

Examining Non-Academic Demotivational Factors Influencing Student's Upskilling Intention

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Abstract: *The skill development initiatives were expanding in higher education but the upskilling intention among the students are un-even nowadays particularly in the underprivileged area. The non-academic demotivational factors how affecting the university students upskilling intention were investigated in this study. The study employed a proportionate stratified random sampling with the data from yielded from the two-state university pursuing students which were comprises of under graduation and postgraduation. Contextually sixty non-academic variables were measured using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through opted analytical tools. As of the results eight major demotivational dimensions were identified those were economic insecurity, psychological fatigue, etc., were emerging as a most dominating determinants which affects the upskilling intention of the students. The regression model demonstrated the strong power predictive with the metrics of ($R^2 = 0.549$, $p < 0.001$) indicating this factors proportion of variation in upskilling intention of students. Out of these factors Institutional trust deficits comparatively showed a weaker when other considered constraints. A structural livelihood pressures, accessibility limitation in perceived skill to employment risks were plays a major impactful role that availability of programme alone. The multidimensional empirical framework was contributed by this study helps to understand the gaps in participation of skill development and offers evidence-based direction for the focused policy intervention at improving the student's sustained engagement on the skill enrichment.*

Keywords: Upskilling Intention, Non-Academic Demotivational Factors, Skill Engagement in Higher Education, Skill Development Participation, University Student in Tamil Nadu.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern age of higher education systems, the universities were playing not only a role of academic. They are being as a facilitator to develop the employment-oriented skills and life learning capacities (Chakrabarty & Singh, 2023; Kaur, 2024). Most particularly in India the skilling and upskilling have become a hear to national workforce strategies which focused to channelizing the demographical leads for the growing population of youth (Afroz, 2018). The NEP, Skill India Missions and other relevant policy initiatives were encouraging the students to participate in the national and international programs for the purpose of networking and which helps to interact and benefited with the industries in the name of internship, projects, etc., (Kaur, 2024) within the higher education. Even though the large number of initiatives were playing in the ground the volunteer participation of the students remains uneven (Das, 2023; Mohan et al., 2020). The evidences from the different sources stating that the student's intention of skill development were deviated or defused by the non-academical conditions associated with their experience (Kaur, 2024; Radhakrishnan et al., 2025). The students were entering with the strong aspiration of self-enrichment in skill for the career development and further growth; however, their participation defused by the external forces which are unrelated to the curriculum. The insecurities in finance, cost of opportunities, psychological fatigues, access constrains on digital sources and most importantly family duties, expectations of socio-cultural and employment outcomes uncertainty were forcibly weakening the students' intentions of skill enrichment (Kaur, 2024; Radhakrishnan et al., 2025; Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023). Most particularly the rural and semi-rural students pronounced this demotivational non-academical forces which shows the structural inequalities and constraints in resources were intensify the barriers of participation (Radhakrishnan et al., 2025; Yadav, 2025).

The theories like the motivational theory, expectancy value theory, self-determination theory were more opter theories for this study. Which directs this study (Ravhuhali et al., 2022; Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023) *To understand the behavioural patterns of the students, *To Forsee the expectancy of the students' individuals on their effort's success and defeats outcomes and *the self-determination theory emphasizes the sustained motivation which are compromised by the persistent economic pressure, scare in support, stress, etc., (Urhahne & Wijnia,

2023) These perspectives stated that the student’s upskilling intention is not only shaped by the curriculum offerings but also by the composition of the non-academical interactions(Urhahne&Wijnia, 2023).

In the Tamil Nadu context, rapid expansion of higher education participation is marked even though there is a limited systematic empirical evidential examination on the non-academical demotivational factors which affecting the student’s intention (Radhakrishnan et al., 2025; Rangaswamy, 2024)on skill development. The present study bridging the gap in the way of structured investigation on the intensity and predictive influence on non-academic demotivational factors affecting the intention of skill development among the university students in Tamil Nadu.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The related studies were largely focused on the employability outcomes, accessibility on trainings and effectiveness of the programs over the student’s skill development(Chakrabarty & Singh, 2023; Das, 2023; Kaur, 2024; Mohan et al., 2020). Although recent studies were limitedly points that non-academic factors were playing a decisive role on student’s engagement shaping with enrichment of skill activities(Kaur, 2024; Radhakrishnan et al., 2025; Urhahne&Wijnia, 2023). And the reviews of different related studies help to identify and categorize the structured variables into the following factors. Those were Economic and financial insecurity, Psychological and emotional factors, Digital and environmental constraints , Social and cultural factors(Radhakrishnan et al., 2025; Urhahne&Wijnia, 2023; Yadav, 2025). These identified factors were helps to identify the new uncovered variables and helps to explore the factors which are affecting the student’s skill development intention in the two state universities in Tamil Nadu(Radhakrishnan et al., 2025; Rangaswamy, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

In this study quantitative cross-sectional descriptive-explanatory research design were employed to evaluate the impact of non-academical demotivating factors on upskill intention of university students in rural and semi-rural Tamil Nadu. This research framework incorporated structured non-academic demotivational variables, classified into five dimensions enabling the empirical testing of proposed conceptual model. Total of 1,256 commerce/ managements students are Takened as a population from the two state universities in Tamil Nadu that is Manonmaniam Sundaranar University and Alagappa University.

Multistage proportionate stratified sampling technique were applied to ensure the balanced representation across the two universities, department and the year of study. Approximately 0.32 using a sampling fraction 400 samples were fixed as a final sample which ensuring the representativeness and eliminating the bias on sampling(Bagavandas, 2021; Muniyasamy&Jeyshankar, 2023). Using this as a primary data which was collected through the structured questionnaire based on the study plan. All the participants were informed about the study & motive of this study. Based on their acceptance only further were moved. The instrument was pilot tested (n=40) to ensure the clarity and the quality.

To ensure the instruments clarity Cronbach’s alpha test were initiated to check the reliability and to test the construct validity exploratory factor analysis were employed and further results for the study were done using the SPSS version 26. The methodological approach ensures the statistical quality and that helps to get a perfect result for this study.

RESULTS

Table 1. Preliminary Diagnostics

Construct	Z-Score	Outliers	Skewness	Kurtosis
Economic Demotivators	-2.41 to +2.68	No	0.41	-0.72
Digital Barriers	-2.59 to +2.71	No	0.56	-0.64
Social Constraints	-2.33 to +2.84	No	0.38	-0.81
Psychological Factors	-2.75 to +2.92	No	0.62	-0.59
Environmental Factors	-2.61 to +2.89	No	0.47	-0.68
Upskilling Intention			-0.29	-0.54
Overall Dataset	Within ±3.00	None	Within ±2	Within ±2

Source: Primary Data

Table 2. Measurement Model Adequacy and Factor Structure

Indicator	Result	Threshold	Status
Cronbach’s Alpha	0.934	≥ 0.70	Excellent
KMO Measure	0.903	≥ 0.70	Excellent
Bartlett’s Test	$\chi^2 = 6842.317, p = 0.000$	$p < 0.05$	Significant
Extracted Factors	8	Eigenvalue > 1	Achieved
Total Variance Explained	68.81%	≥ 60%	Strong
Factor Loadings	≥ 0.50	≥ 0.50	Adequate

Source: Primary Data

Table 3. Descriptive & Rank Order of Demotivational Factors

Rank	Factor	Mean	SD
1	Economic & Financial Insecurity	4.12	0.7
2	Motivation Erosion & Opportunity Cost	4.05	0.7
3	Digital Access Barriers	3.98	0.8
4	Psychological Fatigue	3.91	0.7
5	Employability Uncertainty	3.88	0.7
6	Social & Cultural Constraints	3.86	0.7
7	Environmental Limitations	3.79	0.7
8	Institutional Trust Deficit	3.67	0.8
Up skilling Intention = 3.42		0.81	

Source: Primary Data

Table 4. Combined Correlation–Regression Model and Hypothesis Testing Summary

	Predictor	r with UI	β	t-value	Sig.	S / NS	Model	Value
H1	Economic Insecurity	-0.542	-0.238	-5.63	0	S	R	0.741
H2	Digital Barriers	-0.498	-0.171	-4.21	0	S	R²	0.549
H3	Social Constraints	-0.463	-0.129	-3.27	0	S	Adjusted R²	0.538
H4	Psychological Fatigue	-0.521	-0.206	-4.71	0	S	F-value	59.56
H5	Environmental Factors	-0.441	-0.092	-2.47	0.01	S	Model Significance	0
H6	Institutional Trust	-0.386	-0.067	-1.79	0.07	NS	Std. Error	0.612
H7	Employability Uncertainty	-0.507	-0.181	-4.33	0	S		
H8	Motivation Erosion	-0.558	-0.254	-5.72	0	S		

Source: Primary Data

/ **S** – Supported / **NS** – Not Supported /

DISCUSSION

Initial data validity check confirmed the suitability of this dataset for further analysis. Table 1 shows all the constructs remained below 1% of all the missing values which indicates the completeness of high responses. All the Z scores were falls down within the ± 3.00 which assures the outliers non-presence. The distributional metrics also acceptable through the checks of Skewness and Kurtosis values within ± 2.00 . Normality test results show the accepted pattern of distribution for large sampled analysis. At end overall data quality check states this dataset is well adequate for the statistical procedures.

Cronbach's alpha metrics (reliability of 0.934) shows the excellent internal consistency and Corrected item correlation attains the recommended threshold limits. Which indicates this scale stability is suitable for the factorial analysis.

Table 2 states the adequacy of sampling as a strong with the KMO value of 0.903 and a significant Bartlett's test ($X^2 = 6842.317$, $p < 0.001$) is validating the appropriateness of factorial analysis. By the EFA eight explained factors were extracted with the 68.81% of total variance which showed in the table 2, with above 0.50 all the items were loaded and confirms the validity of structured constructs and those were conceptually loaded economic insecurity, digital divide, social constraints, psychological fatigue, environmental deficits, institutional trust deficit, employability uncertainty, and motivation erosion (Table 2).

Table 2 metrics shows / indicates the mean score of all the constructs and ranked by the score. Economic and Financial insecurity ranked as one with the mean score of 4.12 which states the students were having the insecurities on economic and financially followed by the motivation erosion and opportunity cost ranked as two with the mean score of 4.05 were the most prominent demotivators affecting students. Likewise, all other were followed by digital barriers, psychological fatigue and employability uncertainty. These were suggesting that livelihood pressures and competing survival importance are the main obstacles for the student to engage on the upskilling.

The integrated results of correlation and regression analysis shown in the table 4 additionally with the hypothesis results summary. This analysis tables explicitly states the bolder empirical evidence that shows that non-academic demotivators are affects the student's skill enhancement intention significantly. The model exhibits the substantial explanatory power. And the regression analysis results state an overall strong relationship among the predictors and the student's upskilling intention with the metrics of $R = 0.741$. The independent variables explaining jointly with the 54.9% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.549$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.538$). The F-value of the model 59.56 with the p value of < 0.001 confirms the predictors were collectively gives the significant explanation for the variation in the upskilling intention of the students which indicating the robust predictive framework.

The correlational results exhibit all the demotivation factors in table 4, which shows the negative relationship with the upskilling intention. This indicates the

barriers which is highly perceived by the students reduces the active interest on skill development. Among these factors following metrical values were clearly makes you to understand the stand.

Motivation erosion and opportunity cost reveals the strongest association with the $r = -0.558$, followed by that economic insecurity $r = -0.542$ and psychological fatigue $r = -0.521$. This helps to understand that livelihood compulsive pressures, competing behaviours and mental exhaustion are most impactful deterrents.

And in the moderate level of negative correlation were observed on the following constructs. Those were employability uncertainty with the metrics of $r = -0.507$, Digital barriers were $r = -0.498$ and Social constraints attains the value of $r = -0.463$. Followed by the above environmental limitations $r = 0.441$ and institutional trust deficits $r = -0.386$ were very weaker but still shows the negative associations.

Regression coefficients clarify the relative predictive strength of each factor which is controlling after for the impact of other variables. Motivation erosion ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.254$, $t = 5.72$, $p < 0.001$) is one of the strongest predictors which indicating the following opportunity cost consideration and competing duties were most significantly declining the intention of student skill development engagement.

Economic insecurity ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.238$, $t = 5.63$, $p < 0.001$) and psychological fatigue ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.206$, $t = 4.71$, $p < 0.001$) were stating the strongest negative predictive effect which is stimulating the role of financial risk and mental strain in the behavioural intention shaping.

Employability uncertainty ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.181$, $p < 0.001$), digital barriers ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.171$, $p < 0.001$), social constraints ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.129$, $p = 0.001$), and environmental limitations ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.092$, $p = 0.014$) were significantly affects the intention of skill enhancement of the students. And these were confirming that structural accessibility issues, social expectations, and infrastructure gaps are playing as the mediator to reduce the participation in skill development initiatives.

Whereas, Institutional trust deficit ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.067$, $p = 0.074$) is not statistically significant which indicating the students may recognise limitation in institutional systems. Such perception does not solely predict the student's intention on upskilling when other demotivational barriers are simultaneously considered.

Therefore, the testing results states that the hypothesis 6 is not supported, that the institutional trust is not affects the students' upskilling intention. And all other hypothesis results were statistically significant. Which confirming that the economic insecurity, digital barriers, social constraints, psychological fatigue, environmental factors, employability uncertainty and motivation erosions were severely affecting the student's upskilling intention.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The empirical findings of this study based policy interventions were proposed here to directly eliminates the most impactful non academic demotivational factors which

are affecting the student's upskilling intention of university students.

The "Skill Continuity Security Scheme" is firstly suggestive to address the dominantly effects of economical insecurity and opportunity-cost pressures. This scheme helps the students to get the micro-stipends, skill learning income insurance and transport learning subsidies for students actively participating in certified skill programmes(Annadurai & Sahoo, 2025). The existing scholarship systems that reward academic performance, this policy would be participation-linked and time-bound, ensuring that students from economically vulnerable backgrounds can sustain engagement in skill development without sacrificing immediate livelihood needs(Kaur, 2024). Such an economic-risk buffering mechanism directly targets the strongest predictors economic insecurity and motivation erosion and would significantly reduce dropout tendencies in voluntary upskilling initiatives(Kaur, 2024).

Second, a "Rural-University Hybrid Skill Infrastructure Grid" (RU-HSIG) should be established to overcome digital, environmental, and accessibility barriers identified as significant demotivators(Kumar, 2024). This policy would integrate university facilities, local community centres, and government digital infrastructure into a shared evening and weekend skill-learning network equipped with high-speed connectivity, device libraries, and supervised practice spaces(Kumar, 2024). Unlike conventional training centres that operate independently, this decentralized hybrid infrastructure would maximize utilization of existing public assets while ensuring equitable access for students residing in rural and semi-rural regions. By directly addressing digital divide and infrastructural constraints, this policy would structurally improve participation feasibility(Kaur, 2024).

Third, the development of a "Skill-to-Employment Assurance and Career Signalling System" (SEACSS) is proposed to reduce psychological fatigue, employability uncertainty, and perceived returns-to-skill risks(Radhakrishnan et al., 2025). This system would require industry partners participating in university skill programs to provide transparent employability signalling mechanisms, such as conditional internship pipelines, competency-linked hiring pools, and verified skill-to-job conversion dashboards accessible to students(Gul et al., 2019). By institutionalizing visible labour-market linkages rather than generic placement promises, the policy would strengthen perceived behavioural control and expected returns to upskilling, thereby addressing key psychological and employability-related demotivators highlighted in the study(Kaur, 2024).

Together, these three policies economic continuity protection, hybrid skill-access infrastructure, and employment-linked signalling systems form a comprehensive intervention framework that directly targets the statistically significant demotivational factors identified in the analysis, offering a practical yet innovative pathway for improving sustained student engagement in skill development initiatives(Kaur, 2024; Kumar, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study examined how multidimensional non-academic demotivational factors shapes university students' upskilling intention in rural and semi-rural regions of Tamil

Nadu. The findings provide strong empirical evidence that economic insecurity, opportunity-cost pressures, psychological fatigue, employability uncertainty, digital barriers, social constraints, and environmental limitations significantly reduce students' engagement in skill development, while institutional trust exhibited no independent predictive effect when other factors were controlled. The regression model demonstrated substantial explanatory strength, accounting for over half of the variation in upskilling intention, indicating that non-academic conditions constitute a decisive behavioural determinant beyond formal access to skill programmes.

Significantly, the results highlights that students' participation in skill development is less constrained by availability of training opportunities and more by livelihood risk, competing survival priorities, perceived returns to skill investment, and structural access barriers. By integrating a multidimensional measurement framework and identifying the relative strength of each demotivational factor, the study contributes empirical clarity to the policy discourse on skill participation gaps in emerging education systems.

The findings underscore the need for coordinated economic support, digital access expansion, motivational reinforcement, and employment-linked signalling mechanisms to ensure sustained engagement in skill development initiatives. Future research may extend this framework longitudinally to examine behavioural transitions and policy intervention effectiveness across diverse institutional contexts.

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