation

Motivation is a significant factor that affects students' academic engagement, persistence, and achievement. Song (2024) reports that students' motivation interacts with learning enjoyment, grit, and burnout, illustrating that students who are motivated will persist longer in their studies and handle academic challenges more effectively. Similar to Song's findings, Wei and Saab (2024) report that students' motivation and positive attitudes towards learning are significant predictors of students' engagement and perceived learning outcomes—further supporting that motivation positively influences students' level of participation and satisfaction with learning, especially in online settings. Additionally, Kyotera et al. (2022) found that academic motivation is highly correlated with self-compassion and resilience, where motivated students who possess supportive psychological resources are more likely to sustain effort and reach their academic goals. Therefore, motivation not only affects students' engagement and persistence but is also influenced by various psychological and contextual factors that either facilitate or inhibit students' learning experiences.

In addition to its effect on students' engagement and persistence in learning, motivation also plays a vital role in how students cope with the problems they experience while in school. Mendoza (2025) explained that students with low motivation typically face issues such as poor class participation, low interest in subjects being studied, and difficulty focusing on academic tasks. On the other hand, Calo and Salvaña (2024) reported that motivated students are able to better overcome academic challenges (such as excessive workloads and learning difficulties) due to the fact that motivation allows them to stay engaged and persist in their learning efforts. Furthermore, Pérez et al. (2023) reported that students with greater motivation utilize more effective learning strategies—thus enabling them to better deal with academic problems, reduce stress, and improve academic performance. Therefore, motivation does not only aid in students' engagement and persistence in learning but also aids in helping students to cope with the challenges they experience in their studies.

Family influence

Family involvement has been identified as one of the most critical factors in student motivation; this includes the degree of parental involvement, the level of parent-student interaction, and the encouragement and support provided to the learner by parents that contributes to a learner's motivation to achieve academically (Lin, 2025). Research indicates that students with strong family involvement have a higher motivation to engage in learning experiences, complete assigned work, and remain focused on overcoming obstacles in school (Elahi et al., 2022). Further research by Omoyele et al. (2024) found that students who report having more parental involvement also report greater motivation for learning and greater academic achievement. As a result, family influence is an important factor in developing motivation and supporting the development of both academic engagement and success among students.

Family influence has a strong positive relationship to student motivation, and this relationship is based upon parental involvement, support, and educational involvement that contribute to learners' drive to be successful in academics (Kausar, 2025). Furthermore, students whose parents are involved in their education demonstrate a higher motivation to participate in classroom activities, pursue their academic goals, and remain focused on overcoming academic obstacles (Elahi et al., 2022). Additionally, research conducted by Guerra et al. (2024) indicated that students who experience supportive family educational approaches report higher motivation for achieving academically, and they are more committed to completing their learning tasks. Overall, these results clearly indicate that family influence is a critical component in motivating students and in enhancing students' academic engagement and success.

Financial goals

are a primary motivator for many maritime students, as the maritime industry provides a common perception of high earning potential, financial stability, and long-term job security. In their study, Mendoza et al. (2024) determined that the maritime students are greatly encouraged to take a career course in the maritime field because of the anticipation of monetary stability, good pay, and assured post-graduation jobs, which substantiates the hypothesis that financial objectives are very influential factors shaping the choice of students to take a course in maritime. Additional studies by Apio et al. (2025) also revealed that maritime students have set financial objectives (e.g., save money and prepare future financial needs), which are influencing their financial perceptions and practices. Likewise, a study by Almanza and Cruz (2022) revealed that the relationship between career motivation among maritime students and economic expectations (i.e., the need to earn more money and support their families financially) is strong.

The data from Acabal et al. (2024) supports this finding by revealing that freshman cadets in maritime programs are extremely motivated by their expectation of financial success and professional advancements, showing that financial success is a major factor in their decision to attend school. Similarly, Slišković et al. (2021) report that maritime students are most likely to choose a maritime career based upon the wage rate and the number of job opportunities available to them, reinforcing the idea that financial concerns are a primary reason for choosing a maritime career. Furthermore, Hartoyo (2022) showed that cadets' motivation is primarily influenced by external factors, such as financial expectations, illustrating that the ability to make a lot of money is one of the main drivers of students' education and career choices. These three studies demonstrate that students' financial goals, including making a high income, establishing financial stability, and supporting their future career goals, are a leading motivator for maritime students to pursue their education and career.

Career goals and professionalism Career

goals and professionalism also greatly affect maritime students' desire to succeed at school. Maritime students who have set out career plans tend to be more focused and committed to their studies than those who do not have a plan. Obias et al. (2025) discovered that students with a clear vision of their career tended to be more motivated and put forth more effort into achieving their academic goals. For example, Mendoza et al. (2024) found that maritime students' motivation to enter a maritime program was primarily driven by their expectation of career opportunities, career advancement, and future employment opportunities, which illustrates that career and professional outcomes are a primary motivator for maritime students to stay engaged and committed to their schooling. Thus, maritime students who have established clear career goals and a strong professional identity will be motivated to work harder and maintain their commitment to their chosen profession. Additionally, career aspirations and professionalism are two of the greatest motivators for maritime students seeking to obtain a degree in the maritime field, as it influences their level of engagement, persistence, and commitment to their field. The research has shown that maritime students who have clearly defined career goals are more committed to their academic work and professional development. Nollora (2022) demonstrated that graduate students in offshore and marine studies with strong career motivation had greater engagement in their learning and a greater capacity to manage their academic responsibilities, demonstrating that career goals contribute to sustained academic motivation and professional preparedness. Additionally, Slišković (2021) illustrated that maritime students' enrollment decisions in maritime programs were driven by career-based motivations, such as their interest in working in the maritime field, future employment opportunities, and personal growth. Finally, Malovic et al. (2022) demonstrated that maritime students who demonstrated a proactive approach to planning their careers and developing a professional attitude toward their careers had greater motivation and were more committed to achieving their career goals, including preparing for future positions within the maritime industry. Therefore, these studies show that having a clear career goal and being professionally focused are essential motivators for maritime students, assisting them in maintaining their commitment and succeeding in both academic work and future maritime careers.

METHODS

This chapter outlines the approaches that will be employed in this study, covering the research design, setting of the research, participants, tools for research, methods of data collection, and the statistical analysis of the data.

Research Design

The study will utilize a descriptive correlational research design this is to determine the relationship between problem encountered and motivation among maritime students in all level. The study is descriptive method because this will identify and describe the problems encountered by maritime students and to determine their level of motivation. This is also correlation because the study will be employed or examine whether there is significant relationship between the problems encountered and the level of motivation of maritime students in all levels. This design does not involve manipulation of variables but instead determine the degree of association between both variables.

Research Locale

This non-experimental quantitative research will take place in Davao City, Region XI, situated in the southern region of the Philippines. This quantitative study will be non-experimental and located in Davao City, Region XI, located in the southern part of the Philippines. The target group will be the students in BSMT at DMMA College of Southern Philippines, which is regarded as one of the best maritime colleges in the region. Davao City is one of the largest cities in the country that boasts of vibrant economy, vibrant culture and a diverse community. It is one of the major urban centers in Mindanao that has a rich educational setting which includes urban and rural educational institutions. In addition, it would be accessible and convenient in our part to have our respondents in our study, which will conserve time and we will have accurate results. The researchers will target a place that will fill the gap by default due to their setting and population of students. The aim is to comprehend the issues faced by the maritime students and this would give the insights on how the independent variable (problems encountered) affects or influences the dependent variable (motivation among maritime students).

Research Instrument

Two reliable questionnaires were used in the research to quantify the variables. The initial group of questions was used to evaluate the issues faced, the independent variable, based on the work by Atienza et al. (2017) titled Correlation of Academic Performance and Problems Encountered by Marine Transportation Students. This questionnaire includes 25 items taken from a standardized tool that has been validated for use with students to measure various aspects of the problems encountered. It consists of five indicators: health problems, problems with family, problems as they relate to others, problems related to self-concerns, and problems in studies. The second set of questions focused on motivation, which is the dependent variable. This questionnaire was adapted from Acabal et al. (2024) entitled Motivation and Expectation of Freshmen Cadets in Maritime Education at Saint Joseph Institute of Technology. This questionnaire includes 55 items. It consists of three indicators: family influence, financial goals, and career/professionalism. To clearly analyze the data, the set of parameters for the independent variable, problems encountered, was established based on the adapted instrument.

Data Gathering

To ensure a systematic and organized approach to data collection, the researchers created and adhered to a structured plan for effective data gathering. The data will be collected through the following steps. First, permission to conduct the study was sought. A request letter, which was acknowledged by the adviser, was sent to the Dean of the Maritime Department. The letter received approval after a few working days. After the Dean's approval, a copy of the endorsement letter was forwarded to the college instructors, granting the researchers permission to carry out the study. The researchers personally distributed the

questionnaire. Prior to distributing the survey, the researchers contacted the office of the college registrar to compile a list of all maritime students at various levels enrolled in the second semester of the 2025-2026 school year in order to ascertain the number of participants. After employing a sampling technique utilizing Solving's formula, the researchers provided and clarified the informed consent form; only those who agreed to participate in the study were permitted to proceed with completing the questionnaire. Subsequently, the researchers handed out the survey questionnaires to the students to assess their English language proficiency. Instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire were thoroughly clarified to the participants. Additionally, the researcher personally collected the completed surveys. Once the survey questionnaires were collected, the researchers prepared the data for statistical analysis. Finally, the process involves compiling and organizing the data. The information obtained was derived from the survey and analyzed using relevant statistical methods with assistance from the researchers' statistician.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data and analysis derived from the responses of participants regarding the challenges faced and the motivation levels among maritime students at DMMA College of Southern Philippines. The discussions are structured under the following subheadings: the extent of problems faced by maritime students; the degree of motivation among maritime students; the correlation between encountered problems and motivation; and the regression analysis of challenges and motivation.

Level of Students' Problem Encountered

Presented in Table 1 is the level of students' problems encountered across different domains. The overall mean score of 3.54 (SD = 0.37) indicates a high level of problems, suggesting that students generally experience considerable challenges in various aspects of their lives. Among the indicators, problems with home obtained the highest mean (M = 3.55, SD = 0.66), followed closely by problems with family (M = 3.50, SD = 0.88), problems related to others (M = 3.49, SD = 0.70), and self-concerns (M = 3.47, SD = 1.11), all interpreted as high. This implies that students are significantly affected by their home environment, family relationships, social interactions, and personal issues. In contrast, problems with studies registered a lower mean (M = 2.67, SD = 0.74), described as moderate, indicating that academic-related concerns are less intense compared to other problem areas.

Table 1. *Level of Students' Problems Encountered*

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Problem with Home	0.66	3.55	High
Problem with Family	0.88	3.50	High
Problem Related to Others	0.70	3.49	High
Problem with Self-Concerns	1.11	3.47	High
Problem with Studies	0.74	2.67	Moderate
Overall	0.37	3.54	High

Specifically, the problems at home had the highest rating of 3.55 (SD = 0.66) which is high by definition in regard to interpretation. It demonstrates that home environment can be a problematic situation among the students. It showed that inadequate parental support, economic insecurity and absence of a good learning environment may aggravate such problems. This is evidenced from Goudeau et al researcher findings. Another study (2021) conducted by found that academic engagement and learning at home are significantly influenced by home environment in cases where they do not have enough support and resources. In the same way, Dong et al. (2022) highlighted those home-based disturbances, such as stress and lack of supervision, may adversely affect academic attention and emotional state of students.

The students are known to have difficulties with their studies with an average of 2.67, standard deviation of 0.74 which is moderate. This indicates the presence of such problems as the inability to understand lessons, excessive workload and the inability to organize their time.

According to Talsma et al. (2021), students have an increased difficulty with learning due to school pressure and lack of effective study strategies. In the same way, Broadbent and Poon (2021) discovered that an inability to control themselves effectively and a lack of good study activities negatively impact the grades of students and contribute to their stress.

To add to that, family issues scored an average of 3.50 with a standard deviation of 0.88 which is quite high. This implies that most students have to face conflicts, lack of proper communication and lack of emotional support in their families. Prime and colleagues (2021) indicated that home stress and instability may damage students in terms of their mental health and performance in schools. Spinelli et al. (2021) also found that strained family relationships and stressed parents are related to an increased number of emotional and behavior issues in students.

Moreover, the rating of interpersonal problems produced a mean of 3.49 and the standard deviation of 0.70 which is considered as high. This information indicates that students often have difficulties in their communication with others and classmates. Causes may be peer pressure, social conflicts, feelings of alienation and so on. According to the study by Wang et al. (2021), peer relationships have a considerable impact on academic and emotional growth of students, and harmful interactions may lead to a lack of motivation and engagement. On the same note, Juvonen and Lessard (2022) have pointed out that social issues and peer rejection may significantly influence the sense of belonging and general adaptation of students to the school environment.

Finally, self-related issues were assessed to produce an average score of 3.47 with a standard deviation of 1.11 which too is considered to be high. This means that low self-esteem, anxiety and lack of confidence are internal issues that are usually encountered by students. The high standard deviation is relatively high, indicating that there is a difference in personal experiences on these issues. The findings are consistent with those of the OECD (2021) report, which identified the increasing rates of mental health issues like anxiety and self-doubt among the students, pointing out their direct impact on academic performance. Moreover, a study by Pascoe et al. (2022) found that there were correlations between increased levels of stress and self-related concerns and lower academic performance and well-being. Together, the fairly similar rates in all indicators emphasize the idea that students have complex issues related to home, school, family relationships, and socialization, as well as to individual well-being. These findings highlight the importance of developing the systems of integrated support that will be responsive to the academic as well as psychosocial needs of the learners.

Overall, the very high scores of all indicators imply that students have interrelated problems with such areas as home, school, family, social relationships, and personal well-being. This indicates the need to provide them with support that is responsive to their learning and personal needs.

Level of Students' Motivation

Reflected in Table 2 is the level of students' motivation across selected indicators. The overall mean score of 4.23 (SD = 0.36) indicates a very high level of motivation, suggesting that students are generally highly driven in pursuing their goals. Among the indicators, financial goal obtained the highest mean (M = 4.29, SD = 0.50), followed closely by career/professionalism (M = 4.27, SD = 0.60), both interpreted as very high. This implies that students are strongly motivated by their desire to achieve financial stability and succeed in their future professions. Meanwhile, family influence recorded a slightly lower mean (M = 4.12, SD = 0.60), although still described as high, indicating that family remains an important but comparatively less dominant source of motivation. Overall, the findings suggest that students' motivation is primarily driven by future-oriented goals, particularly financial and career aspirations, while family support continues to play a significant reinforcing role.

Moreover, financial goal attained a very high level of motivation as it emerged first. It implies that students are highly motivated with the monetary objectives, such as finding a stable employment and a higher economic status. They appear to associate school success with money and success. Benabou and Tirole (2021) support this by saying that financial rewards greatly impact students' focus and persistence.

Table 2. *Level of Students' Motivation*

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Family Influence	0.60	4.12	High
Financial Goal	0.50	4.29	Very High
Career/Professionalism	0.60	4.27	Very High
Overall	0.36	4.23	Very High

Garcia and Weiss (2022) also mention that students with different backgrounds usually perceive education as the means of making their economic status better, which makes them even more motivated. Career and professionalism also scored high with a mean of 4.23 and a standard deviation of 0.36 signifying that there is also a high level of motivation here. Learners are eager to achieve professional development and career achievement, which compels them to engage more in their learning. Howard and colleagues (2021) discovered that students who are career oriented are more involved in school and are dedicated to their future aspirations. Likewise, Datu and others (2022) indicated that high future goal students are more perseverant and motivated in their studies.

With a standard deviation of 0.60, family influence received an average rating of 4.12 which is significant. This indicates that family backing plays a big role in motivating students, though it's slightly less than financial or career reasons. The fact that parents' guide and provide emotional support to many students encourage them to excel in school. Studies by Wang and others (2021) emphasize that family participation can serve to keep students motivated and interested. Cheung and Pomerantz (2022) also observed that the support and expectation of the parents were the determinant of the motivation and success of students in school.

Overall, the research indicates that the motivation of students is high, and financial ambitions and career objectives are the primary factors, though family factors are also crucial. These results indicate that students are thinking about their future, driven by their personal objectives and influences. The schools and teachers might enhance student motivation by relating learning to career aspirations, offering counsel on what they might do and develop stronger family relationships.

Correlation between Measures

Disclosed in Table 3 is the relationship between problems encountered and students' motivation. Prior to performing the correlation analysis, the normality of both variables was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test. The results revealed that the data for problems encountered ($W = 0.987$, $p = 0.005$) and motivation ($W = 0.979$, $p < 0.001$) significantly deviated from a normal distribution. Since the assumption of normality was not met, the Spearman rank-order correlation was employed as the appropriate non-parametric test to determine the relationship between the two variables.

The overall correlation coefficient obtained is $r_s = -0.115$ with a p-value of 0.035, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the result is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. However, the negative and weak correlation suggests that as the level of problems encountered increases, students' motivation slightly decreases, although the relationship is minimal.

Table 3. Relationship between Problems Encountered and Motivation

Variables	rs	p	Decision	Interpretation
Problems Encountered * Motivation	-0.115	0.035	Reject Ho	Significant

Note: Significant at $p < .05$

The findings indicated a statistically significant inverse correlation between the overall challenges faced by maritime students and their motivation. This finding indicates that as students encounter increasing levels of challenges, their academic and professional motivation tends to decline. This pattern corresponds with the stress-motivation framework, which asserts that unresolved personal and environmental stressors diminish the psychological resources that support goal-directed behavior (Putwain et al., 2021). The maritime students might be even less motivated to do it independently due to the school stress, personal issues, and conflicts with other students (Almeida et al., 2022).

Self-determination theory sheds more light on the negative correlation between problems and motivation, in which autonomous motivation thrives in settings where psychological safety and need satisfaction are present; where problems intervene to disturb these states, internalized motivation declines (Vansteenkiste et al., 2022). This position is supported by empirical research, which shows that students who believe that their hardships are insurmountable demonstrate lower levels of intrinsic motivation and reduced academic persistence (Fong et al., 2021). In the case of maritime students, where the nature of the environment in which they are trained is both challenging and high-stakes, the build-up of unresolved issues may greatly diminish the motivational underpinning upon which both professional competence and academic achievement is based.

Regression Analysis of Problems Encountered and Motivation

Shown in Table 4 is the regression analysis of problems encountered on students' motivation. All domains of problems encountered, namely home, family, others, self-concerns, and studies, were examined to determine their influence on students' motivation. The results revealed that only self-concerns significantly influenced motivation, while the rest of the domains did not show significant effects.

Table 4. Domains of Problems Encountered Influencing Motivation

	β	p	Decision	Interpretation
Problems with Home	-0.035	0.231	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Problems with Family	0.016	0.466	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Problems Related to Others	-0.021	0.460	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Problems with Self-Concerns	-0.113	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
Problems with Studies	-0.013	0.646	Accept Ho	Not Significant

Note: Significant at $p < .05$

Prior to conducting multiple linear regression, multicollinearity among the predictor variables was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The results indicated acceptable levels for all domains: problems with home (VIF = 1.009), problems with family (VIF = 1.009), problems related to others (VIF = 1.044), problems with self-concerns (VIF = 1.180), and problems with studies (VIF = 1.148), all of which are below the threshold of 10. This confirms that multicollinearity was not a concern. In addition, the Durbin-Watson statistic ($d = 1.435$) suggests no substantial autocorrelation among residuals, thereby supporting the assumption of independence of errors.

Moreover, issues related to home did not substantially forecast motivation among maritime students. Even though problems at home, like money problems and instability, are known to be stressors, the fact that the result wasn't significant suggests that students may have found ways to deal with them that don't affect their motivation as much. Gustems-Carnicer et al. (2021) corroborate this finding, highlighting

that adaptive coping mechanisms can mitigate the adverse effects of home-related stressors. Labrague et al. (2021) also said that strong social support systems can help students deal with personal problems without hurting their motivation to do well in school.

Similarly, family issues were not proven to be a major predictor of motivation. The outcome suggests that marine students may view these issues as controllable, despite the fact that family dynamics typically have an impact on students' well-being. According to Corno and Anderman (2021), pupils can control outside pressures based on their ability to cope. Similarly, Lamberte et al. (2022) noted that people who are exposed to autonomous contexts, like maritime training, typically build resilience that lessens the negative effects of family-related problems on motivation.

Furthermore, issues pertaining to other people have no effect on motivation. This suggests that peer-related problems and interpersonal disputes might not have a direct impact on students' motivation levels. Schreiber and Schreiber (2021) allege that individual traits such as emotional control are often a mediator of the effect of social pressure on motivation. Szymanski and Beres (2022) provided evidence to support this claim by pointing out that structured contexts, such as maritime education, promote flexibility to interpersonal obstacles, hence mitigating their detrimental effects on motivation.

Predictors of motivation however, among marine students, were found to be self-concern issues in a negative and significant way. This suggests that personal tensions such as anxiety, self-doubt, and personal uncertainty can greatly reduce the motivation of students. According to Bandura et al. (2021), self-efficacy theory explains how people's motivation is greatly influenced by their views about their own skills. Moreover, Hysenbegasi et al. (2022) emphasized the necessity to address the inner concerns by underlining that the state of psychological distress and a lack of self-confidence may hinder the involvement of students in academic activities and their academic achievements.

Finally, study flaws were not a significant predictor of motivation. The outcomes suggest that academic challenges may not necessarily reduce the motivation of students, although such problems are often perceived as a barrier. Elliot and Hulleman (2021) argue that students can perceive academic problems as personal growth opportunities, instead of threats. Similarly, Virtanen et al. (2021) also indicated that with structured learning environments, sufficient support networks may be provided to ensure that students are motivated despite the academic challenges.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the overall problems encountered by maritime students have a significant negative relationship with their motivation, indicating that higher levels of problems are associated with lower levels of motivation. This implies that as students experience more challenges, their drive to pursue academic and personal goals tends to decline. Furthermore, among the different domains of problems encountered, only self-concerns significantly influenced motivation, suggesting that internal factors such as self-doubt, anxiety, and personal pressures play a crucial role in shaping students' motivation. In contrast, problems related to home, family, others, and studies did not significantly predict motivation, indicating that these external factors have less direct impact on students' motivational levels compared to self-related concerns.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. Maritime students are encouraged to actively seek and utilize available mental health and counseling services within their institutions to address self-related concerns that may hinder their academic and professional motivation.

2. School administrators should develop and implement comprehensive student support programs that specifically target psychological and self-related concerns of maritime students, including peer mentoring, regular counseling sessions, and well-being monitoring systems.
3. The MARINA is urged to incorporate mandatory mental health and motivational support frameworks into maritime education policies and curriculum standards, recognizing the influence of personal concerns on student readiness for maritime careers.
4. Researchers and future researchers are encouraged to explore the mediating and moderating variables that influence the relationship between problems encountered and motivation among maritime students, and to conduct longitudinal studies that capture changes in these constructs across different stages of maritime training.

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