



The Impact of Social Interaction Anxiety and Perceived Social Support on Academic Motivation among University Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine the impact of social interaction anxiety and perceived social support on academic motivation among university students. Specifically, it explored whether perceived social support mediates the relationship between social interaction anxiety and academic motivation. A total of 110 university students (55 males and 55 females) participated in the study using a cross-sectional survey design. Standardized scales including the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Student Academic Motivation Scale (SAMS) were employed. Correlational and regression analyses indicated that social interaction anxiety showed a weak and non-significant direct effect on academic motivation while perceived social support was a significant positive predictor. Mediation analysis revealed that perceived social support significantly mediated the relationship between social interaction anxiety and academic motivation. Subscale analyses demonstrated that various sources of social support (family, friends, and significant others) differentially influenced the subtypes of academic motivation. No significant gender differences were found in overall academic motivation. These findings underscore the critical role of social support in fostering academic motivation, particularly among students experiencing social anxiety. The study suggests that enhancing peer and family support mechanisms may serve as an effective strategy to promote students' academic engagement and success.

Keywords: Social interaction anxiety, perceived social support, academic motivation, university students, gender differences

Introduction

Social Interaction Anxiety refers to the fear or apprehension experienced during social interactions, especially when individuals feel they are being evaluated by others. It is a central feature of social anxiety disorder and affects how people communicate, form relationships, and perform in public or group settings. In academic environments, students with high social interaction anxiety may struggle with classroom participation, group projects, or forming peer connections. This study uses the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS) developed by Hope et al. (2019) to assess the intensity of these symptoms. The extent to which people feel that their friends, family, and significant others are there for them is known as perceived social support. It represents not just the existence of assistance but also how the person feels about its efficacy, dependability, and accessibility. This instrumental and emotional support is essential for lowering stress and improving mental health. The present study uses the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) by Zimet et al. (1988), which divides support into three categories: family, friends, and significant others.

Academic Motivation includes various types of motivation, such as intrinsic (learning for personal growth), extrinsic (striving for rewards), and amotivation (lack of purpose or drive). This study applies the Short Academic Motivation Scale (SAMS) by Kotera et al. (2020), which includes seven subscales: knowledge, accomplishment, stimulation, identification, introjection, and external regulation, as well as amotivation. These categories allow for a nuanced understanding of what drives or hinders academic engagement.

In today's highly competitive and socially demanding academic environment, students are increasingly exposed to psychological pressures that impact their educational performance. Among these challenges, social interaction anxiety stands out as a critical barrier to academic success. University students experiencing high levels of social anxiety may avoid class participation, struggle in group work, or find it difficult to communicate with instructors. These behaviors can lead to isolation and reduced academic motivation. Past research has shown that students with elevated social interaction anxiety are more prone to procrastination, lower self-efficacy, and diminished academic outcomes, as their fear of negative evaluation overshadows their capacity to focus on learning goals (Warner et al., 2018).

On the other hand, perceived social support has consistently been identified as a protective factor in academic settings. Supportive relationships provide students with emotional comfort, academic guidance, and a sense of belonging, all of which foster greater academic motivation and reduce stress. The buffering hypothesis suggests that social support can weaken the impact of stressors like anxiety, creating a more resilient academic experience. However, the exact mechanisms of how social interaction anxiety and social support interact to influence academic motivation remain underexplored, particularly in university populations. By investigating these relationships and the potential mediating role of perceived social support, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of student mental health and motivation, leading to more effective interventions and support strategies in higher education (Permatasari et al., 2021).

Over the past two decades, the academic environment in universities has become increasingly competitive and psychologically demanding. As students face numerous academic pressures ranging from performance expectations to social obligations their mental health has become a key concern for educators and policymakers alike (Beiter et

al., 2015). Psychological well-being is now widely recognized as a foundational element in student success. Within this framework, the concept of academic motivation has received substantial attention. Academic motivation refers to the inner drive or external encouragement that pushes students to initiate, persist in, and complete educational tasks. Students who are well-motivated not only perform better but also exhibit higher levels of engagement and long-term commitment to learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

A growing body of research has focused on the factors that either enhance or hinder academic motivation. One such factor is social interaction anxiety, which involves excessive fear or distress in social situations, particularly those that involve interaction with unfamiliar people or the possibility of negative evaluation. Students with high levels of social interaction anxiety tend to avoid participation in classroom discussions, group projects, and public speaking activities that are essential to academic success. According to Brook and Willoughby (2016), social anxiety is strongly correlated with avoidance behaviors and poor academic outcomes. When anxiety interferes with these essential components of academic life, students often lose their drive, resulting in lower motivation and disengagement from their studies (Heimberg et al., 1992).

On the other hand, perceived social support serves as a critical buffer against such psychological distress. It encompasses an individual's perception of the availability and quality of support from friends, family, and significant others. The presence of strong social support networks not only alleviates stress but also boosts self-confidence, helping students feel more capable of managing academic challenges. Research by Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld (2005) found that students with higher levels of perceived support adjusted more easily to university life, were more likely to seek help when needed, and demonstrated higher levels of academic motivation. These findings suggest that social support is not just a passive resource but an active contributor to academic persistence and success (Zimet et al., 1988).

The relationship between social support and academic motivation becomes particularly relevant when viewed in the context of autonomous, and connected to others. According to this theory, social support nurtures the need for relatedness, which is essential for maintaining intrinsic motivation. Therefore, students who perceive their social relationships as supportive are more likely to find meaning in their academic efforts, thereby maintaining motivation even in the face of challenges. In contrast, a lack of support can exacerbate the effects of social anxiety, leaving students feeling isolated and demotivated (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Even when students experience high levels of social anxiety, having strong perceived support may help mitigate its negative impact on motivation. For instance, a study indicated that students with strong peer and family support were better able to manage anxiety and remained more academically engaged than those with weaker support systems. This highlights the potential protective role of perceived social support in maintaining academic motivation despite psychological distress (Poots & Cassidy, 2020).

Emotional, informational, and instrumental support can strengthen a student's ability to stay motivated even during academic challenges. Their study concluded that students who perceive strong support systems are better able to regulate their emotions, stay committed to goals, and overcome setbacks. By reducing stress and promoting positive academic behaviors, perceived social support serves as an essential buffer that encourages sustained academic engagement and achievement (Ahmadi et al., 2011).

Social anxiety often presents a hidden barrier to academic success, particularly in settings that require peer interaction. Beidel et al. investigated how social anxiety disrupts student engagement and academic performance. Their findings emphasized that peer support programs significantly mitigate the negative effects of social anxiety by fostering a sense of belonging and reducing fears of negative evaluation. Such interventions not only enhance social functioning but also stimulate academic motivation, suggesting that structured social support initiatives could play a vital role in promoting better educational outcomes among socially anxious students (Beidel et al., 1999).

Peer group characteristics can strongly influence a student's academic motivation. Chiu and Chow explored how classmates' past achievements, socioeconomic status, and attitudes toward education impact individual academic success. Their study, spanning multiple countries, revealed that students embedded within high-achieving, supportive peer groups developed stronger academic motivation and better performance. This highlights that social interaction within academically positive environments can substantially boost a student's commitment to academic goals, demonstrating the significant role of social surroundings in shaping educational outcomes (Chiu & Chow, 2015).

Social anxiety has also proven effective in enhancing academic motivation. Freeman and Freeman (2016) evaluated structured programs designed to reduce social fears among students. They discovered that participants who underwent these programs not only exhibited reduced social anxiety but also demonstrated significantly increased academic enthusiasm and commitment. This relationship highlights that emotional well-being directly feeds into educational persistence, suggesting that reducing social anxieties should be a priority for universities aiming to support students' academic motivation.

Socially anxious students often struggle with academic persistence, and Gallagher et al. explored the buffering role of perceived social support in this context. Their study concluded that when socially anxious students feel supported by friends, family, and institutions, they are more likely to stay committed to their academic pursuits. The research emphasized that perceptions of belonging and validation are critical for helping students overcome internal doubts and maintain educational momentum, showcasing the direct impact of social support on academic motivation (Gallagher et al., 2014). This study reinforces the notion that emotional and instrumental support not only provides comfort but also empowers students to see themselves as capable achievers, thereby maintaining high levels of academic engagement (Karaman et al., 2018).

Peer support serves as a vital mechanism for fostering academic motivation, as reviewed by Purdie and Hattie. Their synthesis of empirical studies found that students who actively engage in supportive peer relationships are more motivated, participate more in class, and perform better academically. The study concluded that peer support networks create an academic environment rich in encouragement, collaboration, and shared goals, which significantly enhances students' resilience and intrinsic motivation even in the face of academic and social challenges (Purdie & Hattie, 1999).

Review of Literature

Ahmadi et al. (2011) investigated the role of perceived social support in academic motivation among university students in Iran. Their study was rooted in the idea that academic motivation is not solely influenced by personal effort but is also shaped by social factors, including peer and family support. The background emphasized the cultural importance of social relationships in Iran, where students often rely on familial and peer

support to navigate academic challenges. The objective was to examine whether students who perceive higher levels of social support demonstrate greater academic motivation despite experiencing social interaction anxiety. The study included 245 undergraduate students from two major universities in Iran. Specifically, students who felt supported by their families and peers. In contrast, students with low perceived social support reported feeling isolated, leading to decreased motivation and academic disengagement. The conclusion highlighted that cultural factors play a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of support and motivation, and universities should implement peer mentorship and family engagement programs to enhance academic motivation among students struggling with social interaction anxiety.

Woodrow and Chapman (2012) explored how social anxiety affects students' willingness to participate in academic activities and how this, in turn, influences academic motivation. The background of their study focused on the increasing number of students experiencing social anxiety in higher education, particularly in classrooms that require presentations, group discussions, or active participation. The objective was to assess the relationship between social interaction anxiety and academic motivation in students from various academic disciplines. The study involved 310 university students from Australian institutions, using surveys to measure social anxiety levels, academic motivation, and class participation rates. The results revealed that students with high social anxiety were more likely to avoid group discussions, public speaking, and collaborative assignments, which negatively impacted their academic motivation. Furthermore, students who perceived themselves as socially anxious also reported lower self-efficacy in academic tasks, making them more likely to procrastinate and less likely to engage in goal-setting behaviors. The conclusion suggested that universities should develop classroom environments that are more accommodating for socially anxious students, such as offering alternative participation methods, structured peer interactions, and anxiety-reducing workshops. By addressing students' fears of social interaction, educators can help increase motivation and engagement in academic settings.

Gallagher et al. (2014) highlighted that students with social interaction anxiety often struggle with class participation, forming study groups, and engaging in academic discussions, which can lead to lower motivation and increased dropout rates. The objective was to explore whether perceived social support from faculty, peers, and academic counselors could counteract the negative impact of social anxiety on student persistence. The study surveyed 415 undergraduate students from a U.S. university, utilizing self-report measures on social anxiety, academic motivation, and perceived social support. The results indicated that students who reported strong social support, particularly from faculty and academic advisors, were significantly more likely to persist in their studies, despite experiencing social anxiety. However, students who lacked perceived support were more likely to disengage from coursework and experience higher levels of academic stress. The conclusion emphasized that universities should integrate faculty mentorship programs and counseling services to support students with social anxiety, ensuring they feel connected and motivated to complete their studies.

Chiu and Chow (2015) examined the role of peer and parental support in academic motivation among students with social interaction anxiety. The background of their study emphasized that while students with social anxiety may struggle with academic motivation, a strong support system from peers and family can encourage persistence and engagement in academic tasks. The objective was to determine how different sources of

social support impact academic motivation and whether parental or peer support plays a stronger role in motivating students with social interaction anxiety. The study included 398 university students from Hong Kong, who completed questionnaires assessing their perceived social support, anxiety levels, and academic motivation. The results demonstrated that both parental and peer support positively influenced academic motivation, but peer support had a stronger effect in reducing social interaction anxiety. Students who had close friendships and supportive peer networks reported feeling more comfortable engaging in academic discussions and collaborative work, leading to higher motivation. In contrast, students who lacked peer support but had strong parental support still struggled with social anxiety, though their motivation levels were slightly higher than those with no support at all. The conclusion emphasized that universities should encourage peer support programs, mentorship initiatives, and group study sessions to provide socially anxious students with a sense of belonging and increased motivation.

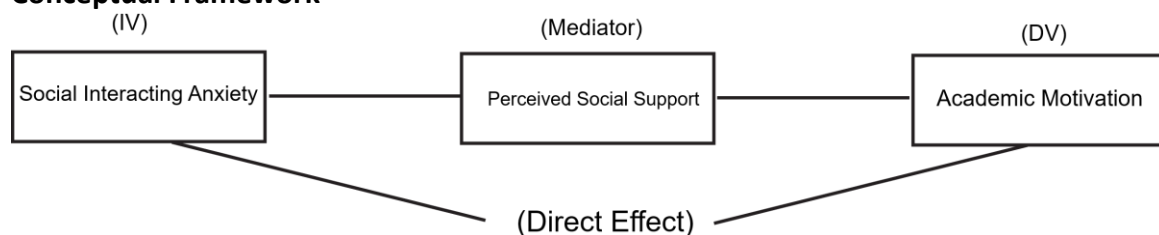
Freeman and Freeman (2016) examined the psychological effects of social anxiety on academic motivation, emphasizing how students with high anxiety levels often struggle with classroom engagement and confidence in academic settings. The background of their study highlighted the growing prevalence of social anxiety disorder among university students and its impact on educational performance. The objective was to explore whether social support interventions, such as group therapy and faculty mentoring, could enhance academic motivation in socially anxious students. The study included 402 undergraduate students from a U.K. university, measuring their anxiety levels, academic motivation, and engagement before and after participating in a semester-long intervention program. The results showed that students who received structured support such as faculty mentorship, anxiety-reduction workshops, and peer counseling reported significant increases in academic motivation and classroom participation. In contrast, those who did not receive interventions continued to experience academic disengagement. The conclusion emphasized that universities should implement targeted psychological interventions to address social anxiety and boost student motivation, particularly in disciplines that require frequent social interaction and presentations.

Karaman et al. (2018) explored the effects of social interaction anxiety on academic self-efficacy and motivation among university students. The background highlighted that students with high social anxiety often experience lower self-efficacy, leading to reduced motivation and difficulty persisting in academic tasks. The objective was to determine whether academic self-efficacy mediates the relationship between social interaction anxiety and academic motivation. The study sampled 354 undergraduate students from multiple U.S. universities, using standardized psychological assessments to measure anxiety levels, self-efficacy beliefs, and motivation. The results demonstrated that students with higher social interaction anxiety reported lower academic self-efficacy, which directly impacted their motivation levels. However, those who perceived strong social support, particularly from faculty members and peers, exhibited greater academic persistence despite experiencing anxiety. The conclusion emphasized that boosting students' self-efficacy through structured academic support programs and mentorship could significantly improve their academic motivation. The authors recommended that universities develop interventions that combine anxiety management techniques with academic confidence-building strategies, such as faculty mentoring and structured peer learning environments.

Rationale:

The present quantitative study aims to investigate the impact of social interaction anxiety and perceived social support on the academic motivation of university students. University students often face psychological challenges that can influence their academic motivation, with social interaction anxiety and the quality of social support networks being particularly important factors. Social interaction anxiety, marked by a fear of negative evaluation in social settings, can reduce students' participation in collaborative learning and academic discussions, potentially leading to lower academic motivation. In contrast, perceived social support from peers, family, and academic staff can strengthen students' sense of belonging and positively impact their motivation. Understanding how these two factors interact is essential for designing interventions that improve student engagement, retention, and academic success. Although earlier research has examined the separate effects of social anxiety and social support, few studies have focused specifically on their combined influence on academic motivation among university students. Additionally, existing studies often rely on qualitative methodologies, limiting the generalizability of findings. This study seeks to address these gaps by employing a quantitative approach to provide measurable and generalizable data. A quantitative research design is appropriate for this study as it allows for the objective measurement of variables and the analysis of relationships between them using statistical methods. This approach facilitates the examination of potential causal links and the generalization of findings to broader populations, thereby enhancing the study's validity and applicability. The findings from this research could contribute to theoretical models of academic motivation by integrating psychological and social dimensions. Practically, the study could inform the development of targeted support programs that address social interaction anxiety and bolster social support networks, thereby enhancing student motivation and academic success. Policy-wise, universities might utilize these insights to create inclusive environments that promote mental health and academic achievement.

Conceptual Framework



The reviewed literature highlights a strong and complex relationship between social interaction anxiety, perceived social support, and academic motivation among university students. Studies consistently demonstrate that higher levels of social anxiety can negatively impact students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, while perceived support from family, friends, and significant others plays a vital protective role in sustaining academic engagement. The multidimensional nature of both social support and academic motivation emphasizes the need to consider subscale interactions rather than broad constructs alone. Furthermore, emerging research suggests that perceived social support may serve as a mediator, helping to buffer the adverse effects of anxiety on motivation. These findings underscore the importance of fostering supportive environments and addressing anxiety to enhance students' academic outcomes and well-being.

Research Objectives

- To examine the impact of social interaction anxiety on the academic motivation of university students.
- To investigate the impact of perceived social support on the academic motivation of university students.
- To explore the mediating role of perceived social support in the relationship between social interaction anxiety and academic motivation among university students.

Hypotheses

- There will be significant relationship among social interaction anxiety, perceived social support and academic motivation in University students.
- Social interaction anxiety will predict perceived social support and academic motivation among university students
- Perceived social support will significantly mediate the relationship between social interaction anxiety and academic motivation in University students.
- Men and women will have different scores on social interaction anxiety, perceived social support and academic motivation.

Methodology

This section outlines the technique used to investigate the connection between university students' academic motivation, perceived social support, and social interaction anxiety. Participants, study design, sampling strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, data collecting process, operational definitions of the important variables, tools used, and statistical analysis are all covered in this section. Throughout the study procedure, data dependability and ethical issues were also given top priority.

Participants

110 university students in all 55 men and 55 women participated in the research. These individuals, who ranged in academic level from the first to the eighth semester, were chosen using a convenience sample technique. The non-probability convenience sampling method was used in the research. Participants were contacted in common spaces, campus hallways, and classroom settings.

Research Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive correlational strategy was used in this investigation. This methodology worked well for determining and examining the connections between academic motivation and perceived social support at one particular moment in time. To collect data from individuals, standardized self-report questionnaires were used. These tools were shown to have good psychometric qualities in the past. The MSPSS was used to measure perceived social support, the SAMS was used to measure academic motivation, and the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale was used to measure social interaction anxiety. Without changing any parameters or implementing any interventions, this approach made it possible to examine the correlations between variables.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- Students presently enrolled in any academic semester (first through eighth) in undergraduate university.
- Between the ages of 18 and 26.
- Signed the informed consent form, indicating their voluntary participation.

Exclusion Criteria

- People who aren't enrolled in any university programs at the moment.
- Pupils who refused to give their informed permission.
- Individuals who filled out surveys but did not complete them.

These standards guaranteed a reliable and suitable sample that matched the population's characteristics and the goals of the study.

Instruments

Short Academic Motivation Scale (SAMS) Questionnaire

Students' academic motivation were evaluated using the SAMS, which was created by Kotera et al. (2020). This short yet reliable scale, which is based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), measures many forms of motivation, such as amotivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and intrinsic motivation. The 14 items on the scale are scored on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from "corresponds exactly" to "does not correspond at all." The whole 14-item SAMS was employed in this investigation, according to the format used in earlier studies by Kotera et al. (2020). A more sophisticated knowledge of the internal and external factors influencing students' academic engagement is made possible by this technology. Greater self-motivation is indicated by higher scores on intrinsic and recognized regulation questions, but a lack of intentional academic drive is shown by higher amotivation scores.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) Questionnaire

The degree of social support that students felt was measured using the MSPSS, which was created by Zimet et al. (1988). Family, friends, and significant others are the three sources of felt support that are measured by this extensively validated 12-item test. A seven-point Likert scale, with "Very strongly disagree" to "Very strongly agree" as the extremes, is used to score each topic. The scale enables researchers to evaluate the effectiveness and accessibility of support networks as well as their existence among respondents. According to Zimet et al. (1988), high scores indicate a strong sense of support, which is associated with less stress and increased emotional and intellectual resilience.

Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS) Questionnaire

Students' anxiety about social interactions was assessed using the SIAS, which was first created by Mattick and Clarke (1998). The 20 questions on the scale are designed to evaluate social anxiety, avoidance, and discomfort, particularly when interacting with strangers. From "Not at all characteristic or true me" to "Extremely characteristic or true me," items are scored on a five-point Likert scale. The whole 20-item version was used for this investigation, according to the format suggested by Hope et al. (2019). The SIAS is especially useful in detecting those who could have signs of social anxiety, which can impede academic performance, peer relationships, and classroom involvement. Greater degrees of social interaction anxiety are indicated by higher scores.

Research Procedure

Formal permission from the appropriate university authorities was acquired prior to data collection. The American Psychological Association's (APA) ethical standards were followed in this research. Prior to performing the study, ethical permission was sought from the instrument's specific creator. Participants were ensured about the confidentiality of their information, the voluntary nature of participation, and their freedom to withdraw at any time. All participants' privacy was protected by the anonymization and safe storage of the data.

Statistical Analyses

SPSS was used to examine the data. In the first analysis, participant answers were compiled using descriptive statistics. Pearson correlation analysis was used to look at the connections between the important variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to ascertain predictive effects, analyzing the degree to which academic motivation was impacted by social support and social interaction anxiety. Independent samples *t*-tests were used to evaluate group differences according to demographic factors including gender. The presence of statistically significant differences between student subgroups was ascertained with the use of these tests.

Results

Table 4.1

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 110)

Variable	Categories	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	55	50.0%
	Female	55	50.0%
Family System	Nuclear	37	33.6%
	Joint	65	59.1%
	Other	8	7.3%
Age Group	18–21	89	80.9%
	22–25	21	19.1%
CGPA Range	2.51–3.00	18	16.4%
	3.01–3.50	57	51.8%
	3.51–4.00	35	31.8%
Education Level	BS	102	92.7%
	MS/M.Phil	4	3.6%
	Other	4	3.6%
Semester	2nd	72	65.5%
	4th	19	17.3%
	8th	19	17.3%
Department	Psychology	35	31.8%
	Biotechnology	23	20.9%
	IT, CS, SE, Education (combined)*	36	32.7%
	Others (e.g., Business, Pharmacy, Law)	16	14.6%
Residential Status	Hostel	57	51.8%
	Day Scholar	53	48.2%

The sample consisted of 110 participants, evenly split between male (50%) and female (50%) students. Most participants came from joint family systems (59.1%), followed by nuclear (33.6%) and other (7.3%). In terms of age, the majority (80.9%) were between 18–21 years, indicating a relatively young cohort, with a smaller portion aged 22–25 (19.1%). The CGPA with over half of the students (51.8%) scoring between 3.01–3.50, and nearly one-third (31.8%) in the 3.51–4.00 range. Most participants were BS students (92.7%), enrolled primarily in the 2nd semester (65.5%), suggesting early-stage undergraduates dominated the sample. Psychology students were the largest departmental group (31.8%), followed by biotechnology (20.9%) and IT-related fields. Finally, living arrangements were almost equally divided, with 51.8% living in hostels and 48.2% as day scholars, indicating no dominant residential status.

Table 4.2*Psychometric Properties of all Scales (N=110)*

	Mean	S.D	Min	Max	Kurtosis	Skewness	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
SIAS	46.79	10.3	21.00	63.00	-0.66	-0.60	.75	20
MSPSS	56.64	13.4	28.00	81.00	-0.62	-0.50	.85	12
SAMS	59.94	10.4	38.00	91.00	2.18	0.68	.77	14

Table 4.2 presents the psychometric properties of the study variables: SIAS, MSPSS, and SAMS. The mean scores indicate that participants, on average, reported moderate levels of social interaction anxiety ($M = 46.79$, $SD = 10.35$), perceived social support ($M = 56.64$, $SD = 13.47$), and academic motivation ($M = 59.94$, $SD = 10.41$). Skewness and kurtosis values for SIAS and MSPSS fall within acceptable ranges ($|skew| < 1$, $|kurtosis| < 2$), suggesting a reasonably normal distribution. However, the SAMS shows a positive skew (0.68) and high kurtosis (2.18), indicating a slight clustering of scores toward the lower end with a sharper peak. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) values were acceptable to good: SIAS (.75), MSPSS (.85), and SAMS (.77), demonstrating that all scales used in the study were reliable and appropriate for the sample.

Table 4.3:*Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables (N = 110)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Total SIAS		.88**	.72**	.70**	.69**	.17	.26**	.11	.19*	.12	.01	.17	-.07
2. Total MSPSS			.81**	.73**	.84**	.23*	.26**	.31**	.23*	.23*	-.01	.19*	-.17
3. MSPSS (SO)				.36**	.52**	.05	.00	.17	.13	.20*	-.29**	-.01	-.03
4. MSPSS (Fam)					.47**	.18	.36**	.03	-.05	-.09	.41**	.40**	-.14
5. MSPSS (Fr)						.34**	.28**	.52**	.44**	.40**	-.07	.11	-.24*
6. Total SAMS							.82**	.79**	.68**	.56**	.61**	.78**	.19*
7. SAMS (Know)								.56**	.41**	.44**	.58**	.79**	-.05
8. SAMS (Accomp.)									.56**	.53**	.37**	.50**	-.07
9. SAMS (Stim.)										.25**	.16	.19*	.31**
10. SAMS (Ident.)											.02	.42**	-.25**
11. SAMS (Introj.)												.77**	-.09
12. SAMS (Ext.)													-.08
13. SAMS (Amot.)													

*Note: SIAS = Social Interaction Anxiety Scale; MSPSS = Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (total); MSIG (SO) = Significant Other subscale; MSIG (Fam) = Family subscale; MSIG (Fr) = Friends subscale; SAMS = Self-Determination Motivation Scale (total); SAMS (Know) = Intrinsic Motivation to Know; SAMS (Accomp.) = Intrinsic Motivation toward Accomplishment; SAMS (Stim.) = Intrinsic Motivation to Experience Stimulation; SAMS (Ident.) = Identified Regulation; SAMS (Introj.) = Introjected Regulation; SAMS (Ext.) = External Regulation; SAMS (Amot.) = Amotivation. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.*

The relationship between social interaction anxiety (SIAS) and academic motivation (SAMS) was weak ($r = .17$), showing a slight, non-significant influence. SIAS showed a significant but small correlation only with intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation ($r = .19^*$, $p < .05$). Correlations with other subtypes intrinsic motivation to know ($r = .26^{**}$), accomplishment ($r = .11$), identified regulation ($r = .12$), introjected regulation ($r = .01$), external regulation ($r = .17$), and amotivation ($r = -.07$) were small or non-significant.

Perceived social support (MSPSS) was moderately correlated with academic motivation ($r = .23^*$). Family support was linked with introjected regulation ($r = .41^{**}$, $p < .01$), intrinsic motivation to know ($r = .36^{**}$), and identified regulation ($r = -.09$, ns). Friends showed strong correlations with accomplishment ($r = .52^{**}$), stimulation ($r = .44^{**}$), intrinsic motivation to know ($r = .28^{**}$), and identified regulation ($r = .40^{**}$).

Significant other support showed weaker links: stimulation ($r = .13$), accomplishment ($r = .17$), and a negative correlation with introjected regulation ($r = -.29^{**}$, $p < .01$). Other associations, including amotivation ($r = -.03$) and external regulation ($r = -.01$), were negligible. This highlights varying impacts of different support sources on motivation.

Table 4.4

Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Academic Motivation (SAMS) from Social Interaction Anxiety (SIAS)

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R ²	F	p (F)
Constant	51.734	4.563		11.34	.000	.174	.030	3.39	.068
SIAS	0.175	0.095	.174	1.84	.068				

Adjusted R² = .021 Predictor: SIAS (Social Interaction Anxiety Scale). Significance set at $p < .05$.

A simple linear regression was performed to assess whether social interaction anxiety (SIAS) significantly predicts academic motivation (SAMS). The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(1, 108) = 3.39$, $p = .068$, indicating that the predictor did not account for a meaningful amount of variance in academic motivation.

The model explained approximately 3% of the variance in academic motivation ($R^2 = .030$), suggesting a weak effect size. The regression coefficient for SIAS was positive ($B = 0.175$), indicating that higher social interaction anxiety was associated with slightly higher academic motivation, though this relationship was not statistically significant ($p = .068$). This positive direction is somewhat unexpected, as anxiety is typically viewed as a barrier to motivation, though it may reflect certain compensatory behaviors in anxious individuals.

Table 4.5*Mediation Analysis*

Path	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Path a (SIAS → MSPSS)	1.145	0.060	19.247	<.001*	1.027	1.262
Path b (MSPSS → SAMS)	0.277	0.153	1.814	.072	−0.026	0.579
Path c' (Direct: SIAS → SAMS)	−0.141	0.198	−0.713	.477	−0.535	0.252
Indirect Effect (a*b)	0.317	0.150			0.022	0.618

Model Summary (SAMS as DV):

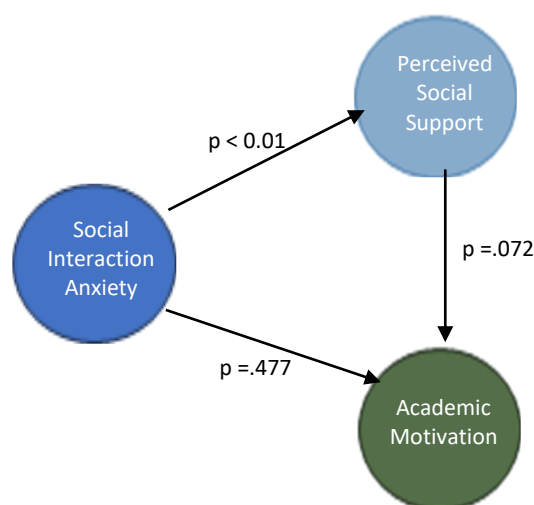
$R = .244$, $R^2 = .059$, $F(2, 107) = 3.38$, $p = .038$

Model Summary (MSPSS as Mediator):

$R = .880$, $R^2 = .774$, $F(1, 108) = 370.46$, $p < .001$

- **Path a (SIAS → MSPSS):** Highly significant ($p < .001$), showing that greater social interaction anxiety is strongly associated with higher perceived social support.
- **Path b (MSPSS → SAMS):** Not statistically significant ($p = .072$), although the trend suggests that higher social support *may* lead to increased self-motivation.
- **Direct effect (Path c'):** Not significant, suggesting no direct link between SIAS and SAMS when MSPSS is included.
- **Indirect effect (a*b):** Significant, with 95% CI not crossing zero (LLCI = 0.022, ULCI = 0.618), indicating that MSPSS partially mediates the relationship between SIAS and SAMS.

Even though SIAS doesn't directly affect SAMS, it does so **indirectly through MSPSS**. This implies that individuals with high social anxiety may show greater motivation when they also perceive strong social support.

**Table 4.6***Independent Samples t-test Comparing Academic Motivation (SAMS) by Gender*

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	t(df)	p	Mean Diff	95% CI	Cohen's d
SAMS	Male	55	59.31	11.15	−0.63 (108)	.530	−1.25	[−5.20, 2.69]	−0.12
	Female	55	60.56	9.67					

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; $p < .05$ considered statistically significant.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare academic motivation (SAMS) scores between male and female participants. The results showed that the mean motivation

score for females ($M = 60.56$, $SD = 9.67$) was slightly higher than for males ($M = 59.31$, $SD = 11.15$), but this difference was not statistically significant, $t(108) = -0.63$, $p = .530$. The assumption of equal variances was verified by Levene's Test ($F = 0.31$, $p = .578$). Further supporting the lack of a meaningful difference is the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference $[-5.20, 2.69]$, which includes zero. The effect size, Cohen's $d = -0.12$, indicates a very small, negligible effect of gender on academic motivation.

Discussion

The current study examined the relationships between social interaction anxiety, perceived social support, and academic motivation among university students. The first hypothesis, which proposed a significant impact of social interaction anxiety on academic motivation, was not statistically supported ($p = .068$), although the direction of the relationship was positive. This suggests that higher social interaction anxiety may be related to lower academic motivation, albeit not strongly enough to reach statistical significance. These results align with prior findings where anxiety had only an indirect or minimal direct impact on academic performance unless mediated by other variables such as coping or support (Hope et al., 2019; Kotera et al., 2020). It highlights the possibility that academic motivation is more intricately influenced by a network of psychosocial factors rather than anxiety alone.

Perceived social support significantly impacts academic motivation, and this was supported by the results. A positive correlation between the MSPSS and academic motivation (SAMS) was found ($r = .234$, $p < .05$), indicating that students who perceive higher social support tend to be more motivated academically. This finding corroborates with previous studies that emphasize the role of supportive relationships in enhancing students' academic engagement and emotional resilience (Zimet et al., 1988). Social support, particularly from family and friends, has been linked to improved mental health, which in turn boosts intrinsic motivation to succeed academically.

Moreover, it was hypothesized that there was a significant relationship between social interaction anxiety and the various subtypes of academic motivation. However, the results offered limited support for this claim. Among the seven subtypes, social interaction anxiety demonstrated a statistically significant but weak positive correlation only with intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation. This might imply that students with higher levels of social anxiety occasionally seek novel and stimulating academic experiences as a form of psychological escape or self-validation. For other subtypes such as intrinsic motivation to know, identified regulation, and amotivation the relationships were either non-significant or too weak to infer any meaningful predictive pattern. Contrary to earlier expectations and theoretical assumptions drawn from self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), social anxiety did not strongly shift students toward either adaptive or maladaptive motivational forms. This challenges prior assumptions that anxiety consistently undermines internalized motivation or fosters disengagement. Rather, the findings suggest that while anxiety might play a minor role in influencing specific motivational tendencies, it does not exert a uniform or substantial effect across the broader spectrum of academic motivation (Hope et al., 2019). Future research should explore moderating variables such as coping styles, academic self-efficacy, or institutional support to better understand this complex dynamic.

It was also assumed that the dimensions of perceived social support namely family, friends, and significant others would significantly predict the subtypes of academic motivation

among university students. The correlation analysis largely supported this proposition, although with varying degrees of influence across sources of support. Family support demonstrated strong, significant associations with introjected regulation and intrinsic motivation to know, indicating that encouragement and emotional reinforcement from family members may lead students to internalize academic norms and pursue learning out of a sense of personal obligation and curiosity. Similarly, friend support was positively and significantly related to intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment and stimulation, as well as moderately related to intrinsic motivation to know and identified regulation. These findings reinforce the idea that friendships in academic settings may enhance motivation through collaboration, social recognition, and shared success. In contrast, support from significant others showed a weaker and more complex pattern. Notably, it was negatively correlated with introjected regulation, suggesting that reliance on romantic partners or other close individuals may reduce motivation based on internal pressure or guilt. These nuanced patterns affirm that while perceived social support generally enhances academic motivation, the specific source of support plays a critical role in shaping the type and strength of motivation (Zimet et al., 1988).

Mediation analysis revealed that perceived social support significantly mediated the relationship between social interaction anxiety and academic motivation. While the direct path (SIAS → SAMS) was non-significant, the indirect path through MSPSS was significant (indirect effect = 0.317, 95% CI [0.023, 0.615]). This suggests that students experiencing higher social anxiety may still maintain academic motivation if they perceive strong support networks. The finding aligns with the buffering hypothesis, which posits that social support mitigates the adverse effects of stress or anxiety on functional outcomes like motivation (Zimet et al., 1988; Kotera et al., 2020). This mediation highlights a crucial intervention point enhancing social support systems in academic settings to protect against the motivational consequences of anxiety.

While finding out gender differences in academic motivation, the result is consistent with research suggesting that gender may no longer be a key differentiator in academic motivation when psychosocial supports and academic resources are equitably accessible (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Chen et al., 2022). Gender-neutral patterns in academic drive may reflect increasing parity in educational expectations and opportunities, especially in coeducational and urban academic institutions where the present study was conducted.

Overall, the findings contribute to the literature by reaffirming the essential role of social support in fostering academic motivation and providing insight into how social anxiety interacts with support systems. While anxiety itself may not be a direct predictor of motivation, its influence becomes more apparent when considering mediating factors like perceived support. These results underscore the importance of implementing university-level interventions that focus on enhancing social connectedness, especially for students experiencing anxiety. Programs that promote peer mentoring, supportive faculty relationships, and counseling access may significantly improve motivation outcomes (Kotera et al., 2020). By understanding the interdependencies among these variables, educational institutions can better tailor mental health and motivational support services.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to explore the influence of social interaction anxiety and perceived social support on the subtypes of academic motivation among university students. The

findings revealed that social interaction anxiety demonstrated only limited and weak associations with academic motivation. Specifically, a statistically significant but small positive correlation was found only with intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation, suggesting that socially anxious students may occasionally seek stimulating academic experiences as a coping mechanism. However, the overall impact of social interaction anxiety on academic motivation was not substantial, indicating that it does not uniformly influence motivational subtypes among students.

In contrast, perceived social support emerged as a more robust predictor of academic motivation. Support from family and friends was significantly associated with several subtypes of motivation, particularly those reflecting internalized and autonomous forms. Family support was positively linked to introjected regulation and intrinsic motivation to know, indicating its role in fostering internalized academic values. Similarly, friend support showed strong associations with intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment and stimulation, highlighting the motivational influence of peer encouragement and academic collaboration. These findings underscore the differential effects of social support sources on specific types of motivation and reinforce the notion that not all support contributes equally to academic engagement.

Interestingly, the support received from significant others displayed a more complex pattern. While it was modestly associated with intrinsic motivation dimensions, it was negatively related to introjected regulation, suggesting that reliance on a close partner or individual might reduce motivation driven by internal pressure or guilt. This nuanced relationship indicates that the motivational impact of significant others may vary depending on the nature of the support and the student's emotional reliance.

Additionally, the study found no significant gender differences in academic motivation, indicating that male and female students experience similar levels and types of motivation. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting minimal gender-based variance in academic drive at the university level, though cultural and contextual influences should continue to be explored in future studies.

The findings offer both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, they lend support to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which emphasizes the role of relatedness and social support in fostering internal motivation. Even when psychological barriers such as social anxiety exist, the presence of supportive relationships can enhance students' engagement in academic tasks. Practically, the results suggest that universities should prioritize programs and interventions that build and sustain strong social support networks. Initiatives such as peer mentoring, parental engagement, and accessible faculty interaction may serve as effective strategies to strengthen students' motivation and academic performance.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. The use of a cross-sectional design restricts causal inference, and reliance on self-reported measures may introduce response biases. Moreover, the study was conducted within a specific academic and cultural context, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future research should consider longitudinal designs and broader, more diverse populations to further validate and extend these results.

In conclusion, the study highlights the pivotal role of social support particularly from family and friends in shaping academic motivation among university students. While social interaction anxiety had a minimal direct effect, the presence of strong supportive relationships

can significantly enhance motivational outcomes. These findings advocate for a holistic educational environment where emotional and relational well-being is integrated into the broader framework of academic success.

Limitations

1. **Cross-Sectional Design:** The study used a cross-sectional method, which prevents the establishment of causality between social interaction anxiety, perceived social support, and academic motivation. Future longitudinal research is recommended to observe how these variables influence one another over time.
2. **Self-Report Measures:** All data were collected using self-report scales, which may be subject to response biases such as social desirability and inaccurate self-assessment. Including teacher ratings or peer assessments could provide more comprehensive data.
3. **Limited Sample Diversity:** The sample consisted mainly of undergraduate students from specific departments and a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader student populations or different cultural contexts.
4. **Unmeasured Confounding Variables:** The study did not control for other psychological factors such as depression, self-efficacy, or resilience, which may also influence academic motivation. Future studies should include a broader set of psychosocial variables.
5. **Gender and Cultural Constraints:** Although gender was examined, the study did not account for other sociocultural variables such as socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, or urban/rural background, which might also moderate the relationships between the studied variables.
6. **Lack of Qualitative Insights:** The study focused solely on quantitative data, which may not fully capture the complexity of students' experiences with anxiety, support, and motivation. Future research could incorporate qualitative interviews to deepen understanding.

Practical Implications

1. **Improving Peer Interactions to Support Academic Motivation:** Students with high social interaction anxiety often avoid classroom participation and group work, which negatively impacts their intrinsic and identified motivation. By fostering a campus culture that encourages peer collaboration and low-pressure social engagement, universities can improve student confidence and motivation in academic settings.
2. **Recognizing Social Anxiety as an Academic Barrier:** Social interaction anxiety should be acknowledged as a legitimate barrier to academic performance and engagement. Academic policies must reflect this understanding by promoting supportive learning environments, flexible participation structures, and assessment methods that do not overly rely on public performance.
3. **Addressing Amotivation through Peer and Faculty Support:** Since amotivation showed a negative association with certain social support sources, such as peers and significant others, strengthening faculty-student and peer-student relationships could counter disengagement. Mentorship programs and approachable faculty conduct can play a key role here.
4. **Designing Gender-Inclusive Motivation Strategies:** Although no significant gender differences in academic motivation were found, the slight trend toward higher

motivation in females suggests that while general strategies may suffice, gender-sensitive support could still be useful in tailored academic development efforts.

5. **Promoting Cross-Disciplinary Awareness of Motivation Dynamics:** Departments beyond psychology should be made aware of how social and emotional dynamics influence learning. Cross-departmental collaborations for student well-being can ensure that academic motivation is supported across various disciplines, not just in mental health-related fields.
6. **Incorporating Findings into Institutional Development:** The results of this study support the integration of psychosocial research into institutional development plans. Data-driven improvements in student services, such as early identification of at-risk students and motivation-enhancing environments, could yield better retention and performance rates.

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