

Factors Influencing University Students' Expectancy for Success in the Foundational Stage

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Abstract— This study aims to identify the factors influencing university students' expectancy for success during the foundational stage in Vietnam. Data were collected from 820 second year students at a public university in the economics and business sector. Using multiple linear regression with robust standard errors, the results show that all five factors included in the model – namely cognitive ability (prior mathematics score), gender, teaching methods, lecturers' professional competence, and place of residence – have statistically significant effects on expectancy for success. Among these, teaching methods have the strongest impact, followed by gender (female students have higher expectancy than males) and place of residence (rural students have higher expectancy than urban students), while cognitive ability has only a weak effect.

Keywords— Expectancy for success, cognitive ability, teaching methods, lecturers' professional competence.

I. INTRODUCTION

Learners' expectancy for success has a direct influence on their motivation, persistence, and academic achievement. However, empirical evidence indicates that many students in the foundational stage of higher education exhibit relatively low levels of expectancy for success. This is evidenced by their difficulties in acquiring new knowledge at the university level (Điệp et al., 2012). Furthermore, many students frequently experience heightened stress during class sessions as well as prior to examinations (Preuss et al., 2010). If unaddressed, such psychological pressure may lead to poor academic performance (March-Amengual et al., 2022). When students doubt their ability to keep up with the curriculum or to attain favorable outcomes, they are prone to diminished motivation, reduced effort, and even avoidance of academic tasks (Kocsis & Molnár, 2024). Both Self-Determination Theory and Expectancy-Value Theory posit that self-efficacy beliefs and expectancy for success are direct antecedents of intrinsic motivation (Cook & Artino, 2016). Several empirical studies have demonstrated that students with low expectancy for success tend to have lower cumulative grade point averages (GPA), lower credit completion rates, and a higher risk of dropping out compared to their counterparts with high expectancy, even when prior academic ability is held constant (Breetzke & Bohndick, 2024; Hunsu et al., 2023; Pinquart & Ebeling, 2020).

Given these realities, the question arises: How can we improve university students' expectancy for success, especially during the foundational stage – the most critical period for academic adaptation? Intervention studies have shown that expectancy for success is not a fixed trait but can be modified through pedagogical and environmental influences (Sisk et al., 2018; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). For instance, providing constructive feedback, designing learning tasks that are appropriately challenging, and creating successive opportunities for success have been demonstrated as pedagogical practices that enhance learners' expectancy for success (J. S. Eccles & Wigfield, 2020; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Wulf & Lewthwaite, 2016). However, to design effective interventions, it is essential to understand which factors truly

shape students' expectancy for success within the specific context of Vietnamese higher education.

Therefore, identifying and measuring the factors influencing expectancy for success is an urgent scientific task. Potential factors may originate from students (prior academic ability, gender), from lecturers (teaching methods, professional competence), and from the living context (place of residence). In the absence of an integrated empirical model, interventions aimed at improving expectancy for success would lack a solid foundation and might prove ineffective. This study is designed to fill that gap, with the aim of providing quantitative evidence to help universities, lecturers, and other stakeholders establish a basis for developing targeted student support policies.

II. LITERATURE OVERVIEW

2.1. Expectancy for success

Expectancy for success refers to an individual's belief about their ability to perform well on a specific task, reflecting the learner's subjective perception of the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes in academic activities (J. S. Eccles & Wigfield, 2020; Nagle, 2021). According to the Expectancy-Value Theory (J. S. Eccles et al., 1983), expectancy for success is one of the two core components of academic motivation, alongside task value. When learners believe they are capable of succeeding in a learning task, they tend to set higher goals, exert greater effort, and employ more effective learning strategies (Safavian, 2019). Expectancy for success is positively correlated with actual academic achievement and predicts learners' persistence when facing difficulties while reducing the risk of dropping out (Schneider & Preckel, 2017). Thus, expectancy for success is not merely a psychological state but a motivational force that promotes positive and sustained learning behaviors.

Given the importance of expectancy for success for motivation and academic achievement, the main research question is: Which factors (originating from students themselves, lecturers, and living environment) influence university students' expectancy for success (Ef) during the foundational stage? Based on theoretical foundations and

relevant empirical studies, five factors are considered in the model: (1) cognitive ability; (2) gender; (3) lecturers' teaching methods; (4) lecturers' professional competence; and (5) students' family place of residence.

2.2. Factors influencing expectancy for success

Students' cognitive ability

Several studies have examined the role of cognitive ability in expectancy for success. (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) pointed out that past success experiences, including prior academic achievement, are one of the core components forming expectancy for success. (Nagengast et al., 2011) also affirmed that perceived competence – a concept closely related to expectancy for success – is directly influenced by the grades and rankings learners receive. The study by (J. S. Eccles & Wigfield, 2020) showed that students who achieved high scores in previous courses tend to believe they will succeed in related future courses.

However, most studies on cognitive ability and expectancy for success have been conducted in Western educational contexts, where assessment systems and learning cultures differ from those in Vietnam. Furthermore, these studies often measure cognitive ability through composite scores, rarely examining individual subjects (e.g., Mathematics) in relation to expectancy for success at the tertiary level. In Vietnam, no study has directly tested the impact of high school graduation exam Mathematics scores on students' expectancy for success during the foundational stage. Therefore, this study will test the following hypothesis

H₁: Students' cognitive ability has a positive influence on expectancy for success.

Gender

Gender differences in expectancy for success have attracted considerable research attention, particularly in STEM fields. In a longitudinal study, (Wigfield et al., 1991) found that male students had higher expectancy for success than female students in mathematics, even though the actual ability of the two groups did not differ significantly. Similar results were reported in a multi-cohort study by (Guo et al., 2015), confirming that female students have lower expectancy for success than male students in science subjects, and that this difference emerges early and persists into university. At the aggregate level, a meta-analysis of 247 independent studies (N = 68,429) by (Huang, 2013) revealed a small (overall effect size of 0.08) but statistically significant difference between males and females in self-efficacy beliefs, with males tending to be slightly higher, especially in domains socially stereotyped as "masculine" (e.g., mathematics, computer science, and social sciences).

It is important to note that this difference may vary depending on cultural context, age, and academic domain. For instance, (Huang, 2013) study also indicated that females have higher self-efficacy beliefs than males in the domain of language arts. In Vietnam, a recent study by (Tuan et al., 2025) documented statistically significant differences in self-efficacy beliefs between male and female students in the context of learning English. However, overall, existing research has primarily focused on secondary school students or students in STEM fields, while studies examining gender differences in

expectancy for success at the tertiary level in general, particularly within the specific cultural context and gender stereotypes of Vietnam, remain quite scarce. Based on the above arguments, this study proposes the following hypothesis to be tested:

H₂: There is a difference in expectancy for success between male and female students during the foundational stage.

Lecturers' teaching methods

The role of teaching methods in shaping students' expectancy for success has been confirmed by numerous theoretical and empirical studies. According to the Situated Expectancy-Value Theory (SEVT) developed by (J. S. Eccles & Wigfield, 2020), the classroom environment and instructional strategies are considered key factors influencing learners' expectancy for success. A recent study by (Zhou & Curle, 2024), applying SEVT in the context of English-medium instruction at a Chinese university, revealed that students' expectancy for success is affected by four main factors: past learning experiences, language proficiency, learner autonomy, and influences from surrounding people. This study confirms that instructional strategies impact students' expectancy for success by creating positive learning experiences and promoting learner autonomy. In a similar vein, research by (Oswald et al., 2025) demonstrated that instructional clarity plays a central role in fostering academic motivation, reducing cognitive load, and thereby enhancing students' expectancy for success. Specifically, when lecturers provide detailed explanations, employ diverse teaching methods, and avoid logical contradictions, students tend to develop higher expectancy for success.

In the context of Vietnamese higher education, although several studies have examined teaching methods and learning motivation (Pham et al., 2024), no research has directly quantified the impact of teaching methods on students' expectancy for success, particularly during the foundational stage – the period when students must adapt to a new learning environment. Therefore, empirical evidence from Vietnam is needed to test this relationship. The hypothesis examined in this relationship is:

H₃: Lecturers' teaching methods have a positive influence on students' expectancy for success during the foundational stage.

Lecturers' professional competence

Lecturers' professional competence plays an important role in shaping learners' expectancy for success. According to social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), when instructors demonstrate deep expertise along with clear communication and constructive feedback, learners tend to have greater confidence in their own ability to succeed. At a broader level, a study by (Bagonza & Taddeo Kaahwa, 2024) of 300 students at six universities in Uganda revealed a positive and significant correlation between four dimensions of lecturers' professional competence (including mastery of subject content, teaching methods, professional guidance and support for students, and assessment methods) and students' positive expectations about learning quality. The study also emphasized that beyond purely pedagogical competence, it is the professional support and feedback from lecturers that have the strongest impact on students' expectations. This suggests that when students

perceive their lecturers as both competent and genuinely caring and supportive, they develop a belief that they can receive the necessary help to overcome difficulties, thereby nurturing their expectancy for success.

In Vietnam, a survey by (Nguyen, 2020) at the Foreign Trade University with 320 students documented a positive influence of lecturers' competence on students' learning motivation. However, this study did not directly measure expectancy for success as an independent variable. Moreover, most current research on lecturers' professional competence tends to focus on evaluating teaching quality or student satisfaction, while very few studies have directly examined the relationship between this factor and expectancy for success in the context of Vietnamese higher education, particularly during the foundational stage – the period when students most need support and guidance from lecturers. Therefore, this study will test the following hypothesis:

H₄: Lecturers' professional competence has a positive influence on students' expectancy for success during the foundational stage.

Family place of residence

Place of residence (urban versus rural) is a foundational factor that many studies have examined in relation to expectancy for success and academic achievement. Some empirical evidence indicates that learners from urban areas tend to set higher academic expectations than those from rural areas, even after controlling for factors such as family background, gender, and academic track (Andres & Looker, 2001). Similarly, a study by (Sexton et al., 2025) found that rural students have lower outcome expectations scores compared to their urban counterparts.

However, not all studies have found this difference. For instance, a survey by (Luu, 2022) of 142 students at a university in Ho Chi Minh City reported no statistically significant difference in self-efficacy beliefs between urban and rural students. The divergence in research findings may stem from regional characteristics, cultural contexts, and differences in measurement methods. Based on the above analysis, the hypothesis proposed for this relationship is:

H₅: There exists a difference in expectancy for success between university students from urban and rural areas during the foundational stage.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data collection

The study sampled 820 second-year students from a Vietnamese public university in the economics and business sector, all enrolled in a compulsory General Mathematics course. Stratified sampling was used, with proportional allocation based on academic departments. Demographically, 83% of the participants were female—reflecting the typical gender pattern in such institutions—and 71.7% were from rural backgrounds.

3.2 Measurement instruments

Expectancy for Success variable (Ef). The variable was measured using items adapted from the questionnaire by (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), employing a 7-point Likert scale

ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.85; the KMO coefficient was 0.89, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then performed to validate the factorial structure of the scale. Factor scores were extracted and used as the composite measure of expectancy for success in subsequent analyses.

Prior academic ability (MaScore). The study used students' scores on the high school graduation examination in Mathematics, measured on a scale from 0 to 10, as an indicator of prior academic ability. Higher scores reflect stronger foundational mathematical competence.

Gender. The variable was coded as 0 for male and 1 for female. This coding allowed us to account for potential gender-based differences in academic performance, as documented in previous empirical research (Richardson et al., 2012).

Teaching methods (METLec_f) and lecturers' professional competence (*COM_Lec_f*) were measured using 10 items on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) indicated a KMO coefficient of 0.92 and a statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$), confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The reliability of the scale was established with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.88 and 0.89, respectively.

Residence. The variable was coded as 0 for urban and 1 for rural. This binary classification allowed the study to examine potential differences in expectancy for success between students who grew up in urban areas (with potentially greater access to educational resources and learning opportunities) and those from rural backgrounds (who may have faced more limited educational infrastructure). This coding is consistent with prior research on regional disparities in academic motivation and outcomes.

3.3. Analytical model

To test the research hypotheses, the author employed a multiple linear regression model. The regression equation was specified as follows:

$$Ef_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot MaScore_i + \beta_2 \cdot Gender_i + \beta_3 \cdot METLec_{f_i} + \beta_4 \cdot COM_{Lec}_{f_i} + \beta_5 \cdot Residence_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where:

- Ef_i is the expectancy for success of the i -th student;
- $MaScore_i$ is the i -th student's high school graduation examination score in Mathematics;
- $Gender_i$ is the student's gender (coded: 0 = male, 1 = female);
- $METLec_{f_i}$ is the i -th student's evaluation of teaching methods;
- $COM_{Lec}_{f_i}$ is the i -th student's evaluation of lecturers' professional competence;
- $Residence_i$ is the student's place of residence (coded: 0 = urban, 1 = rural);
- β_0 is the constant term, β_1 through β_5 are partial regression coefficients, and ε_i is the random error term.

Data were processed using Stata version 17. Prior to the main regression analysis, the following diagnostic tests were conducted:

- Multicollinearity was assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF).
- Normality of residuals was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test or Q-Q plots.
- Heteroskedasticity was tested using the Breusch–Pagan/ Cook–Weisberg test.
- Model fit was evaluated using the F-statistic, the coefficient of determination (R^2), and the adjusted R^2 .

IV. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the continuous variables used in the regression model, including expectancy for success (Ef), prior mathematics score (MaScore), evaluations of teaching methods (METLec_f), and evaluations of lecturers' professional competence (COM_Lec_f) in the foundational course.

TABLE 1. Descriptive statistics (n = 820)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Ef	0	.786	-3.1	1.65
MaScore	8.934	.387	7.4	9.6
METLec_f	0	1	-3.825	1.731
COM_Lec_f	0	1	-5.826	1.354

Information on the two binary variables, Gender and Residence, indicates that female students accounted for 83.2% of the sample, which accurately reflects the typical characteristics of a university in the economics and business sector in Vietnam, where female students tend to be the majority. Similarly, the proportion of students from rural areas was 78.7%, indicating that most learners in the sample had a rural background. These imbalances in gender and place of residence will be controlled for in the regression model by including the respective dummy variables.

4.2. Regression results

Table 2 reports the estimation results of the multiple linear regression model using robust standard errors (to correct for violations of the normality assumption of residuals).

TABLE 2. Estimation results of the multiple linear regression model

Ef	Coef.	St.Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf Interval]	Sig
MaScore	.108	.06	1.80	.073	-.01 .225	*
Gender	.162	.069	2.34	.02	.026 .299	**
METLec_f	.357	.033	10.79	0	.292 .421	***
COM_Lec_f	.096	.034	2.87	.004	.03 .162	***
Residence	.135	.067	2.01	.045	.003 .267	**
Constant	-1.203	.549	-2.19	.029	-2.28 -.125	**
Mean dependent var		-0.000		SD dependent var		0.786
R-squared		0.322		Number of obs		820
F-test		64.351		Prob > F		0.000
Akaike crit. (AIC)		1625.622		Bayesian crit. (BIC)		1653.878

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

The results above show that all regression coefficients are positive and statistically significant at acceptable levels. This supports all the proposed research hypotheses (H_1-H_5). Specifically, the higher the students' prior academic ability (mathematics score), the better the lecturers' teaching methods, and the higher the lecturers' professional competence, the greater the students' expectancy for success. Furthermore, the study also indicates that there are differences in expectancy for success between male and female students, and between students from rural areas and those from urban areas.

4.3. Model diagnostics

Prior to estimating the regression model, the study conducted diagnostic tests to assess the classical OLS assumptions. The multicollinearity test results showed that the VIF values of all independent variables were below 5 (mean VIF = 1.25), indicating no significant multicollinearity. Additionally, the Ramsey RESET test confirmed that the linear functional form is appropriate ($p = 0.746$), and no influential observations were detected (the maximum Cook's distance was 0.048, far below the threshold of 1). However, the Shapiro–Wilk test on the residuals yielded a p -value < 0.001 , rejecting the assumption of normally distributed residuals. Furthermore,

the Breusch–Pagan test also produced a p -value < 0.001 , indicating the presence of heteroskedasticity. To address both violations simultaneously, we employed robust standard errors as recommended by (White, 1980). Table 3 provides a summary of the regression assumption tests.

TABLE 3. Regression assumption tests

Test	Statistic	p-value	Conclusion
Multicollinearity (max VIF)	1.57	–	None
Shapiro–Wilk (standardized residuals)	W = 0.9685	< 0.001	Violation
Breusch–Pagan (heteroskedasticity)	$\chi^2(1) = 24.39$	< 0.001	Violation
Ramsey RESET (functional form)	F(3, 808) = 0.41	0.746	No violation
Cook's distance (max)	0.048	–	No influential points

V. DISCUSSION

5.1. Influence of students' cognitive ability

The results show that prior mathematics score (MaScore) has a positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.108$) and is statistically significant at the 10% level ($p = 0.06$). This provides partial support for H_1 , indicating that students with higher high school

graduation examination scores in Mathematics tend to have higher expectancy for success in the foundational mathematics course. This finding aligns with the theoretical arguments of (Nagengast et al., 2011; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), who posited that past academic achievements shape perceived competence and subsequent expectancy beliefs. It also echoes the empirical observation of (J. Eccles & Wigfield, 2020) that students who performed well in previous courses are more confident about future success.

However, the effect is relatively weak compared to other predictors and only marginally significant. This may be due to the restricted range of mathematics scores in the sample (mean = 8.93, SD = 0.39, on a 0–10 scale), indicating that most students entered the university with high and homogeneous levels of prior mathematical ability. Consequently, the limited variance in MaScore reduces its explanatory power. Moreover, as noted in the literature review, most prior studies on cognitive ability and expectancy for success were conducted in Western contexts with different assessment systems. The present study provides the first empirical evidence from Vietnam regarding the specific impact of high school mathematics scores on expectancy for success in a foundational university course, albeit with modest strength.

5.2. Gender differences in expectancy for success

The regression results reveal a positive coefficient for Gender ($\beta = 0.162, p < 0.001$), with female students coded as 1. This indicates that female students in this sample have significantly higher expectancy for success than their male counterparts. This finding supports H_2 , confirming that there is a difference in expectancy for success between male and female students during the foundational stage.

This result stands in contrast to several previous studies reviewed. (Wigfield et al., 1991) found that male students had higher expectancy for success in mathematics than females, despite similar actual ability. Similarly, (Guo et al., 2015) reported that female students had lower expectancy for success in science subjects from early ages through university. (Huang, 2013) meta-analysis concluded that males exhibit slightly higher self-efficacy beliefs, especially in stereotypically “masculine” domains such as mathematics and computer science. Our finding, therefore, deviates from the typical Western pattern.

Several explanations may account for this discrepancy. First, the present study was conducted in an economics and business university in Vietnam, where female students constitute the majority (83.2% of the sample). In such a context, female students may feel more socially supported and academically competent, leading to higher expectancy beliefs. Second, mathematics is a required subject for all students in this economics-oriented institution, and the high average scores suggest that female students perform well, which may enhance their confidence. Third, cultural factors may play a role. In Vietnam, some studies (e.g., Tuan et al., 2025) have found that female students exhibit higher self-efficacy in language learning. However, our study extends this observation to mathematics within an economics curriculum. It is possible that gender stereotypes operate differently in Vietnamese higher

education, particularly in non-STEM fields where females are overrepresented. Thus, our finding contributes to the literature by highlighting contextual variations in gender differences.

5.3. Influence of lecturers' teaching methods

The results strongly support H_3 . Lecturers' teaching methods (METLec_f) exhibit the largest positive coefficient among all predictors ($\beta = 0.357, p < 0.001$). This finding underscores the critical role of instructional strategies in shaping students' expectancy for success. It is consistent with the Situated Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020), which emphasizes classroom environment and instructional practices as key determinants of expectancy beliefs.

The result aligns with recent empirical studies. (Zhou & Curle, 2024) found that instructional strategies influence expectancy for success by creating positive learning experiences and promoting learner autonomy. Similarly, (Oswald et al., 2025) demonstrated that instructional clarity reduces cognitive load and enhances motivation. Our study provides direct quantitative evidence from Vietnam, filling a gap noted in the literature review that no prior Vietnamese study had directly examined the impact of teaching methods on expectancy for success in the foundational stage. The strong effect size suggests that improving teaching methods – such as providing clear explanations, diverse activities, constructive feedback, and opportunities for success – could be a highly effective intervention for raising students' expectancy for success.

5.4. Influence of lecturers' professional competence

The coefficient for lecturers' professional competence (COM_Lec_f) is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.096, p = 0.004$), supporting H_4 . This indicates that students who perceive their lecturers as having strong content knowledge, clear communication, effective assessment, and supportive feedback develop higher expectancy for success. This finding is consistent with social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), which posits that observing competent models enhances learners' self-beliefs.

The result also corroborates the study by (Bagonza & Taddeo Kaahwa, 2024) in Uganda, which found a positive correlation between lecturers' professional competence and students' positive expectations about learning quality. In the Vietnamese context, Nguyen (2020) reported that lecturer competence positively influences learning motivation, but did not measure expectancy for success directly. Our study extends that finding by explicitly linking professional competence to expectancy for success. Notably, the effect size is smaller than that of teaching methods, suggesting that while both matter, how lecturers teach (methods) may be somewhat more influential than their underlying expertise (competence) in shaping students' expectancy beliefs during the foundational stage.

5.5. Differences by place of residence

The regression coefficient for Residence ($\beta = 0.135, p = 0.067$) is positive, with rural students coded as 1. This indicates that students from rural areas have higher expectancy for success than their urban counterparts. Thus, H_5 is supported –

there is a difference, but the direction is opposite to what some previous studies predicted.

Earlier research (Andres & Looker, 2001; Sexton et al., 2025) generally found that urban students hold higher educational expectations than rural students, attributed to better access to resources and more favourable learning environments. However, our result aligns with the mixed evidence reviewed. For example, Luu (2022) found no significant difference in self-efficacy between urban and rural students in Ho Chi Minh City. The present finding may be explained by the specific characteristics of the sample. The university is located in a regional area, and 78.7% of participants come from rural backgrounds. In such a setting, rural students might have developed stronger resilience, motivation, and study strategies to succeed in higher education, leading to higher expectancy for success. Additionally, the economics and business curriculum may place less emphasis on prior urban advantages (e.g., access to private tutoring or enrichment programmes) and more on effort and perseverance, where rural students may excel. This finding highlights the importance of contextual factors and suggests that the urban-rural gap in expectancy for success is not universal but depends on institutional and cultural contexts.

5.6. Overall Model Fit

The regression model explains approximately 32.2% of the variance in expectancy for success ($R^2 = 0.322$), with a highly significant F-test ($F = 64.51$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the five predictors collectively have a meaningful impact on the outcome variable. The remaining unexplained variance (about 68%) suggests that other factors not included in the model – such as students' prior learning strategies, family support, peer influence, or personality traits – also contribute to expectancy for success. Future research could extend the model by incorporating these additional variables.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study employed regression with robust standard errors to test the hypotheses. The results show that all variables included in the model have statistically significant effects on students' expectancy for success during the foundational stage. However, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is modest, suggesting that further research is needed to incorporate additional factors that could better explain the variation in expectancy for success.

Despite the modest explanatory power, this study provides the first empirical evidence from Vietnam directly linking high school mathematics scores to expectancy for success in a foundational university course. At the same time, the results show that the effects of gender and place of residence are highly context-dependent, challenging universal assumptions derived predominantly from Western research. Furthermore, these findings extend the application of Situated Expectancy-Value Theory (SEVT) and social learning theory to the Vietnamese higher education context, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive models of academic motivation.

In terms of educational practice, the study offers several recommendations. For lecturers, prioritising active, learner-centred teaching methods – such as clear explanations,

diverse classroom activities, constructive feedback, and successive opportunities for success – is essential, as this factor has the strongest impact on students' expectancy for success. For university administrators, investing in pedagogical training programmes that enhance both teaching methods and professional competence is crucial; although the effect of professional competence is smaller, it remains statistically significant, especially during the foundational stage when students most need support. For student support services, it is important to recognise that female students and rural students in economics-oriented universities may already possess high expectancy, but targeted interventions could be designed to support male and urban students if needed, avoiding one-size-fits-all assumptions based solely on international literature.

Finally, the study has several limitations that should be noted. The sample was limited to a single economics and business university, so the findings may not generalise to other disciplines or regions. The modest R^2 (discussed above) suggests that many other factors not included in the model – such as students' prior learning strategies, family support, peer influence, or personality traits – also contribute to expectancy for success. Future research should employ more diverse samples across different institutional types and academic fields, incorporate qualitative methods to understand the contextual mechanisms behind the observed effects, and test intervention programmes based on the strongest predictors identified here, particularly teaching method reforms.

Disclosure

Declaration of AI Assistance in Language Editing: The authors used DeepSeek to improve language clarity and correct minor errors in grammar and style. They reviewed all suggestions and are fully responsible for the content of this publication.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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