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Pathways to Higher Education: The Role of Learning Culture, Achievement Motivation, and Family Environment in Shaping College Aspirations

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ABSTRACT

Higher education plays a critical role in enhancing cognitive and non-cognitive skills, supporting workforce competitiveness in the digital era. However, in Indonesia, particularly East Kalimantan, student interest in pursuing tertiary education remains low. This study investigates how learning culture, need for achievement, and family environment influence students' interest in continuing to higher education, with learning motivation examined as a potential mediating variable. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method. The population comprised 1,562 twelfth-grade students from five public high schools in Samarinda, East Kalimantan. A sample of 410 respondents was selected through proportional random sampling. Data were collected using validated Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via LISREL. Findings revealed that both learning culture and need for achievement have significant direct effects on students' interest in continuing their studies. Family environment, however, did not exhibit a direct influence. Learning motivation was significantly affected by need for achievement and family environment but did not significantly mediate the relationship between learning culture or need for achievement and students' interest in pursuing higher education. It was only a significant mediator in the case of family environment. The study concludes that fostering a strong learning culture and nurturing students' achievement motivation are key drivers of higher education aspirations. While family environment plays an indirect role, learning motivation is not a universal mediator. These findings offer practical implications for educators and policymakers to strengthen school-based and motivational interventions targeting college readiness and access.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education is a crucial driver of national development, as it enhances both cognitive and non-cognitive skills, preparing individuals to adapt to the demands of a competitive global workforce (Marginson, 2010; Krstić et al., 2020). In the digital era, tertiary education is increasingly viewed not

only as a path to personal advancement but also as a means to strengthen national competitiveness and economic resilience (Kadir et al., 2024). Despite policy efforts in Indonesia to expand access—such as through the Kartu Indonesia Pintar (KIP) for College—participation rates remain suboptimal. According to BPS data (2023), only 33.49% of high school graduates nationally continue to higher education, with East Kalimantan showing particularly low rates, where the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) at the tertiary level is just 23.02%.

This participation gap suggests that beyond economic constraints, there are underlying psychosocial and cultural factors influencing students' decisions. Previous research has often focused on academic achievement as an outcome of learning culture or family environment, but has paid less attention to how these factors shape long-term aspirations such as the intention to pursue higher education.

This study addresses that gap by examining how three key variables—learning culture, need for achievement, and family environment—influence students' interest in continuing to higher education, while also evaluating whether learning motivation serves as a mediating factor. Framed within the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), this study aims to uncover the direct and indirect pathways influencing students' college aspirations in East Kalimantan.

Many studies highlight the influence of learning culture on students' academic grades or learning outcomes. However, there is limited research linking learning culture to long-term decisions, namely interest in continuing on to higher education.Low interest in continuing education to higher education can have a significant impact on various aspects of an individual's life as well as the progress of society as a whole. When students have low interest in continuing their education, they are likely to miss out on opportunities to improve the skills and knowledge needed in an increasingly complex world of work. Low participation rates in higher education can also have an impact on the competitiveness of the workforce in facing a competitive global market.

The low rate of high school graduates who continue their education to the tertiary level reflects their limited ability to compete in the labor market, as many employers now prefer workers with higher academic and technical skills (Wang, 2012; O'Reilly et al., 2015). In countries with inclusive and quality education systems, education often enables individuals from lower economic backgrounds to achieve higher incomes and better social positions (Hannum & Buchmann, 2005) and educational stratification affects career opportunities, where those with higher degrees are more likely to obtain prestigious jobs with higher earnings (Bol & van de Werfhorst, 2011). Thus, low interest in continuing higher education not only affects individuals but also suppresses the potential for economic and social growth on a broader scale.

The government, through programs such as the Indonesia Smart Card (KIP) for College, seeks to increase accessibility to higher education, especially for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Hutabarat et al., 2024). The program not only provides financial assistance, but also builds a more inclusive and aspirational learning culture, so that students from various backgrounds are motivated to pursue higher education. This support is an encouragement for students to keep their learning spirit high even though they may come from underprivileged families (Puspita et al., 2023). With this support, students are motivated to actively participate in their learning environment, which in turn can increase their interest in continuing their education to a higher level (Montanesa & Ahmad, 2023). A poorly developed learning culture often becomes an obstacle to building high learning motivation (Yuliasari & Ikhrom, 2022). According to Hofstede (1986), Culture plays an important role in influencing the way a person thinks and acts, including in education. Furthermore, Hofstede et al., (2010) explain that students who grow up in a cultural environment that values education and hard work tend to have higher academic aspirations and are more motivated to continue their education.

The need to achieve has a positive relationship with academic achievement. Individuals with a high need for achievement tend to have strong intrinsic motivation to achieve academic success, resulting in better performance (Schneider & Green, 1977). With this support, students have a need to

achieve in the academic field, which encourages them to continue their education to a higher level. High achievement motivation is a factor that drives students to achieve as a way to increase self-esteem and gain recognition from others through higher education (Covington & Dray, 2002) because going through higher education is seen as a means to achieve personal success and professional (Elliot & Church, 1997).

A supportive learning environment at home, at school, and in the community plays a major role in building interest in continuing education to higher education (Björklund & Salvanes, 2011). A good learning environment encourages students to see higher education as a way to improve their abilities, so they are more motivated to continue their education (Z. Li & Qiu, 2018). In addition, a positive environment at school and support from teachers and peers give students the confidence that they are able to face the challenges of higher education (Astin, 1999). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) in developmental ecological theory, the family environment is an important role in determining a child's motivation and interest in learning. Families who support their children's education through attention, guidance, and financial resources will encourage children to continue their education to a higher level.

Motivation acts as a moderating variable that strengthens the relationship between learning culture, need for achievement, and learning environment with interest in continuing education to college. Students who have high learning motivation have a stronger interest in continuing their education (Oryza & Listiadi, 2021; Noveli et al., 2023). Based on (Deci & Ryan, 2000) Self-Determination theory, students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can strengthen the influence of these factors on their interest in continuing their education.

Based on the current situation, there has been no research conducted on the impact of learning culture, achievement motivation, and family environment on the desire to pursue further education in East Kalimantan. This study aims to address this gap by analysing how these elements influence students' motivation for learning and their interest in advancing to higher education, particularly in the city of Samarinda. Furthermore, this research will also offer a more detailed understanding of the obstacles that high school students in this region encounter when making decisions regarding their educational progression. Consequently, this study aims to answer the following research questions: 1. To what degree do learning culture, achievement motivation, and family environment directly affect students' interest in attending university? 2. Does learning motivation serve as a mediator in the relationship between these factors and students' interest in higher education?

2. METHOD

This study utilized a quantitative explanatory research design to investigate the relationships among learning culture, need for achievement, family environment, learning motivation, and students' interest in pursuing higher education. The primary objective was to test hypotheses and explore causal relationships through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

The research was conducted across five public senior high schools in Samarinda, East Kalimantan: SMA Negeri 3, 4, 8, 14, and 16. The target population comprised 1,562 twelfth-grade students. A sample of 410 students was selected using proportional random sampling based on Slovin's formula, ensuring representative distribution across the selected schools.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire employing a four-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 4 = Always). The instrument measured five latent constructs: learning culture, need for achievement, family environment, learning motivation, and interest in continuing education. Each construct was operationalized through multiple indicators reflecting established theoretical dimensions (e.g., environmental support, academic perseverance, and family dynamics).

Instrument validity was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, indicating sampling adequacy (KMO > 0.6) and suitability for factor analysis ($p < 0.05$). Construct reliability (CR) was also evaluated, with all constructs demonstrating strong internal consistency (CR > 0.70).

Table 1. Instrument Grid

No.	Variable	Indicator Total	Instrument Item	Total
1	Learning Culture (BB)	1. Environmental conditions	1, 2, 3, 4,5	5
		2. Exercise	6, 7, 8, 9, 10	5
		3. Readiness/availability	11, 12, 13, 14, 15	5
2	Need for Achievement (NA)	1. Able to take on new tasks that are more difficult than previous tasks	1, 2, 3	3
		2. Enjoy tasks for which you have personal responsibility	4, 5, 6, 7, 8	5
		3. Likes tasks that have feedback	9, 10, 11	3
		4. Doing your best at a difficult task	12, 13, 14	3
		5. Strive to do better than others	15, 16, 17, 18	4
		6. Achievement drive	19, 20	2
3	Family Environment (LK)	1. Parents' knowledge of entrepreneurship	1, 2, 3	3
		2. Parents' mindset on entrepreneurship	4, 5, 6	3
		3. Support from family to become an entrepreneur	7, 8, 9, 10	4
		4. How parents educate their children	11, 12, 13, 14	4
		5. Relationship between family members	15, 16, 17	3
		6. Family economic conditions	18, 19, 20	3
4	Learning Motivation (MB)	1. Perseverance in learning	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	15
		2. Tenacious in the face of adversity	16, 17, 18, 19, 20	5
		3. Interest and sharpness of attention in learning	21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26	6
5	Interest in Continuing Studies (MMS)	1. Feelings of pleasure	1, 2, 3, 4	4
		2. Student interest	5, 6, 7, 8	4
		3. Greater attention	9, 10, 11, 12	4
		4. Student engagement	13, 14, 15, 16	4

Table 2. Validity Test of Research Instruments

KMO and Bartlett's Test		Learning Culture (BB)	Need for Achievement (NA)	Family Environment (LK)	Learning Motivation (MB)	Interest in Continuing Studies (MMS)
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.739	0.617	0.679	0.643	0.635
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		42.525	61.366	86.586	46.519	46.519
Approx. Chi-Square	Df	21	15	15	15	15
	Sig	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Test the validity of the research instrument with construct validity. The basis for making decisions for this validity test is by paying attention to the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value (Hair et al, 2019). The questionnaire items are declared valid if the Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) value> 0.50. The instrument has been valid and reliable, in addition to being tested on respondents.

Table 3. Reliability Test of Research Instruments

Latent Variabel	∑SLF	Construct Reliability (CR)	Critical Loading Factor	Decision
Learning Culture (BB)	3.66	0.86	0.7	Reliable
Need for Achievement (NA)	3.87	0.88	0.7	Reliable
Family Environment (LK)	4.58	0.89	0.7	Reliable
Learning Motivation (MB)	4.57	0.89	0.7	Reliable
Interest in Continuing Studies (MMS)	4.48	0.88	0.7	Reliable

The data were analyzed using the quantitative descriptive method using SEM. The stages of SEM analysis itself must go through at least five stages (Latan & Ramli, 2013), namely: 1) model specification; 2) model identification; 3) model estimation; 4) model evaluation; 5) model adjustment or redefinition. The data were examined using quantitative descriptive methods, employing SEM. The SEM analysis process involves a minimum of five key stages (Latan & Ramli, 2013), which are: 1) specifying the model; 2) identifying the model; 3) estimating the model; 4) evaluating the model; 5) adjusting or redefining the model.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

To examine the hypothesized relationships between learning culture (BB), need for achievement (NA), family environment (LK), learning motivation (MB), and interest in continuing to higher education (MMS), a structural model was developed and tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with LISREL. The analysis aimed to evaluate both the direct and indirect effects among the variables, including the potential mediating role of learning motivation. Figure 1 presents the standardized path coefficients derived from the structural model, illustrating the strength and direction of each relationship within the hypothesized framework.

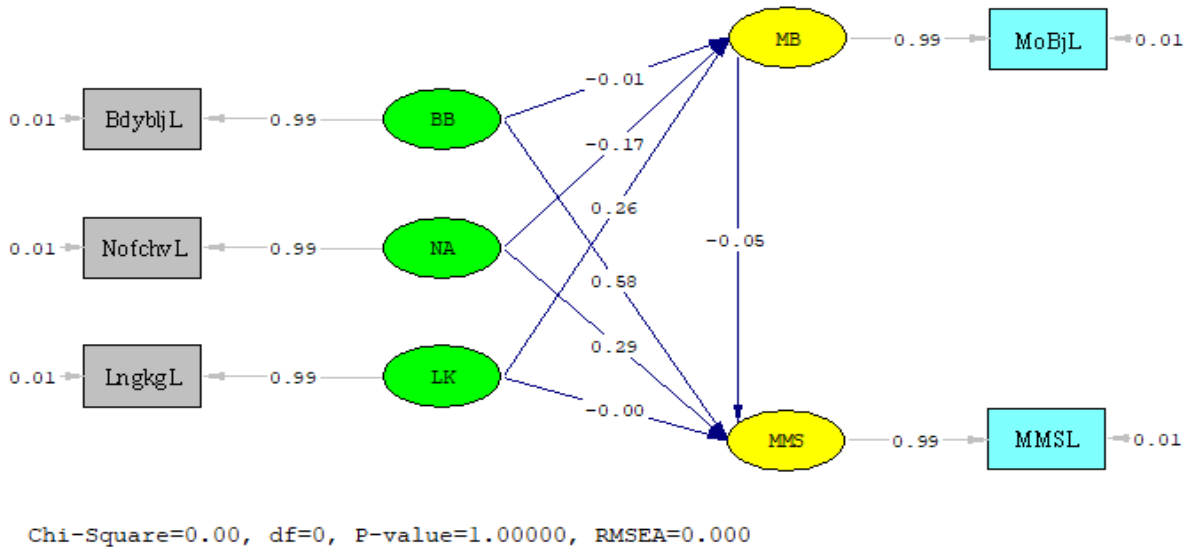

Figure 1. Research Structural Model Test Results (Standard Coefficient)

Information: BB = Learning Culture; NA = Need for Achievement; LK = Family Environment, MB = Interest in Learning, MMS = Interest in Continuing Studies

Based on the figure above, it can be explained that the direct effect shows that the stronger the learning culture, the higher the interest in continuing studies. Achievement motivation is a key factor in encouraging students to choose higher education. A significant effect indicates that a positive learning environment strengthens students' desire to achieve. The indirect effect indicates that there is an indirect influence of learning culture not only directly impacting interest in continuing studies but also increasing achievement motivation, which in turn encourages higher learning interest. The mediation role is proven to be significant as a mediator of the relationship between learning culture and interest in continuing studies. Mediation is partial, because learning culture still has a direct effect even through a mediator. This shows that learning culture creates a climate that encourages students to achieve, and this achievement motivation strengthens the intention to continue to higher education.

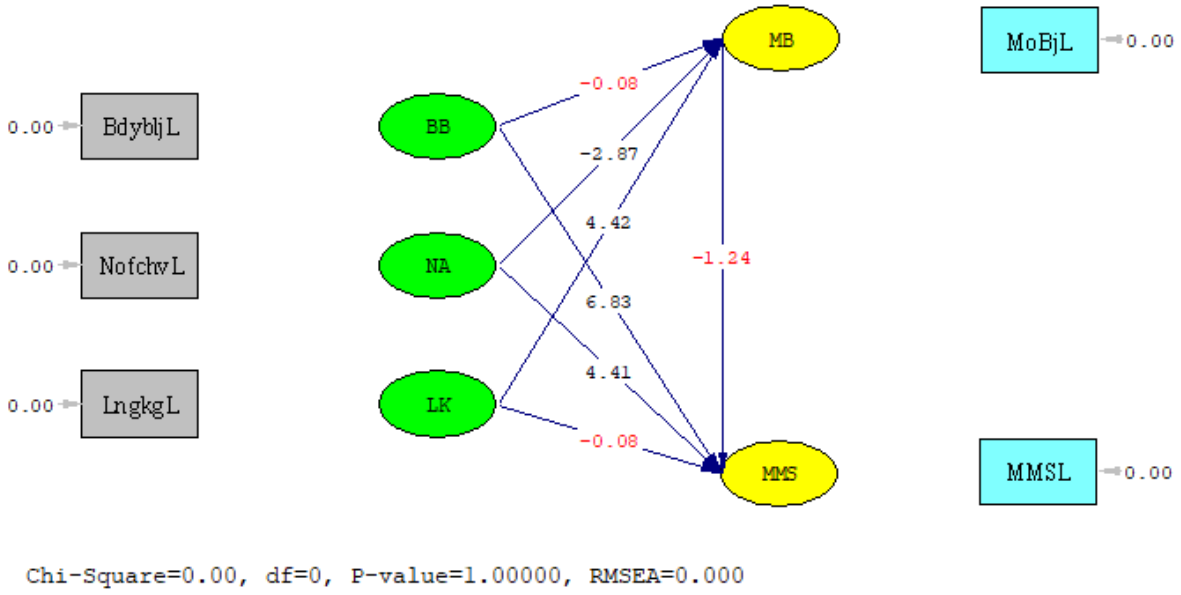

Figure 2. Research Structural Model Test Results (t value)

To evaluate the proposed hypotheses, a structural model analysis was conducted to examine both direct and indirect relationships among the study variables. The table below summarizes the results of hypothesis testing, including the standardized path coefficients, t-values, and conclusions based on the significance level (α = 0.05). A hypothesis is accepted if the absolute t-value is ≥ 1.96, indicating a statistically significant relationship. This table provides a comprehensive overview of the effect size and significance of each hypothesized path within the model.

Table 4. Results of Structural Model Test / Research Hypothesis Test

Description	Relationship Between Variables	Value t count	Standardized Coefficient			Hypothesis Test Conclusion
			Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	
Hypothesis 1	There is a positive direct relationship between latent variables BB and MMS	6.83	0.58	-	0.58	H_1 is accepted because the *absolute t* value ≥ 1.96 has a favourable relationship among the underlying

						variables.
Hypothesis 2	There is a positive direct relationship between latent variables NA and MMS	4.41	0.29	-	0.29	H_2 is accepted because the *absolute t* value ≥ 1.96 with a positive correlation between latent variables.
Hypothesis 3	There is a positive direct relationship between latent variables LK and MMS	-0.08	-0.00	-	-0.00	H_3 is rejected because the *absolute t* value ≤ 1.96 with a positive correlation between latent variables.
Hypothesis 4	There is a positive direct relationship between latent variables BB and MB	-0.08	-0.01	-	-0.01	H_4 is rejected because the *absolute t* value ≤ 1.96 with a positive correlation between latent variables.
Hypothesis 5	There is a positive direct relationship between latent variables NA and MB	-2.87	-0.17	-	-0.17	H_5 is accepted because the *absolute t* value ≥ 1.96 with a favourable relationship among underlying variables.
Hypothesis 6	There is a positive direct relationship between latent variables LK and MB	4.42	0.26	-	0.26	H_6 is accepted because the *absolute t* value ≥ 1.96 with a favourable relationship among underlying variables.
Hypothesis 7	There is a positive direct relationship between latent variables MB and MMS	-1.24	-0.05	-	-0.05	H_7 is rejected because the *absolute t* value ≤ 1.96 with a positive correlation between latent variables.
Hypothesis 8	There is an indirect	-	0.58	0.0005	0.5805	H_8 is rejected

	relationship between BB and MMS variables through the intervening variable MB					because the *absolute value of the* indirect effect (0.0005) < direct effect (0.58)
Hypothesis 9	There is an indirect relationship between NA and MMS variables through the intervening variable MB	-	0.29	0.0085	0.2985	H_9 is rejected because the *absolute value of* indirect effect (0.0085) < direct effect (0.29)
Hypothesis 10	There is an indirect relationship between LK and MMS variables through the intervening variable MB	-	0.00	0.013	0.013	H_{10} is accepted because the *absolute value of* the indirect effect (0.013) > direct effect (0.00)

*) Note: out of 10 hypotheses, 5 hypotheses were accepted and 5 hypotheses were rejected.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 The direct effect of learning culture on interest in continuing studies in college

H_1 is accepted, as the absolute t-value (6.83) ≥ 1.96, indicating a statistically significant and positive correlation between the latent variables. This finding supports the conclusion that a strong learning culture has a positive and significant effect on students' interest in pursuing higher education.

These results align with previous studies. For example, Yuliasari and Ikhrom (2022) found that a weak learning culture often hinders the development of strong learning motivation. In contrast, students who engage in a positive learning culture are more likely to value innovation and collaboration, leading them to develop a stronger belief in their academic capabilities and better readiness to face academic challenges (Apple et al., 2018). Bala and Bala (2020) emphasized that cultivating a learning culture in secondary schools helps foster student independence, ultimately preparing them for academic success in higher education.

Moreover, students immersed in a strong and supportive learning environment tend to exhibit greater motivation to continue their studies at the university level. Aparicio et al. (2016) also identified learning culture factors—such as collectivism vs. individualism, uncertainty and vulnerability, and time orientation—as having a significant influence on students' learning experiences, especially at the university level.

Further supporting this, Purdum and Evans (2024) highlighted the importance of creating a robust and inclusive educational environment, supported by teacher training, to encourage students to pursue further academic advancement. Collectively, these findings suggest that a strengthened learning culture correlates with increased motivation to pursue higher education.

3.2.2 The direct effect of need for achievement on interest in continuing their studies in college

H_2 is accepted, as the absolute t-value (4.41) ≥ 1.96, indicating a statistically significant and positive correlation between the latent variables. This suggests that the need for achievement has a positive and significant effect on students' interest in pursuing higher education.

The need for achievement—widely recognized in psychological theories such as McClelland's Theory of Motivation—is a core driver of learning motivation and interest in academic advancement. Students with a strong need for achievement are typically motivated by clear goals and measurable outcomes. Higher education offers a structured environment where they can gain advanced knowledge, skills, and experiences, providing a sense of accomplishment and personal fulfillment.

When students perceive that success in higher education can enhance their social status, competencies, and career prospects, they are more inclined to pursue it.

This finding aligns with research by Fajčíková and Urbancová (2019), which emphasizes the need for achievement as a critical factor in shaping students' interest in continuing to college. Students often view higher education as a gateway to fulfilling their aspirations, gaining recognition, and achieving personal goals.

Furthermore, as McClelland et al. (1953) noted, individuals with a high need for achievement strive to meet high standards across various life domains, including education. This is supported by McGregor and Elliot (2002), who found that such individuals actively pursue academic excellence, and by Lowell (1952), who reported that they also demonstrate persistence throughout the learning process.

In summary, the higher a student's need for achievement, the stronger their interest in continuing their education to the college level.

3.2.3 The direct effect of family environment on interest in continuing studies in college

H_3 is rejected because the absolute t value (0.08) ≤ 1.96, so it can be concluded that the family environment does not have a positive and significant effect on the interest in continuing their studies in college. The indirect impact of the family environment on interest in higher education can be significant because of several psychological, social, and economic factors that influence individuals in making decisions related to education. The reason is the existence of family norms and values: The family is often the main source for individuals to form their life values, including views on education.

In this case, self-motivation and personal aspirations are more dominant in determining interest in continuing their studies than the influence of the family environment. Sometimes it is found that although family support can provide motivation, many students choose to continue their studies based on their personal aspirations and goals (Bozzato, 2020). A positive social environment can encourage students to take more courageous steps to continue their education, even if family support is not as strong as expected. This indicates that the influence of the family environment may be reduced by other more pressing factors. Internal factors, such as personal motivation and aspirations, and other external factors, such as the social and economic environment, can be more influential.

3.2.4 The direct effect of learning culture on learning motivation

H_4 is rejected, as the absolute t-value (0.08) ≤ 1.96, indicating that learning culture does not have a significant effect on learning motivation. While learning culture can shape attitudes toward education and influence classroom dynamics, this study finds that it does not directly impact students' intrinsic motivation to learn.

One explanation lies in the distinction between internal and external sources of motivation. Internal motivation—driven by factors such as curiosity, personal interest, or the desire for mastery—tends to originate from within the individual. External motivation, on the other hand, is often influenced by outside pressures, such as academic expectations from parents or institutional requirements. When internal motivation is strong, the influence of a broader learning culture may diminish. Conversely, when students rely more on external motivators, the learning culture might have a more noticeable effect.

Despite the important role learning culture plays in shaping educational environments, its direct impact on student learning motivation appears limited. Individual factors, such as personal interests and social support systems, often exert a greater influence. As Li et al. (2020) argue, students with strong social and emotional support tend to maintain higher motivation levels, regardless of the surrounding academic culture. Similarly, Ishida and Sekiyama (2024) emphasize that with greater access to information and personalized learning tools, students are increasingly guided by their own interests and goals rather than by institutional or cultural norms. Their findings suggest that personal agency has become a more dominant factor in shaping learning motivation than traditional cultural frameworks.

In conclusion, while learning culture contributes to the broader academic atmosphere, this research confirms that it does not significantly influence students' motivation to learn, which is now more strongly driven by individual preferences, needs, and access to resources.

3.2.5 The direct effect of need for achievement on learning motivation

H_5 is accepted as the absolute t value (2.87) is greater than or equal to 1.96, indicating a positive correlation between the latent variables. Thus, it can be concluded that the need for achievement positively and significantly influences learning motivation. The need for achievement refers to an intrinsic drive to excel and meet high standards, leading individuals with a strong need for achievement to evaluate themselves against specific objectives (McClelland et al., 1953). This implies that such individuals are motivated by an internal desire to attain success. Research by Komarraju & Karau (2005) highlights that personality traits significantly impact academic motivation, suggesting that educators can create learning environments and motivational strategies that cater to students' unique differences, potentially enhancing educational outcomes across diverse student personalities.

The results of the study prove that there is a positive and significant influence between need for achievement and learning motivation which is in line with the research of Elliot & McGregor (2001) that goal orientation driven by need for achievement has a direct impact on learning motivation. Students who have a need for achievement will have high learning motivation to achieve proud academic achievements. This can increase their interest in continuing their studies in college.

3.2.6 The direct effect of family environment on learning motivation

H_6 is accepted because the absolute t-value (4.42) $\geqslant$ 1.96. With a positive correlation between latent variables, it can be inferred that the familial setting exerts a beneficial and notable influence on motivational factors related to learning. Research conducted by Bektiarso et al. (2024) stated that the support provided by parents (both in the form of emotional, financial, and practical) contributes greatly to student learning motivation, which can create a positive environment that supports student learning motivation to try harder in their studies (Raufelder et al., 2016). Likewise, research conducted by Damanik (2019; Damanik & Irawan (2021) that the family environment has a significant effect on learning motivation. Furthermore, Schweder et al. (2022) added that an effective family environment, which includes physical and social aspects, is very important in increasing student learning motivation. This means that the better the family environment, the higher the learning motivation and vice versa.

3.2.7 The direct effect of learning motivation on interest in continuing studies in college

H_7 is rejected because the absolute t value (1.24) $\leq$ 1.96, so it can be concluded that learning motivation has no impact on the desire to pursue further education in college. Some recent studies have shown that other factors such as economic conditions, social environment, and negative experiences in education can affect students' enthusiasm for pursuing further education, regardless of the level of learning motivation they have (Li. H et al., 2020). Research confirms that although learning motivation is an important factor, in some cases, students with high motivation still choose not to continue their studies due to external reasons.

3.2.8 The indirect effect of learning culture variables on interest in continuing their studies to higher education through the intervening variable of learning motivation

H_8 is rejected because the absolute value of the indirect effect (0.0005) < direct effect (0.58), so it can be concluded that learning culture has no effect on interest in continuing studies to college through the intervening variable of learning motivation.

Learning culture does not consistently exert a direct influence on the desire to pursue further education, especially when viewed from the aspect of student learning motivation. Cultural differences in various regions can affect the way students view education and future career prospects. Local cultures that may value practical skills over formal education may reduce students' interest in

continuing their studies. A learning culture is designed to foster an environment that encourages academic pursuits. However, research shows that its effectiveness can vary significantly based on individual motivation levels (Diba and Retnowati, 2019). In some cases, local cultures may prioritize practical skills over formal education, leading to reduced interest in higher studies (Khadijah et al., 2017).

3.2.9 The effect of the indirect relationship between the need for achievement variable on the interest in continuing studies in college through the intervening variable of learning motivation

H_9 is rejected because the absolute value of indirect effect (0.0085) < direct effect (0.29), so it can be concluded that learning culture has no effect on interest in continuing studies to college through the intervening variable of learning motivation. The indirect effect is not statistically significant, but the direct effect remains influential. Students who have a need for achievement will have high learning motivation to achieve proud academic achievements, which in turn can increase their interest in continuing their studies in college.

Recent research shows that the effect of need for achievement on interest is not always significant, especially when mediated by individual learning motivation. In truth, the influence of the need for achievement on the desire to pursue further studies at university is not consistently apparent. Numerous students exhibit a strong need for achievement, yet opt not to advance their education to a higher tier. Negative perceptions about college, such as high costs and uncertainty about employment after graduation, can be a strong inhibiting factor (Donald et al., 2018).

3.2.10 The effect of the indirect relationship between family environment variables on interest in continuing their studies in college through the intervening variable of learning motivation

H_{10} is accepted because the absolute value of the indirect effect (0.013) > direct effect (0.00), it can be inferred that the familial setting exerts a beneficial and considerable influence on the desire to pursue higher education, mediated by the variable of academic motivation.

Zhao & Zhao (2022) explain that adolescents from a family environment that provides emotional support and high expectations from parents tend to have more positive interactions with peers and higher educational expectations. According to Li & Qiu (2018), family background not only affects academic outcomes directly, but also through improving the quality of educational opportunities and parental involvement. Then Hayek et al. (2022) explain that children raised in an authoritative environment tend to have higher motivation to learn and better academic achievement compared to children raised in permissive or authoritarian parenting patterns. Recent studies have shown that a stable and supportive family (especially parental) environment can increase children's confidence in making educational decisions (Meng et al., 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that learning culture and the need for achievement both have a positive and significant effect on students' interest in pursuing higher education. In contrast, the family environment and learning motivation do not directly influence students' inclination to continue their studies at the college level. Notably, learning culture does not significantly affect learning motivation, while both the need for achievement and family environment do exert an influence. Furthermore, learning culture and the need for achievement do not indirectly affect interest in further education through learning motivation, whereas the family environment does play a mediating role in this pathway.

Despite these insights, the study has limitations, including a relatively narrow sample and reliance on self-reported survey data, which may not fully capture the complexity of the factors affecting students' educational decisions. Future research should consider employing more diverse and comprehensive data collection methods, such as longitudinal studies, in-depth interviews with

students, parents, and educators, and the inclusion of broader demographic contexts to deepen understanding of the determinants of higher education aspirations.

The findings have practical implications for enhancing participation in higher education, which is linked to improved social welfare and national competitiveness. They provide guidance for school administrators to design targeted career guidance programs and interventions that foster achievement motivation among students. Theoretically, this study contributes by highlighting that learning culture and achievement motivation are key predictors of interest in further study and offers an integrative model combining psychological and cultural factors in understanding motivation for higher education.

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