



**ACADEMIC MOTIVATION AMONG SELECTED UNIVERSITY
UNDERGRADUATES IN OGUN STATE: THE ROLES OF PERCEIVED
PARENTAL SUPPORT AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERN**

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ABSTRACT

For effective learning to take place, students must be academically motivated. Academic motivation (AM) is the drive that propels students to engage in academic tasks with the aim of being successful. While rich literature exist on the subject of academic motivation of Nigerian undergraduates, there is a dearth of studies on the interactions between academic motivation, family communication pattern and perceived parental support. This study therefore investigated how perceived parental support and family communication patterns predict academic motivation among Nigerian undergraduates. The quantitative research design was deployed for the study. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 395 students (mean age: 19.68 ± 2.41) from the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The Academic Motivation Scale, Perception of Parents Scale, and Family Communication Patterns Scale were used to for data collection. Data was analyzed using linear regression, multiple regression, and independent sample t-test. The results indicated that family communication patterns predict academic motivation [$F=132.06$, $p < .01$] with a variance of 25% of the total variance observed in academic motivation; perceived parental support predicts academic motivation [$F=260.83$, $p < 0.01$] with a variance of 40% of the total variance observed in academic motivation, while the joint contribution of family communication patterns and perceived parental support predicts academic motivation [$F=147.21$, $p < 0.05$] with a variance of 43% of the total variance observed in academic motivation. Gender significantly influenced AM [$t = -7.58$, $p < .01$], with female students reporting higher academic motivation than male students. Age did not significantly predict AM. The study recommends parents fostering a positive communication climate in the home, and collaboration with schools to create programs that increase parental involvement in their children's academic lives.

Keywords: Perceived parental support, Family communication patterns, Academic motivation, Undergraduates, Ogun State.

INTRODUCTION

Academic Motivation (AM) is a psychological concept that is essential to the educational process. It may be defined as the intrinsic motivation, perseverance, and the urge to participate in the education processes with no direct implications on academic performance, retention, and overall performance (Vu et al., 2024). The significance of student motivation in academic performance has always been noted in the academic community across the world (Steinmayr *et al*, 2019). For instance, cross-national research in China and the United States indicate that achievement is positively correlated with extrinsic motivation and *amotivation* negatively affects performance (Gale and Nowell, 2020). Similarly, a study done in Europe reveals that psychological distress and isolation during the COVID-19 outbreak had a massive negative impact on the motivation level of pupils (Tian *et al*, 2025). These studies show that motivation itself is not only an individual characteristic but also depends on the macro societal and contextual factors (Ishida and Sekiyama, 2024).

There is an extensive body of literature on the level of academic motivation of the Nigerian undergraduates. Research has revealed that academic resilience, achievement drive and self-efficacy are good predictors of student involvement. For instance, a research at Kebbi State University discovered that academic stress is a major factor that dictates motivation since most students cannot endure under pressure (Muza *et al*, 2020). In another study, Nnamdi Azikiwe University found that no other institutional practices have direct influence on the levels of motivation of students in either way, and in some cases a competitive environment discourages poor students (Okeke *et al*, 2023). The findings of the study implies that various individual, institutional, and family-specific factors are most likely to influence the motivation rates of the Nigerian undergraduates.

Granted the above, it becomes important to interrogate the implications of the communication patterns in the family and the perceived parental support on motivation. The encouragement and emotional safety of the parents are the foundation of the academic engagement of students and their sustainability. Studies have established that the presence of parental support is associated with an increased likelihood of children developing an intrinsic motivation that is critical in the maintenance of engagement and performance (Steinmayr *et al*, 2019).

Perceived parental support influences motivation of students to study as it makes them feel empowered and self-sufficient. Parental support, guidance, and resources are seen by students as confirmation of their capability and this enhances their self-confidence in solving academic tasks. On the other hand, lack of it, which may be caused by the perceived absence of parental support, can lead to students becoming disengaged and performing poorly. Lawal (2023) discovered that the contacts of parents with Nigerian students played an important role in supporting their tenacity and academic commitment, which demonstrates that family systems could be very helpful in maintaining motivation.

Family patterns of communication are also very significant in regard to academic motives. Establishing trust, understanding, and emotional stability through open, honest, and encouraging communication have enabled children to air their concerns, consult, and align their expectations in school with their families. Conversely, given the likelihood of students to enjoy autonomy and self-direction, motivation might be surpassed by oppressive or controlling communication styles. Jackson *et al* (2023) claim that communication styles as a factor applied to African environment, where the focus of students is on families, with significant impact on motivation, as they either support or undermine academic dreams of students. When family communication styles are

added to perceived parental support, the latter will influence the former in a synergistic way (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002; Steinmayr *et al*, 2019). The practical advice and psychological backing provided through family support and open communication also help the students remain motivated (Choi *et al*, 2010; Ritchie and Fitzpatrick, 1990). Such interaction is of a great relevance in Nigeria, where undergraduates become the targets of peer pressure, institutional pressure, and financial hardships (Lawal, 2023; Okoro, 2020). The family provides support to the pupils by teaching them about perseverance, resilience, and academic focus (Okoro, 2020).

Other than family factors, demographic factors such as age and gender also have a great influence on academic motivation and achievement (Richardson *et al*, 2012; Schunk *et al*, 2014). It is found that male and female students do not share the same view of academic challenges and reaction to motivational stimuli (Muza *et al*, 2020). Richardson *et al* (2012) and Okoro (2020) assert that the extrinsic factors influencing male students more might be a career opportunity and social status, while female students might be intrinsically motivated and persevere. Such differences can be also backed by cultural expectations and gender roles. Age has also been identified to play an important role. Younger undergraduates tend to be less persistent and more passionate than older students, who might be more resistant and self-sufficient but uninterested in academic work (Lawal, 2023).

These demographic implications are an indication that when analyzing academic motivation, individual differences should be considered (Steinmayr *et al*, 2019). Parental involvement, family communication style, age, and gender collaborate to generate positive outcomes in the Nigerian universities, specifically in Ogun State, where higher education is viewed as a venue of intellectual growth and social mobility (Lawal, 2023; Okoro, 2020). Some of the problems that most fresh undergraduates encounter include peer pressure, financial problems, and institutional stress (Muza *et al*, 2020). The role of families as a source of psychological and emotional support is still considered to be one of the most crucial, and demography also affects how students will react to such issues (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002; Jackson *et al*, 2023). The knowledge of these factors can allow optimizing academic motivation in Nigerian undergraduates and ensure that treatment matches individual and family traits (Steinmayr *et al*, 2019; Okoro, 2020).

To establish the academic motivation of the sampled undergraduates in Ogun State, the research seeks to establish the relationships existing between perceived parental support and family communication pattern. The specific research questions for this study are: to what extent does perceive parental support predict academic motivation among undergraduates in a selected institution in Ogun State? To what degree does family communication patterns predict academic motivation among the participants? To what extent does the joint interaction of perceived parental support and family communication patterns predict academic motivation among the undergraduates? And are there gender influences on academic motivation among the participants? This study offers a comprehensive outlook on the impact of family structure on motivation and presents a feasible intervention to enhance student participation in higher education in Nigeria, contextualizing it to the global and African environment as well as to the country of Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

Constructed on a quantitative research design, this study deployed the cross-sectional survey method. A multi-staged sampling approach was used to select 395 (201

male, and 194 females) undergraduates (mean age: 19.68 ± 2.41) from Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire on socio-demographics, academic motivation, perception of parental support scale, and family communication patterns scale was used.

Academic Motivation Scale:

Academic Motivation Scale is a scale of 28 items which is Likert Scaled, to assess motivation in education (Vallerand *et al*, 1992). The 28 items are further divided into seven sub-scales that evaluate *amotivation*, three forms of extrinsic motivation, and three forms of intrinsic motivation. It poses the question, "*Why do you go to college?*" and the items illustrate the various motivational approaches that could be used to answer it. The seven sub-scales include: *intrinsic motivation-to know* (items 2, 9,16,23), *intrinsic motivation-towards accomplishment* (items 6, 13,20, 27), *intrinsic motivation-to experience stimulation* (items 4,11,18,25), *extrinsic motivation-identified* (items 3,10,17,24), *extrinsic motivation-introjected* (items 7,14,21,28), *extrinsic motivation-external regulation* (items 1,8, 15,22) and finally, *amotivation* (items 5, 12,19,26). The scale is measured using a 7-point Likert Scale of 1 = Does not correspond at all, 2/3 = corresponds a little, 4 = corresponds moderately, 5/6 = corresponds a lot, 7 = corresponds exactly.

However, due to the ambiguity in the 7-point Likert Scale, the scale was adapted to suit the understanding of the participants, whereby 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, and 7 = strongly agree. The English version of the scale, which is the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), possesses sufficient temporal stability in a period of one month (mean test-retest = .79) and internal consistency (mean alpha = .81) (Vallerand *et al*, 1992). The consistency of the tool in the participants of the current study was 0.88. The scores are high, which means that there is a high level of academic motivation.

Perception of Parental Support Scale:

The Perception of Parental Support scale is a self-report questionnaire comprising of 9 questions that provides a measure of three subscales (informational support, emotional support and financial support) (Choi *et al*, 2010). Informational parental support was determined by using three questions that measured the extent to which the adolescents perceived their parents provided counseling on studies, career choices, and proper attitudes regarding education and life. Financial assistance was evaluated using three questions related to perceptions of the participants concerning the allowance given by their parents and the purchase of necessities.

Emotional support was measured using three questions on the degree to which teenagers felt that their parents understood them, listened to them regarding their problems and supported them during hard times. Each item was scored on four-point Likert Scale (1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree and 4 = agree) scales. The scale reliability was done in the United States, Japan, South Korea and China $\alpha = 0.86$, $\alpha = 0.64$, $\alpha = 0.90$; $\alpha = 0.82$, $\alpha = 0.72$, $\alpha = 0.88$; $\alpha = 0.66$, $\alpha = 0.52$, $\alpha = 0.82$. The instrument has a 0.89 reliability among the participants of the present study. A higher score means that there is a high perception of parental support.

The Revised Family Communication Patterns Scale:

The Revised Family Communication Patterns Scale, the revised version of McLeod and Chaffee (1972) measure the Family Communication Patterns Scale, which is a Likert-type scale created by Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (1990) as the Family Communication Patterns Scale, and intended to measure communication patterns in families, based on 26 items (conversation orientation, 15 items and conformity orientation, 11 items). Conversation orientation indicates the degree of openness and free flow of communication among family members whereas conformity orientation indicates the degree of uniformity of attitudes, beliefs as well as values among family members (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002).

Agreements or disagreements are rated (and therefore there is a Likert scale) with the highest possible score of 5 (strongly agree), and the lowest possible score of 1 (strongly disagree); hence, high conversation orientation scores indicate open and supportive communication, whereas high conformity orientation scores indicate focus on agreement and conformity. The RFCP has continually passed reliability estimates of acceptable to excellent internal consistency with Cronbach alpha values between .84 and .92 in conversation orientation, and between .72 and .87 in conformity orientation, and the reliability coefficient of participants in the present study was .83 which confirms that the RFCP is suitable in measuring the family communication patterns in the Nigerian undergraduate setting (Ritchie and Fitzpatrick, 1990; Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002).

RESULTS

Sociodemographic characteristics of participants

The socio-demographics of the participants are summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables	Group	Number	%
Gender	Male	201	50.9
	Female	194	49.1
	Total	395	100.0
Caregiver	Both Parent	324	82
	Only Mother	41	10.4
	Only Father	15	3.8
	Guardian	9	2.3
	Self-Sponsored	6	1.5
	Total	395	100
Family Type	Monogamous	356	90.1
	Polygamous	33	8.4
	Others	6	1.5
	Total	395	100
Year of Study	100L	116	29.4
	200L	129	32.7
	300L	110	27.8
	400L	28	7.1
	500L	12	3.0
	Total	395	100.0
Age (in years) Mean: 19.68, SD=2.41 Ranges between 15 to 34 years			

The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in the study are shown in Table 1. The findings shows that male participants were 201 (50.9%) while the female participants were 194 (49.1%). Their ages range between 15 and 34 years ($M = 19.68$; $SD = 2.41$). Those who have both parents as caregivers were 324 (82%), those with only father as care giver were 15 (3.8%), those with only mother as care giver was 41 (10.4%), those with guardians were 9 (2.3%) and those that were self-sponsored were 6 (1.5%). It was observed that participants from monogamous families were 356 (90.1%) while those from polygamous families were 33 (8.4%), and others were 6 (1.5%). Also, the level/year of study of the participants indicated that 116 (29.4%) were in 100 level, 129 (32.75%) were in 200 level, 110 (27.8%) were in 300 level, 28 (7.1%) were in 400 level and 12 (3.0%) were in 500 level.

Table 2: Summary of Correlation Matrix among the Variables in the Study

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Age	1							
Gender	.05	1						
Perceived Parental Support	-.03	.16**	-.06	-.05	-.08	1		
Family Communication Patterns	.03	.13*	.04	-.05	.03	.57**	1	
Academic Motivation	-.02	.23**	-.05	-.09	.00	.63**	.50**	1
Mean	19.68	-	-	-	-	37.79	83.33	133.89
SD	2.41	-	-	-	-	7.74	13.96	25.23

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ $N = 395$. Gender was coded 1 = Male, 2 = Female.

The result in Table 2 shows the test of the relationship between the variables. It can be noted that gender had a significant relationship with perceived parental support [$r(393) = .16$, $p < .01$], family communication patterns [$r(395) = .13$, $p < .05$] and AM [$r(395) = .23$, $p < .01$], indicating that female students have higher level of academic motivation, perceived parental support and family communication patterns compared to their male counterparts. Also, perceived parental support [$r(395) = .63$, $p < .01$] and family communication patterns [$r(395) = .50$, $p < .01$], respectively have positive significant relationship with academic motivation. These findings shows that university undergraduates with high level of perceived parental support and family communication patterns will experience high level of academic motivation. More so, age had no significant relationship with academic motivation [$r(395) = -.02$, $p > .05$], [$r(395) = -.05$, $p > .05$], [$r(395) = -.09$, $p > .05$] and [$r(395) = .00$, $p > .05$], respectively.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 3: Linear Regression Analysis showing the Prediction of Perceived Parental Support on Academic Motivation

Variables	β	T	R	R^2	df	F
			.63	.40	1, 393	260.83**
Perceived Parental Support	.63	16.15**				

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, $N = 395$

The results in Table 3 showed that perceived parental support significantly predicted academic motivation [$\beta = .63$, $t = 16.15$, $p < .01$]. This implies that when university students have high perceived parental support, the level of academic motivation increases. The implication was that academic motivation increases among

the participants with a significant increase in the level of their perception of parental support. It was further observed that the variable (perceived parental support) contributes a significant variance of 40% of the total changes observed in academic motivation [$R = .63$, $R^2 = .40$, $F(1, 393) = 260.83$, $p < .01$].

Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis showing the Prediction of Family Communication Patterns on Academic Motivation

Variables	β	T	R	R^2	df	F
			.50	.25	1, 393	132.06**
Family Communication Patterns	.50	11.49**				

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, , N=395

The results in Table 4 shows that family communication patterns significantly predicted academic motivation [$\beta = .50$, $t = 11.49$, $p < .01$]. This means that when family communication patterns are positive, academic motivation increases. This entails that academic motivation increases among the participants with a significant positivity in the patterns of their family communication. It was further observed that family communication patterns contributes a significant variance of 25% of the total variance observed in academic motivation [$R = .50$, $R^2 = .25$, $F(1, 393) = 132.06$, $p < .01$].

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Prediction of Perceived Parental Support and Family Communication Patterns on Academic Motivation

Variables	β	t	R	R^2	df	F
			.66	.43	32,391	147.21**
Perceived Parental Support	.51	11.03**				
Family Communication Patterns	.21	4.61**				

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, N=395

The results in Table 5 reveals that perceived parental support significantly predicted academic motivation [$\beta = .51$, $t = 11.03$, $p < .01$] and family communication patterns significantly predicted academic motivation [$\beta = .21$, $t = 4.61$, $p < .01$]. The joint contribution of both variables impacted academic motivation significantly. It was further observed that the variables contributed a significant variance of 43% of the total variance observed in academic motivation [$R = .66$, $R^2 = .43$, $F(3, 391) = 147.21$, $p < .01$].

Table 6: Independent t-test showing the influence of gender on Academic Motivation

Variable	Source	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P
Gender	Male	201	124.85	23.32	393	-7.58	.000
	Female	194	142.84	23.80			

N=395, Gender was coded 1 =Male, 2 = Female

The results in Table 6 indicate that there is a significant difference between males and females on academic motivation [$t(395) = -7.58$, $p < .01$]. It can be observed that there is a significant difference between the mean score for male ($\bar{x}=124.85$, $SD = 23.32$) and female ($\bar{x}=142.84$, $SD = 23.80$) university undergraduates. This suggest that

the female undergraduates have high level of academic motivation compared to male undergraduates.

DISCUSSIONS

The current study sought to determine the impact of family communication patterns and perceived parental support on students' academic motivation in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The investigation of how the aforementioned family-related characteristics interact with demographic variables, such as gender and age, to effect students' academic engagement was done using existing motivation theories, family communication theories, and prior empirical research. The results posted in Table 2 in terms of the association indicate that gender is related to academic motivation, family communication styles, and perceived parental support. This indicates that female students are highly motivated and they are better supported by their families as compared to male students. This finding could be compared to the findings of the research by Muza *et al.* (2020), which found that tenaciousness and resilience in academic environments are usually more common among female students. On the same note, Richardson *et al* (2012) also reveal that male students are more susceptible to extrinsic motivators such as employment opportunities whereas female students tend to be predisposed to high intrinsic motivation. Nonetheless, Schunk *et al* (2014) did not discover any meaningful gender difference in motivation, which means that the effects of gender are situational.

The perceived parental support is a significant predictor of AM. Its result adds to the results of the Steinmayr *et al* (2019) study which determined that parental involvement enhances the intrinsic motivation and endurance of pupils. Another study by Lawal (2023) also verified the relevance of a supportive family system in the maintenance of the motivation since it too indicated that parental support was an essential factor in perseverance and involvement among Nigerian students. The findings of this paper indicate that, culturally, family engagement in education is important in Nigeria whereby parents are regarded as an essential facet of the performance of kids.

The styles of family communication were strong predictors of AM. The above observation is congruent with works by Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) which observed that open and supportive communication leads to a sense of autonomy and trust, either of which enhances motivation. Jackson *et al* (2023) have noted that academic aspirations of students in the African countries are largely dependent on their communication patterns. Nevertheless, as Gonda (2017) stated, unlike in the case of high conversation orientation, when the outcomes were positive, in the case of restricted or authoritarian forms of communication, autonomy and low motivation levels can be avoided.

The overall effect of the family communication patterns and perceived parental support combined explained a significant part of the variance of academic motivation. These contributions combined outline the importance of family settings in shaping academic engagement of students. Okoro (2020) also highlighted the role of resilience and favorable family structures in the case of Nigerian students since these factors are key determinants of motivation. These two issues, when combined with the notion of parental support and communication styles, imply that the best conditions, in keeping motivation, are established when families are supportive and have unrestricted communication.

Lastly, in line with a related study (Khan *et al*, 2022; Kuśnierz *et al*, 2020) the female student population is significantly more likely to be academically motivated compared to their male counterparts. This result confirms previous results of the correlation study along with other studies that indicate the difference in motivation

between men and women. The insignificance of the age and other socio-demographic elements indicate that the family-related factors have a more significant effect on motivation than individual demographic factors, although female students also seem to like the supportive family structure and communication.

CONCLUSION

The current study investigated the role of family communication patterns in predicting AM among university undergraduates. Based on the findings of the study, it can be seen that family communication patterns significantly predict AM among the participants. Also, the findings shows that perceived parental support has a strong and significant influence on academic motivation. Undergraduates who reported higher levels of emotional, informational, and financial support from their parents showed higher motivation toward their academic pursuits. This underscores the continuing importance of parental involvement in students' academic lives, even at the university level.

The study also established that family communication patterns significantly influence academic motivation. Open, supportive, and participatory communication within the family is associated with higher academic motivation among students. Furthermore, when perceived parental support and family communication patterns were considered jointly, their combined effect accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in academic motivation. This indicates that parental support and effective family communication do not operate in isolation but work together to enhance students' motivation toward academic achievement.

In addition, gender differences are observed in academic motivation, with female undergraduates exhibiting higher levels of motivation than their male counterparts, while age is found not to significantly influence academic motivation. These findings suggest that psychosocial and familial factors play a more critical role in shaping academic motivation than demographic variables such as age. The study highlights the need for parents, families, and educational stakeholders to foster supportive home environments and positive communication patterns to enhance academic motivation among university undergraduates.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Even though the study's relevance has been established, certain aspects of its procedure and results have been found to have shortcomings. The questionnaires were distributed to the students during their exam period. This made some of them reluctant to fill the questionnaires. This may have affected the accuracy of the results. Also, the study's sample size and restriction to Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, are major limitations. The results may not apply to other Nigerian universities or to other countries because of discrepancies in educational structures, cultural contexts, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The study's findings are unique to this particular cohort of undergraduates, and while they provide insightful information, it's possible that they don't accurately represent the student population as a whole (in Nigeria or around the world).

Conflict of Interest: None is declared.

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