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FOREWORD

The Department of Psychology, University of Lagos has continued to expand the frontiers of knowledge through the engagement of cutting edge research by her seasoned faculty members, and the publications of rigorously processed articles in her new journal. This new journal has been welcomed in the academia as a veritable tool for the dissemination of research findings in Nigeria and beyond. The first issue has continued to attract the interest of scholars and researchers and has guided enlightened conversations in the specific areas wherein the studies were conducted; In this edition we are presenting even more fascinating topical issues being addressed by different authors. We hereby invite you to savour these well researched articles. The edition is, as usual, a combination of thought-provoking analyses and discussions on different quests to understanding human behavior and mental processes for a sustainable world; it also highlights promising paths and directions for future intervention. It is hoped that findings from this edition of the journal will furnish the understanding of scholars on how to improve human behaviour for a sustainable society through effective use of modern therapy and intervention models. Finally, this edition has advanced the combined ideas of scholars and academics from different academic disciplines. For this reason, I want to thank everyone who is interested in promoting the boundaries of knowledge, transformation process and ultimately adding to the body of research in behavioural science.

Editor

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Self-regulation and family support as factors influencing examination anxiety among students of Plateau State University, Bokkos, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of family support and self-regulation on examination anxiety among undergraduates at Plateau State University, Bokkos. The sample consisted of 100 participants, including 62 females (62.0%) and 38 males (38.0%). Among them, 61 (61.0%) were married, 39 (39.0%) were single, 77 (77.0%) identified as Christians, and 23 (23.0%) as Muslims. Employing a correlational design, the study utilized three instruments: the Family Support Scale, the Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire, and the Westside Test Anxiety Questionnaire. Three hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 significance level using a two-way analysis of variance (2-way ANOVA). Results for the first hypothesis indicated that family support level did not significantly affect examination anxiety. (Mean scores: 37.40 vs. 36.85, F (1, 96) = 0.214, p = 0.644). Similarly, the second hypothesis revealed no significant difference in examination anxiety between students with low versus high self-regulation. (Mean scores: 37.53 vs. 36.72, F(1, 96) = 0.462, p = 0.498). Expectedly, the third hypothesis showed that the interaction between family support and self-regulation was not significant in predicting examination anxiety. (Mean scores: 36.86, 37.21, 38.21, 35.49, F(1, 95) = 2.528, p = 0.115). In conclusion, the study suggests that neither family support nor self-regulation significantly influence examination anxiety among students at Plateau State University, Bokkos. Further research is recommended to further explore these hypothesised relationships in more depth. Findings were discussed in the light of extant literatures.

Keywords: *family support, self-regulation, examination anxiety*

Background to the Study

Modern educational practices heavily rely on specialised assessment forms to evaluate students' knowledge and competencies. Students at all educational levels participate in these assessments, ranging from primary school tests to the Unified State Examination (USE) in high school, which serves as the final school examinations and determines university admission eligibility (Brown, 2022). Anxiety, as defined by the American Psychological Association (2024), involves feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes such as increased blood pressure. It is a future-oriented response focused on diffuse threats. Anxiety is a common aspect of human life, with both positive and negative effects on performance. Moderate anxiety can enhance responsibility and motivation, while high anxiety levels can cause physical and mental health issues, impairing social and academic functioning (Chakraborty, 2023).

Examination anxiety, a well-researched topic, significantly affects students' performance. Many students experience fear and stress during tests, which can negatively impact cognitive functions like working memory and reasoning. While some may find increased motivation, others suffer debilitating consequences, leading to poor mental health (Chakraborty, 2023; BPS, 2022). Stress arises from internal and external stressors, causing physiological and psychological responses, with anxiety and depression as common psychological reactions (Townsend & Morgan, 2017). Among adolescents, these responses are prevalent and often linked to family and school factors, impacting their health and well-being (Abou Abbas & Al Buhairan, 2018; Escobar et al., 2020).

Test anxiety is a psychological condition marked by distress before, during, or after testing situations, manifesting in physiological, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive symptoms that impair academic performance (Tan, 2022). Reeve et al., (2014) describe test anxiety as negative affect, worry, physiological arousal, and behavioral responses associated with concerns about failure or lack of competence. Spielberger and Sarason (1989) define it as a situational trait reflecting anxiety and worry during examinations. Test anxiety influences students' behaviors and can either alleviate or exacerbate examination anxiety depending on familial contexts

(Onyeizugbo, 2010). Medium levels of test anxiety have been associated with better examination performance, while high or low levels correlate with poorer outcomes (Putwain et al., 2018). Alemu and Feyssa (2020) found that female students report higher test anxiety, contributing to under-achievement and low performance, which can be mitigated through proper training.

Family support, according to McGregor and Devaney (2020), provides a protective response for children and youth, aiding parents and families under adverse conditions. Kyzar et al., (2012) view family support as strategies that benefit family members, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Increased family support correlates with lower stress levels and enhances life satisfaction by influencing stress perception (Özer et al., 2021; McLean et al., 2023). While, Self-regulation involves managing cognition, behavior, and attitude to optimize learning (Etkin, 2018). Effective self-regulation is essential for managing test anxiety, as students with high self-regulation tend to experience less anxiety and perform better academically (Morosanova et al., 2020). Emotional regulation strategies negatively correlate with test anxiety, suggesting that students, who effectively manage their emotions, experience less examination anxiety (Liu et al., 2021).

Research by Amate-Romera and de la Fluente (2021) found a significant negative relationship between test anxiety and self-regulation in university students. Additionally, personal resources like self-control and social support are inversely related to test anxiety (Agbara & Bdier, 2020). Augustine et al., (2022) demonstrated that family cohesion reduces anxiety problems through enhanced self-regulation among African American emerging adults.

Research on primary school pupils has shown that the quality of family interactions significantly impacts test anxiety and depression. Fourth graders reported higher satisfaction with family and better interactions with parents compared to seventh graders. Female pupils viewed their mothers as more accepting, while male pupils perceived their fathers as more accepting. Maternal rejection predicted higher test anxiety and depression for both genders, whereas paternal rejection was more prominent in boys (Jelena, 2020). Kataria (2019) found no significant correlation between parental

support and examination anxiety among secondary school students. However, Xu et al., (2021) revealed that higher family socio-economic status in Chinese high school students was linked to better learning resources, higher academic self-efficacy, lower parental psychological control, and reduced test anxiety.

Statement of the Problem

Examination anxiety is prevalent and detrimental to students' academic performance, leading to stress, reduced concentration, and poor outcomes. Understanding contributing factors are essential for effective intervention. In Nigeria, inadequate learning skills and preparedness heighten test anxiety across educational levels, negatively impacting performance. Research specifically examining family support and self-regulation's impact on examination anxiety among undergraduates at Plateau State University, Bokkos, is limited.

Purpose of the Study

1. Investigate the influence of self-regulation on examination anxiety among undergraduates at Plateau State University, Bokkos.

2. Examine the influence of family support on examination anxiety among students at Plateau State University, Bokkos.

3. Determine the interactive role of self-regulation and family support on examination anxiety among undergraduates at Plateau State University, Bokkos.

Research Questions

1. Does self-regulation significantly affect examination anxiety among undergraduates at Plateau State University, Bokkos?

2. What influence does family support have on examination anxiety among undergraduates at Plateau State University, Bokkos?

3. What is the interactive influence of self-regulation and family support on examination anxiety among undergraduates at Plateau State University, Bokkos?

Hypotheses

1. Higher self-regulation is associated with lower examination anxiety among undergraduate students at Plateau State University.

2. Strong family support will positively influence examination anxiety among undergraduate students at Plateau State University.

3. The combined effect of self-regulation and family support on examination anxiety is will be significant among undergraduate students at Plateau State University.

Methodology

Sample and Sampling Technique

A quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design was employed to examine the relationship among self-regulation, family support (independent variables), and examination anxiety (dependent variable). Participants from all faculties and departments were selected using convenience sampling. After obtaining informed consent, participants completed questionnaires, which were then retrieved. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the study.

Scope of the Study

This study focused on family support and self-regulation as predictors of examination anxiety among undergraduate students at Plateau State University, Bokkos. It included students from all faculties, departments, and academic levels, encompassing various age groups, genders, religious affiliations, and marital status.

Significance of the Study

Understanding the relationship between family support and self-regulation can guide educational institutions, parents, and educators in developing strategies to reduce examination anxiety. This study highlights the impact of examination anxiety on academic performance at Plateau State University, Bokkos.

The findings will underscore the detrimental effects of unmanaged test anxiety, helping lecturers support affected students more effectively. Recommendations may include alternative assessment methods, such as continuous assessments. The study contributes to the broader understanding of how examination anxiety influences academic success and provides a foundation for future research in this area.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Mean, Standard Error, and 95% Confidence Interval for Self-Regulation and Examination Anxiety

Self-Regulation	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low self-regulation capacity	37.534	.869	35.809	39.259
High self-regulation capacity	36.717	.829	35.073	38.362

Table 1 shows that participants with low self-regulation had higher mean examination anxiety scores than those with high self-regulation.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Error, and 95% Confidence Interval for Family Support and Examination Anxiety

Family Support	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Poor Family Support	37.404	.856	35.704	39.103
Good Family Support	36.848	.842	35.176	38.519

Table 2 shows that participants with poor family support had higher mean examination anxiety scores compared to those with good family support.

Table 3: Mean, Standard Error, and 95% Confidence Interval for Examination Anxiety Across Family Support and Self-Regulation

Family Support*Self-Regulation	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Poor Family Support*Low self-regulation capacity	36.857	1.105	34.663	39.051
Poor Family Support*High self-regulation capacity	37.950	1.308	35.354	40.546
Good Family Support*Low self-regulation capacity	38.211	1.342	35.547	40.874

Good Family Support*High self-regulation capacity	35.485	1.018	33.464	37.506

Table 3 reveals that participants with good family support and low self-regulation capacity had the highest mean scores for examination anxiety.

Inferential Statistics

Table 4: ANOVA for Family Support, Self-Regulation, and Examination Anxiety

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	120.781[a]	3	40.260	1.177	.323
Intercept	130762.776	1	130762.776	3822.799	.000
Family Support	7.329	1	7.329	.214	.644
Self-regulation	15.809	1	15.809	.462	.498
Family Support * Self-Regulation	86.459	1	86.459	2.528	.115
Error	3283.779	96	34.206		
Total	139418.000	100			
Corrected Total	3404.560	99			

a. R Squared = .035 (Adjusted R Squared = .005)

Results for Hypothesis 1 indicate no significant effect of family support on examination anxiety among students ($F(1, 96) = 0.214$, $p = 0.644$). Therefore, the hypothesis is not supported.

Results for Hypothesis 2 show no significant effect of self-regulation on examination anxiety among students ($F(1, 96) = 0.462$, $p = 0.498$). Thus, this hypothesis is not supported.

Results for Hypothesis 3 demonstrate that the interaction between family support and self-regulation is not significant ($F(1, 95) = 2.528$, $p = 0.115$). Hence, this hypothesis is also not supported.

Discussion

The hypothesis that higher self-regulation would be associated with lower examination anxiety was not supported, indicating that self-regulation does not predict examination anxiety among students at Plateau State University. This contrasts with previous findings by Morosanova et al., (2020) and Fomina (2017), who reported a negative relationship between self-regulation and test anxiety. Similarly, Liu et al., (2021) found that emotion regulation strategies correlated negatively with test anxiety, promoting a healthier mental state and reducing anxiety.

The hypothesis that strong family support would positively influence examination anxiety was also not supported. This aligns with Kataria (2019), who found no significant correlation between parental support and academic anxiety among secondary school students. Similarly, Agbara and Bdier (2020) observed that high self-control and social support correlate with lower test anxiety.

Lastly, the hypothesis that the combined effect of self-regulation and family support on examination anxiety would be significant was not supported. This finding slightly contrasts with Augustine et al., (2022), who found that family cohesion decreased anxiety problems via increased self-regulation among African American emerging adults. This suggests that family cohesion can play a promotive role in reducing anxiety during emerging adulthood.

Recommendations

Understanding the interaction between family support and self-regulation can guide educational institutions, parents, and educators in developing effective strategies to mitigate examination anxiety. By addressing these factors, students' well-being and academic performance can be enhanced. The researchers, therefore, recommend the following:

1. Lecturers' Training and Assessment Methods:

Lecturers should be trained to support students experiencing test anxiety, informed by the study's findings. Alternative assessment methods, such as continuous assessment, should be prioritized over multiple high-stakes examinations.

2. Future Research Directions:

Future research should build upon these findings, employing qualitative data collection methods to allow participants to express themselves more comprehensively. Additionally, increasing the number of participants and expanding the scope of the study can enhance the generalisability of the results.

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