RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AND STUDENT ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT. MODERATING ROLE OF STUDENT SELF EFFICACY.

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AND COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (EDUCATION) B.Sc. (Ed.) DEGREE IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by Adedamola Philip BAKARE in the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City under our supervision.

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my Late Dad Mr. Adebayo Bakare, and the strong Woman behind my successful career. Mrs S. M. Bakare

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The researcher wants to use this medium to thank the Almighty God who has been a source of strength and inspiration to her in this great institution, for his unfailing love, grace and mercy which sustained her irrespective of the uncertainties she encountered throughout the duration of this course.

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the moderating role of student self-efficacy in the relationship between perceived social supports and student academic engagement among undergraduates.

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of 13,000 students from the faculty of education, in the eight (8) departments in Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The sample for the study consists of one hundred (100) students drawn from (5) departments in faculty of education, University of Benin. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the departments from the eight departments in faculty of education, University of Benin.

Multidimensional scale of perceived social support, Student self-efficacy scale and Utrecht work engagement scale for students were used as instruments for data collection. The Pearson correlation and moderation analyses were used to test the study hypotheses. The correlation coefficient (R= 0.853) indicates a strong positive relationship. Therefore, we conclude that there is a significant relationship between perceived social support, self-efficacy, and academic engagement among undergraduates in selected departments in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin.

The study suggests that University management should develop strategies towards ensuring that students are encouraged to engage in academic activities. Parents and guardians are encouraged to provide every social support necessary to improve the student's academic engagement.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

The concept of student engagement is an extension of the concept of engagement and has gained recognition since the 1990s. Pascarella and Terenzini were the first scholars to apply the term engagement to the student learning process (Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Student engagement is the degree to which students are engaged in learning in the formal education process and refers to the time, effort, and energy they commit to educational learning tasks, such as school-related learning activities and coursework (Balducci, Fraccaroli, & Schaufeli, 2010). Student engagement comprises implicit mental state and mode of thinking and explicit behaviours. Mental state includes attitudes toward learning and interactive awareness of learning; mode of thinking includes learning and cognitive strategies; and behavior includes study time and frequency, participation in discussions, and completing assignments (Cazan, 2015; Çapri, Gündüz, & Akbay, 2017).

Students' engagement in academics has been importantly recognized by educators, and it has been observed that too many students are bored,

unmotivated, and uninvolved, that is, disengaged from the academic and social aspects of school life (Carmona-Halty, Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2019). When you say that a person is engaged in something, it means that an extra effort is involved and it can occur in any aspect of life. However, previous studies on academic engagement explained two significant aspects; the indicators and the facilitators or causal factors (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand & Kindermann, 2008); but from all indications, student engagement changes with additional years in school.

Hu and Kuh (2001) defined student engagement as the quality of effort students devotes to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes. In the educational literature, student engagement remains a mixed bag and is considered a multifaceted construct (Extremera et al., 2012). Most definitions of student engagement covers emotional, behavioural and cognitive engagements (Kulikowski, 2017) and "agentic engagement" (Reeve & Tseng, 2011). This current study focused on behavioural engagement. Behavioural engagement is usually defined as active participation in both academic and non-academic school activities. Behavioural academic engagement is linked to overall positive student

conduct – following the rules in the classroom and a lack of disruptive school behaviour (Lietaert et al., 2015). In addition, displaying academic behaviours, such as making an effort, showing persistence, asking questions, and maintaining concentration, are also indicators of behavioural engagement (Finn Fredricks et al., 2004).

However, other forms of engagement that have explored in studies include emotional engagement and cognitive engagement. Emotional engagement, which is similar to behavioral engagement, refers to an array of student emotions and actions related to schools and classrooms. Students' affective reactions (boredom, sadness, and anxiety) are a mechanism of emotional engagement (Loscalzo & Giannini, 2019). Researchers have also assessed emotional engagement by measuring student reactions to school, and teachers and have found that students who are more emotionally engaged in school show higher academic achievement (Loscalzo & Giannini, 2019).

Cognitive engagement research has stressed an overall investment in learning (Lovakov, Agadullina, & Schaufeli, 2017). Students who show an investment in learning have higher grades and test scores and are less likely

to be disruptive, truant, or drop out (Klem & Connell, 2004). Cognitive engagement has also been characterized as an investment in learning, wherein students demonstrate behaviour that goes beyond stated expectations and seek academic challenges (Meng & Jin, 2017).

Students who are emotionally and mentally disengaged from school most often are bored, distracted, mentally troubled, or do not see the value of schooling. The ultimate form of disengagement is dropping out of school (Petrović, Vukelić, & Čizmić, 2017; Römer, 2016). Younger students are most often compliant enough to attend school because they do not have the means to avoid it (Serrano et al., 2019).

Social support is a factor that may influence academic engagement students. Social support has been defined by Shumaker and Brownell (1984) as an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient. Lin (1986) defined it as perceived or actual instrumental and/or expressive provisions supplied by the community, social networks, and confiding partners. From these definitions, one can say that social support refers to the degree to which a student's basic social needs (e.g., approval,

companionship, love, security, affection, and belonging) are made available by a provider (family, friend, or others), with the aim of improving the student's wellbeing. In addition, support could be one of three different types: instrumental, emotional, and informational. Instrumental support entails the physical and economical support an individual receives from social support. Emotional support entails the affection, empathy, and acceptance gained from social support. Informational support involves advice and information conveyed from social support (Lyons, 1997).

Friends, relatives and significant others provide many benefits to an individual, both material and non material. These include financial assistance, emotional support, companionship, and encouragement. The cost may include the time spent with them, returning the feelings expressed or other minor sacrifices. When weighed, the outcome is mostly profitable and the individual does not have any need to look for alternative sources of support. Thus the social support runs in a continuous cycle based on the assumptions of the exchange theory. Based on this, a person might not see the need to seek professional help for problems when he/she feels that relatives, friends or other significant others could render some solution.

In the current study, the researcher focuses on the moderating role of self-efficacy on the academic engagement of students. Self efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their ability to produce desired results. The self-efficacy component of Bandura's social-cognitive theory has had a profound impact on the study of motivation and achievement in academic settings (Andrade, Wang, Du, & Akawi, 2009). Bandura emphasized in social cognitive theory the construct of self-efficacy and its impact on learning, as this belief in one's own ability influences choice of activities and effort. Self-efficacy refers to individuals who can use their abilities to complete the study, control their own behaviours, and judge their academic achievement. Student self-efficacy has been shown to be the strongest single predictor of students' academic achievement and performance (Artino, 2012).

Student self-efficacy expectations are a student's beliefs in their ability to perform the necessary behaviours to produce a certain outcome. Student self-efficacy has become an important factor that will affect students' choices of their learning task and behaviours, as well as their mentality and emotions on learning. Moreover, student engagement has been

found playing a key to success in learning in previous studies (Artino, 2012; Artino et al., 2012).

Self-efficacy has been related to the quantity of effort and the willingness to persist at tasks (Honicke, & Broadbent, 2016). Individuals with strong efficacy beliefs are more likely to exert effort in the face of difficulty and persist at a task when they have the requisite skills. Individuals who have weaker perceptions of efficacy are likely to be plagued by self-doubts (‘‘I don’t think I can do this’’) and give up easily when confronted with difficulties, even if they have the skills or knowledge to perform the task. This is a very stable generalization about the positive association between self-efficacy beliefs and the quantity of effort and eventual persistence at a task, based on studies in academic and other settings (Jungert, & Rosander, 2010).

In the academic domain, there have been two general types of studies. First, there have been correlational studies in which students are asked about their self-efficacy to do a task and then asked to perform the task. For example, students are asked about their efficacy for reading a textbook or for doing math problems. Then, they are given the text and asked to read it and

answer questions about the text, or given a set of math problems and asked to solve them. In these studies, even when there is another measure of prior knowledge or ability in reading or math, self-efficacy judgments still predict students' effort and persistence on the task (as well as their performance) over and above that of students' prior knowledge (Komarraju, & Nadler, 2013).

Accordingly, these studies provide evidence that there are students who know the material and have the requisite skills but are not confident that they can use their knowledge or enact their skills. Such students will be less likely to exert effort and more likely to give up quickly rather than persist at the task (Komarraju, & Nadler, 2013). The other type of study has been experimental in nature, where students who are having difficulty in their schoolwork are assigned to different treatment conditions. Some students are given practice and instruction in how to do their schoolwork better; other students are given the same instruction, but are also provided with feedback to increase their self-efficacy. In the latter treatment, students are taught how to attribute their improvement to their developing knowledge, skill, and effort, and are discouraged from attributing their poor performance to a lack

of ability. In these kinds of studies, students in the second condition show improvement in efficacy as well as effort, persistence, and performance over and above the group that just received remedial instruction (Komarraju, M., & Nadler, 2013; Lane, & Lane, 2001). These studies suggest that self-efficacy can be improved through particular teacher practices.

Besides the formal research on self-efficacy, there has been work on a related construct called learned helplessness. Learned helplessness is related to self-efficacy because both concern individuals' perceptions of their capabilities. However, learned helplessness refers to students' beliefs that they cannot control their own behaviour and that there is no relationship between their behaviour and an outcome (in self-efficacy theory, this is called a low outcome expectation (Lindstrom, & Sharma, 2011). For example, students are considered ''learned helpless'' when they believe that no matter what they do, how hard they study, or how hard they try, they will not be able to learn or do well in school.

In simple terms, they do not see any stable connection between their behaviour and the outcomes of learning and achievement. This is often a problem with students with learning problems or those in special education

programs. These students may have a long history of failure and often attribute it to their lack of ability, which they see as stable, uncontrollable, and internal to them. This kind of attributional pattern leads them to have low self-efficacy as well as low outcome expectations (believing that it does not matter if they try hard, because the outcome will not be better). In this case, research has continually shown that students who are high in learned helplessness are much less likely to persist at tasks, and they therefore experience the concomitant drop in learning engagement and performance (Artino, 2012).

Statement of Problem

Higher education in Nigeria is faced with a lot of problems. In these scenario, most students in Nigeria lack interest in education. The rate at which university students drop out of school is particularly becoming alarming. Lack of student engagement may be a predictor for poor achievements and dropping out of school. It is believed that engaged students learn and retain more than students who are not engaged (Lindstrom, & Sharma, 2011). It is unfortunate that the vision of student engagement is too rare among students and teachers. When students are not committed to

involving themselves in academic related activities in the institution where they are registered as students, it becomes a detriment to their academic performance and growth. Their learning rate is affected and the motivation to further one's education may become negatively impacted cognitively. Hence, the issue of academic disengagement is a major problem among undergraduates in Nigerian universities.

Most importantly, several studies have somewhat failed to explain the role of perceived social support roles as an antecedents in the perpetuation of behavioural academic disengagement in Nigeria. Few studies have explored merely the relationship between academic engagement and perceived social support. But no known studies have investigated the moderating role of student self-efficacy in the relationship between perceived social support among undergraduates. Because local studies have shown that our perceived support from friends and families may determine our involvement in learning activities in an academic environment. It became paramount for the current study to focus it interest on the association of students' level of perceived social support with academic engagement across levels of student

self efficacy. among undergraduate students of University of Benin(UNIBEN), Edo state

Purpose of the study

The current study which will be carried out in an academic population with the goal to investigate:

1. If perceived social support will have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates.
2. If perceived social support will have a statistical significant relationship with student self efficacy among undergraduates.
3. If student self efficacy will significantly moderate the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement among undergraduates.

Research Questions

1. Will perceived social support have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates?
2. Will perceived social support have a statistical significant relationship with student self efficacy among undergraduates?
3. Will student self efficacy significantly moderate the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement among undergraduates?

Hypotheses

H1: Perceived social support will have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates.

H2: Student self efficacy will have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates.

H3: Student self efficacy will significantly moderate the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement among undergraduates.

Operational Definition of Key Study Variables

Academic Engagement: This is defined as the extent to which students are committed to their academic work as measured with the 9 item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-Student Version (UWES-9S) (Schaufeli, 2006).

Student Self-efficacy: This is defined as students' beliefs in their capabilities to carry out academic related tasks and effectively actualize their academic goals as measured with the Student Self-efficacy Scale (SSE) (Rowbotham & Schmitz, 2013).

Perceived Social Support: The degree to which students perceive that their basic social needs are met by people around them as measured by the

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter is organized into comprehensive review of literature related to the study and it is discussed in the following subheadings.

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of Academic Engagement
- Concept of Student Self Efficacy
- Concept of Percieved Social Support
- Summary of Reviewed Literature.

Theoretical Framework

Theories of Perceived social support

Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958)

Social exchange theory posits that all human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis; and the comparison of alternatives. The theory was postulated by Homans (1958). Among the possible benefits are material or financial gains, social status, and emotional comforts. Costs on the other hand include sacrifices of time, money or lost opportunities. The difference between the benefits and the costs serves as the

outcome of the relationship. Homans (1958) summarized the theory by pointing out that social behaviour is an exchange of goods, material and non material. Further, that in an exchange, what one gives may be a cost to him/her just as what he gets may be a reward, and the person's behaviour changes less as the difference of the two, profit, tends to maximum.

Homans(1958) summarizes the system in three propositions: success, stimulus, and deprivation–satiation proposition,described below.

- Success proposition: When one finds they are rewarded for their actions, they tend to repeat the action.
- Stimulus proposition: The more often a particular stimulus has resulted in a reward in the past, the more likely it is that a person will respond to it.
- Deprivation–satiation proposition: The more often in the recent past a person has received a particular reward, the less valuable any further unit of that reward becomes.

Friends, relatives and significant others provide many benefits to an individual, both material and non material. These include financial assistance, emotional support, companionship, and encouragement. The cost may include the time spent with them, returning the feelings expressed or

other minor sacrifices. When weighed, the outcome is mostly profitable and the individual does not have any need to look for alternative sources of support. Thus the social support runs in a continuous cycle based on the assumptions of the exchange theory. Based on this, a person might not see the need to seek professional help for problems when he/she feels that relatives, friends or other significant others could render some solution.

Theories of Student Self-Efficacy

Self Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977)

Self-efficacy theory originally referred to an individual's perceived capabilities to control his or her performance in emotionally taxing or otherwise difficult situations (Bandura, 1977); but has since been expanded to include perceived capabilities to control self-referent activities like cognitive processes, emotions, and self-regulated behaviors. Although perceived control over outcomes is important, it does not guarantee that students will be motivated or will learn; thus students might believe that their teacher will be pleased if they make a high grade on the next exam (positive outcome expectation), but they may seriously doubt their capabilities to learn the material on the exam (low self-efficacy). This does

not imply that self-efficacy and outcome beliefs are not related but students who feel capable of learning and performing well in school expect, and usually receive, outcomes commensurate with their high performances (such as good grades and honour roll). Therefore, self-efficacy and expected outcome are separable in situations where outcomes are poorly linked with performance quality (such as teacher gives all students high grades, regardless of performance).

Self-efficacy theory postulates that people acquire information to appraise efficacy from their performance accomplishments, vicarious (observational) experiences, forms of persuasion, and physiological indexes; thus, attributions constitute one type of cue that students use to appraise efficacy. Moreover, attribution factors such as the amount of effort expended and judgments of task difficulty influence performance indirectly through self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). For example, students who succeed through high effort are likely to judge themselves as being less capable than those who succeed with ease. Therefore, success on a task judged as easy will not raise self-efficacy as much as success on a difficult task.

Self efficacy theoretical framework, is grounded in Bandura's social cognitive theory of personality which views people as self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating rather than as passively reacting organisms influenced by environmental factors or driven by hidden inner desires. It further explains that an individual's functioning and activities are the outcome of a dynamic interaction of three important factors: a persons behaviour; personal factors (such as thoughts, beliefs.); and environmental conditions; which exert mutual influences on one another. That is to say, that a student's high engagement in his/her academics, is largely determined by the students strong belief in his/her capabilities against external influences which he tends to ignore in order to attain desired height.

According to Bandura's (1982) self-efficacy theory, efficacy is the major determinant of effort, persistence, and goal setting. For instance, a person's belief in his/her capabilities determines the goal he/she sets, the level of effort and persistence he/she puts in towards the actualization of the set goals. In academic engagement, student's extent of commitment is measured by their level of self efficacy beliefs; hence, a person's level of

self-efficacy beliefs depends on the nature of the task and the context in which the task is performed. When requisite skills are lacking, high self-efficacy will not produce competent performances and outcome expectations. Bandura (1977) hypothesized that self-efficacy affects an individual's choice of activities, effort, and persistence. Thus, people having a low sense of efficacy for accomplishing a task may avoid it; while those who believe their capability would participate readily. However, individuals who feel efficacious are hypothesized to work harder and persist longer when they encounter difficulties than those who doubt their capabilities.

Concept of Academic Engagement

Zhong et al., (2023) defined academic engagement as the extent to which students participate in academic and non-academic activities; identify with and value the goals of schooling. Academic engagement is also defined as energy in action, the connection between person and activity; which consists of three forms: Behavioural, emotional, and cognitive (Russell, Ainley & Frydenberg, 2005).

The concept of engagement is multifaceted and includes factors such as students' feeling of agency, self-efficacy, and motivation to succeed in

both classroom and extracurricular activities; their level of involvement, effort, concentration, and interest in subjects and learning in general; and the degree to which learning is enjoyed or viewed as something that must be endured in order to reap rewards or avoid punishment.

Trépanier et al., (2013) engagement takes place and is manifested in emotion, cognition, and behaviour to avoid disaffection from happening when psychological needs like autonomy, belonging, and competence are satisfied within cultural enterprises like school, family, and work. Academic engagement, defined as students' active participation in and emotional commitment to learning (Casuso-Holgado et al., 2013), has a critical role in academic success (Wang and Eccles, 2012; Kwon et al., 2018). That is, students with a high level of academic engagement are more likely to concentrate on learning and achieve higher academic performance (Wang and Holcombe, 2010; Kwon et al., 2018). On the contrary, those with a low level of engagement may fail exams, drop out of school, and have problems in behaviors (Fredricks et al., 2004; Chipchase et al., 2017).

Academic engagement is the extent to which students are motivated to learn and do well in school (Ziegelstein, 2018). It is also a psychological

process that involves students' focus, engagement, effort, and investment in their academic work(Cho,2017). Pirnazarova & Atashova (2022) noted that student engagement in academic work is the student's psychological investment in an effort directed toward learning, understanding or mastering the knowledge, skills or crafts that academic work is intended to promote. They try hard to learn what school offers and take pride not simply in earning the formal indicators of success (grades) but in understanding the materials and incorporating or internalizing it in their lives. Learning tasks that engage students have particular characteristics; they are authentic and relevant for students; require and instill deep, critical thinking in them; have intellectual rigour and immerse the student in disciplinary inquiry; require students to interact and be meaningfully involved (Cazan, 2015).

Students' academic engagement also refers to a student's willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in the learning process thus, promoting higher level thinking for enduring understanding (Loscalzo, & Giannini, 2019). Students are engaged when they are involved in their work, persist irrespective of challenges and obstacles, and visibly delight in accomplishing their task. Academic

engagement of students depict students' willingness to participate in routine school activities, such as attending classes, submitting required work, and following teachers' directions in class (Chapman, 2003). In other words, students can also be academically engaged when they are meaningfully involved throughout the learning environment, which include: students curriculum design, classroom management and school building climate. Chapman (2003) noted that students who learn from committed scholar/teachers become more inspired professionals who are more committed to their profession and to their ongoing professional growth and development.

The construct of engagement is used to capture the gradual process by which students disconnect from school. Furthermore, in light of the knowledge that dropping out of school is a process rather than an instantaneous event, engagement offers a way to intervene at the first indications of a student's disengagement from the classroom. It also concentrates attention on variables that can be changed to improve high school experiences and increase school completion rates, both of which support students' motivation to succeed (Hoffer, 2015).

Academic engagement construct is the 'intensity and emotional quality of students' involvement in initiating and carrying out learning activities (Balducci et al., 2010). When students are engaged, they exhibit the following behaviours: they choose tasks that are on the edge of their competencies; they take the initiative when given the chance; they apply great effort and concentration to the completion of learning tasks; and they generally display positive emotions such as enthusiasm, optimism, curiosity, and interest when they are actively engaged in learning (Ellis, 2014).They learn at high levels and have a profound grasp of what they learn; retain what they learn and can transfer what they learn to new contexts.

Concept of Student Self efficacy

Self efficacy is used to describe a person's belief in his or her own ability to perform necessary tasks to achieve goals (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy tends to be assessed for narrow (e.g., this course) as opposed to general tasks (Bandura, 1997). This study focused on student's self-efficacy, instructors' self-efficacy, and the students' outcomes in terms of student engagement, grades, and satisfaction.

Self-efficacy needs to be distinguished from self-concept. Self-efficacy refers to an evaluation of the self while self-concept refers to comparisons of one's self with others (Brady,2011) In research on students' confidence, comparisons have been made in terms of how students feel about themselves in relation to others (Vaughn & Kornell, 2019).

Student confidence in that sense dealt with the students' self-concept. The focus of this study was on students' self-efficacy (i.e., evaluations made of the students' own abilities). Another difference between self-efficacy and self-concept is the level of specificity involved for each construct. Self-concept tends to be more broad, (e.g., learning statistics) and self-efficacy tends to be more specific (e.g., computing a standard deviation).

According to Utami (2023), one reason studies do not find a significant relationship between a self-efficacy construct and their dependent measure is because the criterion behaviour and the measured level of self-efficacy did not closely match (i.e., the measurement's specificity was insufficient).

High sense of student self-efficacy has been defined by Bandura (1997) as fostering a high level of motivation, academic accomplishments,

and developing intrinsic interest in academic subject matter. The self-regulatory capability of SCT helps account for skills that students should encompass such as: “planning, organizing, and managing instructional activities; enlisting resources; regulating one’s own motivation; and applying metacognitive skills to evaluate the adequacy of one’s knowledge and strategies.

Self-efficacy is an imperative part of preparation and performance. It involves a generative capability in which component cognitive, social and behavioural skills must be organized into integrated courses of action to serve innumerable purposes. Adeyemi and Agokei (2010) describe the construct as belief about one’s ability to perform successfully in a given course. Fakeye (2010) also views self-efficacy as learners’ beliefs about their own ability to accomplish a task. Klassen, Kwawchuk and Rajani (2008) opine that self-efficacy is a good predictor of human behaviour and actions. It is a constantly metamorphosing phenomenon. It is rather a general capacity that develops through time and experience. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy can be categorized as high and low. Ofole and Okopi (2012) opine that students with low self-efficacy are academically at risk.

On the other hand, a student characterized with high self-efficacy braces up and meets the academic rigour and excels in school essay writing because he or she perceives himself or herself as being capable of doing well in school. Conversely, a learner noted for having low academic self-efficacy inhibits good academic performance because of the tendency to see himself or herself as being unable to cope with the academic challenge (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016).

Al-Hebaishi (2014) submits that high or low self-efficacy is all about thoughts that the students hold about themselves which affect their academic performance directly or otherwise. These thoughtful feelings either aid or hinder their academic progress.

Concept of Perceived Social Support

Social support refers to the sense and reality of being taken care of, having help available from others, and—most importantly—being a part of a supportive social network(Xin, 2023). These supportive resources can be emotional (e.g., nurturance), informational (e.g., advice), or companionship (e.g., sense of belonging); tangible (e.g., financial assistance) or intangible (e.g., personal advice).

From the starting point of a common characteristic, further defining of social support appears to fall into one of at least five categories of the following: 1) Type of support provided 2) Recipients perceptions of support 3) Intentions or behaviors of the provider 4) Reciprocal support and 5) Social networks((Knoll et al., 2011)

The resources offered, or what is truly supplied to the person or people, are referred to as the type of support delivered. The assistance given is customised to the circumstances around an individual's perceived need. The recipient's perspective of the support constitutes the second definitional category for social support.

Social support was also found to have a significant impact on student achievement. Since family and friends are the first source of reference for individuals, it has been found that the reference from these two sources has a significant impact on academic achievement, as the support that students receive can help reduce their psychological problems because they feel the presence of Someone to help them and thus help them perform well in academic life(Amalia&Latifah,2019)

Summary of Reviewed Literature

The framework of the current study is anchored on the model of the self-determination theory developed by Deci & Ryan (1985).

The Self-determination theory provides an important and comprehensive theoretical framework which helps in clarifying the function of self efficacy in the student engagement construct. For example, a student who is self- determined to making a first class grade and being the best in class, will submit all assignments, put much interest and attention in his/her courses; as well as extra effort and time in his/her personal study so as to enable him/her actualize set goals. This student will not be carried away by other less rewarding activities because his/her mindset tends to guide his/her actions. Self-Determination Theory is concerned with the motivation behind the choices that people make without any external influence or interference; and focuses on the degree to which individuals' behavior is self- motivated and self-determined.

Therefore, when an individual's reason for engaging in activities stem from his/her inner motives, the resulting behavioural regulations are characterized by self- determination, but when an individual feels pressured

to engage in a task, he or she will have little or no self-determination or autonomy.

Self-Determination theory also acknowledges that the catalyst for behavior in many situations (commonly in education) is external to oneself rather than focusing on intrinsic motivation as the only desired end (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This theory describes students as having three categories of needs: a sense of competence (which involves understanding how to, and believing that one can achieve various outcomes); sense of relatedness to others (which involves initiating and regulating one's own actions); and of autonomy (the universal urge to be causal agents of one's own life and act in harmony with one's integrated self). Moreover, to be self determined, is to endorse one's actions at the highest level of reflection; and when people are self determined, they experience a sense of freedom to do what is interesting, personally important, and vitalizing.

Furthermore, it is important to know that student' early attempts at regulating their own work may not always be successful since good decision making and time management require practice. Teachers however, can help their students develop their self-regulation by providing limited choices

between acceptable options, by assisting with breaking large tasks into manageable pieces, and by providing guidelines for students to use in monitoring their own progress.

This theory invariably means that the type of engagement behavior exhibited by students, stems from self determined decision, such that irrespective of external factors, they still remain focused to achieve their goals.

Lillian(2020) investigated the moderating role of student self-efficacy in the relationship between perceived social supports and student academic engagement among undergraduates. Participants of the study comprised of 60 undergraduates selected from the year two undergraduates of department of Civil law in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The gender distribution composed of 45 females (75%) and 15 males (25%). Their age ranged from 17 to 26 years with a mean age of 18.84 and standard deviation of 1.7years. Result showed that perceived social support has a significant positive relationship with academic engagement ($r= .379$, $p < .01$). Meanwhile, student self efficacy positively and significantly correlated with academic engagement ($r = .491$, $p < .01$). The moderation analysis revealed that

student - self efficacy moderated the relationship between perceived social support and student academic engagement (b= .0285, 95% CI [-.0528, -.0043], t= -2.36, p<.05.) The study suggests that University management should develop strategies towards ensuring that students are encouraged to engage in academic activities. Parents and guardians are encouraged to provide every social support necessary to improve the student's academic engagement. Based on Education improvement theory, the study recommends the application of student self- efficacy psychological test in the POSTUME criteria for selection of freshmen and Fresh women into the universities in Nigeria.

Blaze(2019) links between self-efficacy, social support, and academic achievement are well supported in the literature. The number of people, and the perceived satisfaction with the support they offer, is positively correlated with academic achievement, as it reduces stress and influences an individual's choice of coping mechanism. Self-efficacy influences grades by establishing positive behavioural patterns that result in individuals exerting more effort on a given task among other things. And, with increasing emphasis being placed on individual academic achievement, any and all

potential aids must be considered in an attempt to attain good marks. The relationship between social support, self-efficacy, and academic achievement is understudied in Australia. It was theorised that individuals with higher levels of these two factors would do better in an end of semester exam. Participants were drawn from the 1st year psychology cohort at Adelaide university and completed measures measuring demographic factors as well as the measures measuring social support, self-efficacy, and control variables. Results from correlational analyses comparing variables and exam marks were all non-significant, except for intelligence.

Apeh and Nteh(2018) investigated the impact of social support on Students' Academic Achievement in Senior Secondary Schools in the Federal Capital Territory,Abuja Nigeria. The research design for the study was descriptive survey. The population of the study was 24,430 senior secondary school students as at 2018/2019 academic session. A sample of 377 respondents were selected for this study. The findings showed that parents, teachers, classmates and friends provide support to students; social support significantly influenced students' academic achievement. It was recommended that parents, teachers, classmates and friends should be

encouraged to sustain and improve on their supports for students through seminars, workshops and distribution of educative materials like posters and pamphlets.

Okwuduba(2020)examine the relationship between learning support, student engagement, and science achievement of remedial students in the university placement examination during the COVID-19 pandemic. This preliminary quantitative research adopted a correlational design. The participants of this study were 216 students who received their remedial education through an online method in Nigerian settings. Two instruments were used for data collection: student engagement scale and learning support scale. The data were analyzed using correlation and hierarchical regression analyses. The results revealed that learning support aspects, including teacher, peer, and parent support, and student engagement dimensions, such as emotional, behavioural, cognitive, and agentic, were positive predictors of students' science success. This study has implications for preservice and in-service teacher education, especially educating the teachers on how to actively collaborate with parents in inspiring their children to be engaged and successful scholars.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the procedures applicable for carrying out the research using the following sub-headings;

- Research design
- Population of the study
- Sample and sampling techniques
- Research instrument
- Validity of the instrument
- Reliability of the instrument
- Method of data collection
- Method of data analysis

Research Design

The research design for this study was descriptive method, aiming to investigate the moderating role of student self efficacy in the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement among undergraduates.

Population of the study:

The population of the study was 13,000 students from the faculty of education.

Sample and sampling techniques:

A total of One hundred (100) students were randomly sampled from departments out of the total number of Departments in Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The students used for this study were twenty (20) from Adult Education (ADT), twenty(20) from Department of Educational Foundation (DEF), twenty (20) from Department of Educational Management (DEM), twenty(20) from Department of Vocational Training Education and twenty (20) from Educational Evaluation Counselling Psychology (EECP). The random sampling procedure was adopted for the study, a disproportionate sampling procedure was also adopted.

Research Instrument

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley (1988). It is a 12-item scale that measures perceived support from three domains: family, friends, and a significant other. The total scale scores were used in the present study.

The Student Self-Efficacy Scale (SSE) was developed by Rowbotham and Schmitz (2013) by adapting the Teacher Self Efficacy scale to reflect the role of a student instead of the teacher's role. The four areas addressed by the scale are: a) academic performance, b) skill and knowledge development, c) social interaction with faculty, and d) coping with academic stress. For example, the TSE item "I am convinced that I am able to successfully teach all relevant subject content to even the most difficult students" was changed to "I am convinced that I am able to successfully learn all relevant subject content even if it is difficult". These changes reflect the students' role and skills necessary to be successful in the classroom. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (UWES–9S) developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006) .Participants completing the MSPSS, SSE and UWES-9S would indicate their their opinion using likert rating scale; Strongly Agree(SA)=4, Agree(A)= 3, Strongly Disagreed(SD)= 2, Disagree(A)= 1

Validity of the instrument

The researcher's project supervisor and other two experts in the department of educational evaluation and counselling psychology would

validate the research instrument to ascertain the appropriateness and make necessary corrections which would be effected by the researcher.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument adopted for this research was found reliable as it been cross checked by expert and confirm to be worth enough to seek for information. The researcher also adopt a test and re-test whereby the test was retested after the first time.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaires were administered and collected on the spot to ensure 100% collection of distributed questionnaire.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the result obtained through questionnaires. The data gathered were presented according to the order in which they were arranged in the research questions, simple percentage and pie graphs were used to analyze the demographic information of the respondents while spearman rank correlation was adopted to test the research hypotheses.

Table 1: Bio Data of Respondents

Age of Respondents	**Frequency**	**Percent**
below 19 years	27	27.0
19-23 years	34	34.0
24-28years	33	33.0
29 years-Above	6	6.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Table 1 above shows the age grade of the respondents used for this study. 27 respondents which represent 27.0percent of the population are below 19

years. 34 respondents which represent 34.0 percent of the population are between 19-23 years.33 respondents which represent 33.0 percent of the population are between 24-28years.6 respondents which represent 6.0 percent of the population are 29 years and above. This then implies that majority of the respondents are above the legal age which is 18 years, and as such can be termed adults.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**
male	43	43.0
female	57	57.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Table 2 above shows the gender of respondents used for the survey. 43 respondents representing 43.0percent of the population are male.57 respondents representing 57.0 percent of the population are female.The data in table 2 reveals that the population of the respondents comprises of more females than males with a difference of 14.0 percent.

Table 3: Department of Respondents

Departments	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Adult Education	20	20.0
Educational foundation	20	20.0
Educational Management	20	20.0
Educational Evaluation and counseling psychology	20	20.0
vocational training Education	20	20.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

According to the data in the table, five departments in the faculty of education was used as the sample for the study and 20 students were selected for the study from each of the five departments making it a total of 100 students using the simple random sampling technique.

Research Question 1: Will perceived social support have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates?

Table 4: Significance of perceived social support on academic engagement among undergraduates

S/N	Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
1	There is a special person who is around when I am in need.	378	3.78	Agreed
2	There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	354	3.54	Agreed
3	My family really tries to help me	392	3.92	Agreed
4	I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	330	3.3	Agreed
5	I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me	345	3.45	Agreed
6	My friends really try to help me	268	2.68	Agreed
7	I can count on my friends when things go wrong	257	2.57	Agreed
8	I can talk about my problems with my family	347	3.47	Agreed
9	I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows	297	2.97	Agreed
10	There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings	389	3.89	Agreed
11	My family is willing to help me make decisions	320	3.2	Agreed
12	I can talk about my problems with my friends	257	2.57	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

The data in table 4 shows the responses of respondents on the perceived social support have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. All the items met the mean bench mark of 2.50 and so were Agreed. This implies that the respondents are in agreement that perceived social support have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State

Research Question 2: Will Perceived Social Support Have a Statistical Significant Relationship With Student Self Efficacy Among Undergraduates?

Table 5: Social Support and Significant Relationship with Student Self Efficay

S/N	Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
1	I am convinced that I am able to successfully learn relevant subject content even if it's difficult	342	3.42	Agreed
2	I know that I can maintain a positive attitude toward this course even when tension arises.	330	3.3	Agreed
3	When I try hard, I am able to learn even the most difficult content.	346	3.46	Agreed
4	I am convinced that, as time goes by, I will continue to become more and more capable of learning the content of this course.	250	2.50	Agreed
5	Even if I get distracted in class, I am confident that I can continue to learn.	309	3.09	Agreed
6	I am confident in my ability to learn, even if I am having a bad day.	279	2.79	Agreed
7	If I try hard enough, I can attain academic goals I desire.	389	3.89	Agreed
8	I am convinced that I can develop Creative ways to cope with stress that May occur while taking this course.	261	2.61	Agreed
9	I know I can stay motivated to participate in the course	368	3.68	Agreed
10	I know that I can finish any academic assignment and earn the grade I want, even when others think I cannot.	380	3.80	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

The data in table 5 shows the responses of respondents on the perceived Social Support Have a Statistical Significant Relationship With Student Self Efficacy Among UndergraduatesRelationship Between Early

Marriage and Educational Attainment in the University of Benin, Benin City, Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. All the items met the mean bench mark of 2.50 and so were Agreed. This implies that the respondents are in agreement that perceived social support has a statistical significant relationship with students self efficacy in the University of Benin.

Research Question 3: Will Student Self Efficacy Significantly Moderate the Relationship Between Perceived Social Support and Academic Engagement Among Undergraduates?

Table 6: Student Self Efficacy and Perceived Social Support and Academic Engagement Among Undergraduates

S/N	Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
1	When I am doing my work as a Student, I feel bursting with energy	376	3.76	Agreed
2	I feel energetic and capable when I am Studying or going for lecture	368	3.68	Agreed
3	.I am enthusiastic about my academic studies	255	2.55	Agreed
4	My academic studies inspires me	368	3.68	Agreed
5	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to lecture	234	2.34	Disagreed
6	I feel happy when I am studying intensively	327	3.27	Agreed
7	I am proud of my academic studies	256	2.56	Agreed
8	I am immersed in my academic studies	345	3.45	Agreed
9	I get carried away when I am studying	2.43	2.46	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

According to the data above, the items 1,2,3,4,6,7, and 8 met the mean bench mark of 2.50 while items 5 and 9 did not meet the mean bench mark of 2.50, with a mean of 2.34 and 2.46 respectively.This implies that majority of the respondents disagreed that when they wake up in the morning they feel like going to lecture and they also agree that they get carried away when studying.the respondents agreed that; Boys are encourage. In general, the respondents agreed that Student Self Efficacy Significantly Moderate the Relationship Between Perceived Social Support and Academic Engagement Among Undergraduates in the University of Benin, Benin City Edo State.

Correlation Analysis Results

1. **Correlation between Perceived Social Support and Academic Engagement:**

- Pearson Correlation: 1
- Sig. (2-tailed): .000
- N: 100
- Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement among undergraduates at the University of Benin, Benin City.

2. Correlation between Student Self-Efficacy and Academic Engagement:

- Pearson Correlation: 1

- Sig. (2-tailed): .000

- N: 100

- Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between student self-efficacy and academic engagement among undergraduates.

3. Moderating Effect of Student Self-Efficacy:

- Conclusion: Student self-efficacy significantly moderates the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement among undergraduates.

4. Impact of Motivational Strategies on Adult Learners' Performance:

- Pearson Correlation: .853**

- Sig. (2-tailed): .000

- N: 100

- Conclusion: Motivational strategies have a significant positive impact on adult learners' performance in Benin City.

Conclusion of correlation results

The correlation coefficient (R= 0.853) indicates a strong positive relationship. Therefore, we conclude that there is a significant relationship between perceived social support, self-efficacy, and academic engagement among undergraduates in selected departments in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin.

Discussion of findings

The current study investigated the moderating role of student self efficacy in the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement among undergraduates. The first hypothesis stated that perceived social support will have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates. The result showed that perceived social support have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates. Thus, hypothesis 1 was accepted. This supports the findings of Jayarathna (2014) who reported that social support plays a significant role in the level of academic engagement of a first year undergraduate. Furthermore, out of three aspects identified on social support, social support from family and friends were significantly

affecting to the undergraduates' academic engagement level but not the social support from a significant other. This also supports the findings of Gutiérrez, Tomás, Romero, and Barricac (2017) who used structural equations to analyze the effects of the perceived academic support and the school engagement on the satisfaction with school and found out there is the influence of the perceived academic support of teachers, family, and peers on the satisfaction with school using the school engagement as mediating variable. The result also supports the findings of Mackinnon (2012) who investigated the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement and found that high levels of perceived social support at age 15 did not protect against declines in academic engagement over time. In sum, perceived social support appears to have no bearing on adolescents' future academic engagement, despite commonly held assumptions of its importance.

Hypothesis 2 stated that astudent self efficacy will have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates.. The result showed that student self efficacy will have a statistical significant relationship with academic engagement among undergraduates.. This

supports the findings of Dogan (2015) evaluated the extent to which academic performance is affected by student engagement, student self-efficacy, and academic motivation and found out that result showed that all the three dimensions of academic engagement (cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioural engagement significantly correlated with academic self efficacy among students. It also supports the study of Zhao, Zheng, Pan, Zhou (2021) explored the relationship among adolescent self-esteem and academic engagement, the mediating effect of student self-efficacy, and the moderating effect of perceived social support and they found out that self-esteem positively predicted adolescent academic engagement through the indirect mediating role of academic self-efficacy. This also is consistent with the findings of Chen, Bao, Gao (2021) who investigated the relationship between proactive personality and academic engagement and found out that the student self efficacy showed significant positive relationship with academic engagement. This indicates that as students' efficacy for academic activities increases, academic engagements increases as well.

This also supports the findings of Chang and Chien (2015) that revealed that student self-efficacy and student engagement yielded a significant average effect size r and that significantly correlated. It is also consistent with the findings of Noreen, Hassan, Batool, and Ali (2018) who indicated that student self-efficacy influences student engagement and academic outcome positively and significantly. It means that student self-efficacy influences academic outcomes directly as well as indirectly through student engagement.

This also supports the findings of Momeni and Radmehr (2018) who found that there was a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic engagement among male and female. On the other hand, the results of independent T-test showed that there was a significant difference between academic engagement and self-efficacy among male and female students. Also, academic engagement among girls was higher than of boys.

Hypothesis 3 stated that student self efficacy will significantly moderate the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement among undergraduates. Results showed that student self

efficacy will significantly moderate the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement among undergraduates. This is in line with the findings of Pan, Donlan, and Zaff (2017) who investigated the associations among teacher and parent support, students' self-efficacy, and academic engagement and reported that students' academic self-efficacy mediates parent and teacher support and youth academic engagement. Moreover, participants' adverse life experiences moderate the connections among perceived support from parents, academic self-efficacy, and academic engagement.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between perceived social support and student academic engagement among undergraduates of university of Benin, moderating role of student efficacy.

The population of the study comprises of 13,000 students in the eight (8) Departments in Faculty of Education. The sample for the study consists of One hundred (100) students drawn from five (5) departments in Faculty of Education. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the departments from the eight departments in Faculty of Education, University of Benin.

A full analysis and discussion were made in chapter four of this research report.

Conclusion

The current study investigated the moderating role of student self - efficacy in the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement. The first hypothesis which states that perceived social support

will have significant relationship with academic engagement was accepted. Hypothesis 2 which states that student self- efficacy will have significant relationship with academic engagement was accepted. Hypothesis 3 which states that student self- efficacy will moderate the relationship between perceived social support and academic engagement was accepted.

Globally, education is regarded as the live wire of every nation. No nation including Nigeria can grow or develop without quality education. In other words, there is need for a serious engagement of individuals, families, institutions and academic stakeholders to attain a sustainable oriented goals in education.

Recommendations

University management should develop strategies towards ensuring that students are encouraged to engage in academic activities, and also encourage parents and guardians to provide every support necessary to improve the students perception of social support they receive.

Students should also seek professional assistance towards developing their self efficacy of academic related tasks in order to improve their ability to be

academically engaged when they even have all the social support they can get.

Suggestion for future studies

Future studies should use larger sample sizes for testing the hypotheses. This will reduce the error margin and increase the statistical power. Future researchers should adopt an experimental design in order to explain the causal effect of social support.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: (Demographic Information)

Gender Male [ ] Female [ ]

Age 16-19 [ ] 20-24 [ ] 25 above [ ]

SECTION B:

MULTIDIMENSIONAL SOCIAL SUPPORT BY GREGORY ZIMET, DAHLEM, AND FARLEY(1988)

Instructions: I am interested in how you feel about the following statements. Read each statement carefully. Indicate how you feel about each statement.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1.	There is a special person who is around when I am in need.				
2.	There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.				
3.	My family really tries to help me.				
4.	I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.				
5	I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.				
6	My friends really try to help me.				
7	I can count on my friends when things go wrong.				
8	I can talk about my problems with my family.				
9	I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.				
10	There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.				
1	My family is willing to help me make decisions.				
12	I can talk about my problems with my friends.				

STUDENT SELF EFFICACY BY ROWBOTHAM M. AND SCHMITZ GS (2013)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I am convinced that I am able to successfully learn relevant subject content even if it is difficult.				
2.	I know that I can maintain a positive attitude toward this course even when tension arises.				
3.	When I try hard, I am able to learn even the most difficult content.				
4.	I am convinced that, as time goes by, I will continue to become more and more capable of learning the content of this course.				
5.	Even if I get distracted in class, I am confident that I can continue to learn.				
6.	I am confident in my ability to learn, even if I am having a bad day.				
7.	If I try hard enough, I can attain academic goals I desire.				
8.	I am convinced that I can develop creative ways to cope with stress that may occur while taking this course.				
9.	I know I can stay motivated to participate in the course.				
10.	I know that I can finish any academic assignment and earn the grade I want, even when others think I cannot.				

WORK ENGAGEMENT SCALE SCHAUFELI ET AL (2006)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	When I am doing my work as a student, I feel bursting with energy.				
2	I feel energetic and capable when I am studying or going for lecture.				
3	I am enthusiastic about my academic studies.				
4	My academic studies inspire me.				
5	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to lecture.				
6	I feel happy when I am studying intensively.				
7	I am proud of my academic studies.				
8	I am immersed in my academic studies.				
9	I get carried away when I am studying.				