



# Relationship Between Adverse Childhood Experience And Future Time Perspective With Approval Motivation Among Psychology And Law Students

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## **Abstract**

The present study aims to explore the relationship of *adverse childhood experience* (ACE) and *future time perspective* (FTP) in relation to *approval motivation* among *psychology* and *law students*. The study aimed to investigate how early life adversity and future time perspective influence student's tendency to seek approval from others. The study employs a quantitative cross sectional research design and data was collected from 180 students with 90 each in psychology and law domain through standardised questionnaire. Pearson's Product moment correlation analysis was used to know the relationship among variables and separate correlation analysis was done to assess within group relationships among psychology and law students.

The correlational analysis revealed significant negative relationship between adverse childhood experience and approval motivation for both groups with effect being stronger in law students. Additionally future time perspective showed a positive relationship with approval motivation for both psychology and law students indicating students with stronger future perspective tend to engage in goal directed behaviour and seek constructive feedback. These findings highlight the importance of role of early experiences and future perspective in shaping students motivational tendencies and need for interventions for fostering intrinsic motivation, resilience and adaptive coping strategies among students.

**Keywords:** adverse childhood experience, future time perspective, approval motivation, psychology students, law students

## **Introduction**

The human behaviour is influenced by previous experiences, current needs and desires and expectations. The manner in which the people control their actions, desire to gain validation, as well as in their goal pursuit is not just the environment they experienced during their early childhood, but also the cognitive orientation they have towards their future.

The study explore how adverse childhood experience and future time perspective shapes approval motivation among students. It focuses around psychology and law students, as they exhibit different academic background that may result in different motivational pattern and future orientation.

It is known that adverse early experience are linked with emotional regulation and social sensitivity, while future time perspective is associated with goal direction behaviour and regulation. However, there is little research on the relationship of these processes with approval motivation, which is associated with social sensitivity and external validation.

In academic setting, where academic achievement, social comparison and future career goals are salient, approval motivation is a very important factor in understanding students behaviour. Students perform in a social environment that is evaluative, where external feedback and achievement contribute significantly to the development of the self concept and career identity.

The role of early adversity and future orientation in the development of approval motivation is useful in understanding the behaviour patterns in students.

### **Approval motivation**

Approval motivation is one of the many motivation construct that have been examined in psychology, as a social aspect of behaviour of great dimensions and indicate how much one is motivated by the need to be accepted, recognised and positively rated by others.

Motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic, approval motivation is the need to foster positive perception as well as need for admiration and to avoid negative responses.

### **Adverse childhood experience**

Adverse childhood experiences are potentially traumatic events that have happened before including the physical, emotional, or sexual, neglect and dysfunction in the in childhood including parental separation, substance abuse or mental illness. These childhood misfortunes disrupt the normal emotional and mental growth that have long term implication on the behaviour, patterns and relationships.

### **Future time perspective**

Future time perspective means how the person feel, plan and organise their behaviour that align with their future goals and how hopeful the person feel about their future goals.

Future time perspective as the individual ability to plan the future through behavioural, motivational and cognitive participation.

### **Review of Literature**

The study includes literature related to adverse childhood experience, approval motivation and future time perspective.

#### **Adverse childhood experience**

Irshad, S., & Lone, A. (2025) have discovered that elevated ACE scores were closely linked with low emotional intelligence, which shows that previous negative experiences in early years adversely relate to emotional control and interpersonal performance among young adult. These results imply that childhood adversity can influence subsequent social and emotional mechanisms, which are connected to motivational inclination.

Hinojosa, R., Nguyen, J., Sellers, K., & Elassar, H. (2018) this study examines relationship between ACE and academic barriers among college students at large southern eastern university. Results showed students with higher ACE scores are subject to more family difficulty, health issues and stress which indicated higher academic barriers. Moreover ACE was linked to difficulties in family and health domains influencing academic performance.

Study conducted by Begni, (2005) which explains psychology trainees with having high early adversity consider supervisors as their parental figure to fill in the void of validation that was missing in early childhood.

### **Approval motivation**

Sen, I., Arora, K., Banerjee.J., & Archika, J. (2025) studied peer relations on students emotional, academic and social motivation indicating bad peer result in decrease motivation while good peer system result in healthy motivational patterns which help in performance.

Varshini, A., & Jha, M.(2025) explore the relationship between people pleasing, risk taking behaviour and social support among adults. The result showed negative relationship between people pleasing and social support also indicating slight negative link between people pleasing and risk taking.

### **Future time perspective**

Zhu X. Y., Chen, S.M., & Lyu, H., (2025) this study explored academic self - efficacy among university students is significantly predicted by future time perspective and this effect is mediated by learning engagement and personal growth. There exists a positive relationship between FTP and self efficacy, learning engagement and personal growth in large survey of college students. Thus indicating future orientation promote academic motivation and success.

Simons, J., Vansteenkiste, M., & Lens, W., ( 2004) this study explored that students having long term goals are persistent and motivated in tasks with result associated with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and regulated dependence on external validation for success.

### **Research Gap**

Despite separate researches done on approval motivation, adverse childhood experience and future time perspective, very limited research examined these constructs together particularly for psychology and law students . Understanding this would provide insights as how early adversity and future goals associate with approval seeking behaviour in student population .

### **Methodology**

The current study is a descriptive- correlational design , using cross sectional design is appropriate for the study as the main purpose of the study is to determine the relationship among variables without attempting to manipulate them.

### **Objectives**

To explore the relationship between adverse childhood and approval motivation among psychology and law students.

To explore the relationship between future time perspective and approval motivation among psychology and law students.

## Hypothesis

### For Psychology students

**H1 :** There will be a significant positive relationship between adverse childhood experience and approval motivation .

**H2 :** There will be a significant positive relationship between future time orientation and approval motivation.

### For Law students

**H3:** There will be a significant negative relationship between adverse childhood experience and approval motivation

**H4:** There will be a significant positive relationship between future time orientation and approval motivation.

## Variables

**Independent variable** - Adverse childhood experience and Future time perspective

**Dependent variable** - Approval motivation

## Sample

Sample comprised of 180 college students belonging to psychology and law programme, 90 psychology and 90 law students with age ranging 18 - 25 years, including both male and female.

## Sampling Technique

The study used both purposive and convenience sampling techniques as participants were chosen based on accessibility and their relevance to criteria of the study.

## Inclusion criteria

Students currently enrolled in psychology and law post graduate programme  
Age ranging 18- 25 years

## Exclusion criteria

Students who do not belong to psychology and law programme  
Participants outside the defined age group

## Tools

**Martin Larsen Approval Motivation Scale:** is a self report questionnaire consisting of 20 items and in likert type (1 to 5 = strongly disagree to strongly agree). In this study adverse childhood experience and future time perspective are examined in relation MLAMS.

**Adverse Childhood Experience:** questionnaire developed by Felitti is a self report questionnaire evaluating exposure to negative experiences. It consists of 10 items categorise into family dysfunction and abuse. ACE scores ranges from 0 to 10 and is calculated by adding yes or no.

**Future Time Perspective:** is a self report questionnaire developed by Stanford Lifespan Laboratory, is a tool used to gauge how people view their future. It consists of 10 items measured on Likert Scale, 1 to 7, with very untrue to very true. High scores indicate high future perspective.

### Statistical Analysis:

Data was analysed using IBM SPSS. Descriptive statistics were measured like mean and standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to find the relationship among variables.

### Result

#### For Psychology students ( N = 90)

**Table 1** below represents descriptive statistics and correlation among variables.

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
1. Adverse childhood experience	2.53	2.209	—		
2. Future time perspective	45.24	13.288		—	
3. Approval motivation	59.07	9.912	-.230* .029	.430** .000	—

**Note \***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level ( 2 - tailed).

**\*\***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level ( 2 - tailed).

Psychology students reported low to moderate level of adversity, moderate future time perspective and moderate level of approval motivation.

### Correlation analysis between variables

#### Adverse Childhood Experience and Approval Motivation

The result demonstrated ( $r = -.230$ ,  $p = .029$ ), this indicates while being statistically significant a weak negative correlation exists between adverse childhood experience and approval. This means students with higher adverse experience have lower approval motivation.

### Future Time Perspective and Approval Motivation

The result demonstrated ( $r = .430$ ,  $p < .001$ ), this indicates a significant, moderate positive correlation exists between future time perspective and approval motivation.

As future time perspective increases approval motivation also increases.

This indicates that future time perspective has a stronger association with approval motivation than adverse childhood experience in psychology students.

### For Law students ( N = 90)

**Table 2** below represents descriptive statistics and correlation among variable

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
1. Adverse childhood experience	2.46	2.567	—		
2. Future time perspective	48.46	9.722		—	
3. Approval motivation	56.18	9.388	-.478** .000	.348** .001	—

**Note \*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed)

Law students reported low to moderate adversity similar to psychology students, moderate Future time perspective and moderate approval motivation.

### Correlation analysis between variables

#### Adverse Childhood Experience and Approval Motivation

The result demonstrated ( $r = -.478$ ,  $p < .001$ ) this indicates a statistically significant moderate negative correlation exists between adverse childhood experience and approval motivation, which indicates students with higher adverse experience tend to have lower approval motivation.

#### Future Time Perspective and Approval Motivation

The result demonstrated ( $r = .348$ ,  $p = .001$ ) this indicates significant moderate positive correlation exists between future time perspective and approval motivation, which indicates higher future perspective is associated with greater approval motivation.

While both groups show same direction relationships, the positive correlation is higher in psychology students and negative correlation in law students.

## **Discussion & Conclusion**

### **Psychology students**

#### **Adverse Childhood Experience and Approval Motivation**

The result demonstrated a weak negative relationship between adverse childhood experience and approval motivation which indicates the hypothesis was not supported which predicted a positive relationship between two. The result suggested students with high adversity tend to have lower approval motivation as students might develop self dependency and less social interaction as defence mechanism. This can be supported by Irshad S. and Lone (2025) which explains higher adversity makes it difficult to manage emotions, interact with others, which reduces perceived value of approval. In psychology students their academic training helps them recognise excessive dependence on others validation as unhealthy and to rely more in their own. The psychology students self aware factor which helps them to manage their emotions. Emotional blunting, respondent fatigue and cognitive overload might also influence.

#### **Future Time Perspective and Approval Motivation**

The result demonstrated positive relationship between future time perspective and approval motivation which is also supported by study hypothesis. This indicates psychology students who are future oriented are more prone to validation as a goal oriented and strategic behaviour. These students consider validation as feedback which helps them in their academics which is supported by (Z h u X.Y. et al. 2025) explains how future time perspective increases, growth, motivation in the learning process. In psychology students approval motivation relates to therapeutic training where rapport, empathy and positive regard are important for client interaction.

### **Law students**

#### **Adverse Childhood Experience and Approval Motivation**

The result demonstrated negative relationship between adverse childhood experience and approval motivation which is supported by hypothesis. Law students creates a survivalist mindset, where emotional self sufficiency and less reliance on others are considered important. Supported by ( Hinojosa R. et al., 2018) explains that adversity is positively related to family issue, stress and educational obstacles which decrease social approval. These students may develop thick skin and view validation as sign of weakness. They become naturally skeptical of seeking validation.

#### **Future Time Perspective and Approval Motivation**

The result indicates positive relation between future time perspective and approval motivation, supported by study hypothesis. Students view seeking approval as path to move forward towards their goal. (Peng Y.P. et al., 2022) supported this by stating that future time perspective improves the motivation to learn and engage that promotes goal orientation. These students with strong future perspective uses approval to see where they stand in the competitive environment. Law students are preparing to enter bureaucratic system, approval motivation in this context is a social skill needed to navigate rigid system.

## **Conclusion**

The findings have shown a shift in the form of a tug of war with adverse childhood experience being related to lower approval motivation as a sign of self reliance and careful contact with external validation while future time perspective is associated with increase approval motivation as a strategy to obtain future goals to facilitate long term goals for both the psychology and law students.

Approval motivation when driven by adverse childhood experience it is considered as a risk to be avoided and with future time perspective it is considered as path to reach towards future goals. As psychology and law students are still in their learning and growing process within group analysis observed are similar because of the age and environment factor rather than established professional roles. Childhood adversity may make students less inclined towards approval motivation but future goals makes them to consider it as a pathway towards goal.

## **Limitations**

The self reporting bias as psychology students are being aware which results in under report or over report.

Family dynamics, beliefs and values.

By taking into consideration particularly psychology and law students, the findings cannot be generalize to other fields.

Lack of gender analysis.

Students who are currently stressed may view their childhood more negatively while others may skip over.

Small sample size.

## **Implications**

The findings hold importance in terms of academic, psychological and practical aspect. This helps in explaining how adverse childhood experience and future time perspective shape students to seek approval motivation . These findings help in mentoring strategies, students to cultivate intrinsic motivation, resilience and coping strategies. To help in fostering self awareness, reducing maladaptive habits and to promote better academic functioning.

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