

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON STUDENT MOTIVATION IN COMPLETING FINAL PROJECTS AT STKIP MUHAMMADIYAH SOUTHWEST ACEH

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ABSTRACT

Motivation to finish a final project can be difficult to sustain without support from the people around a student. This study set out to gauge how much social support students felt they had, how motivated they were to complete their final projects, and whether the two were connected, focusing on undergraduate students at STKIP Muhammadiyah Southwest Aceh. A quantitative, correlational design guided the research. Thirty students from the English Education and Mathematics Education programs took part, selected through random sampling. A closed-ended questionnaire was distributed, and the resulting data were processed in SPSS using descriptive statistics together with Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation. On average, students rated the social support they received as moderate ($M = 40.77$, $SD = 6.49$) and their own motivation as moderate as well ($M = 54.37$, $SD = 8.35$). The correlation test produced a coefficient of $r = .527$ with a significance value of $.003$, pointing to a moderate, positive, and statistically significant link between the two variables: students who felt more supported also tended to report stronger motivation. These results suggest that steady encouragement from family, friends, and lecturers can help students stay motivated and see their final projects through to completion.

Keywords : Final Projects, Motivation, Social Support.

A. INTRODUCTION

Completing a final project is one of the requirements undergraduate students must fulfil before graduating. Under Ministerial Regulation Number 53 of 2023 concerning Higher Education Quality Assurance, issued by Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, this requirement is not tied to a single fixed format: it may take the form of a thesis, a prototype, a project, or another comparable output, depending on what each institution's own curriculum and academic regulations allow. Even so, working through this requirement is rarely straightforward. Students commonly struggle with choosing a research topic, handling data analysis, and coping with stress, anxiety, or the pull toward academic procrastination (Indriani, 2024), all of which can chip away at their drive to finish. Given these pressures, the encouragement students receive from the people around them — family, friends, and lecturers alike — becomes an important factor in keeping their motivation and psychological well-being intact.

At STKIP Muhammadiyah Southwest Aceh specifically, finishing a final project calls for more than academic guidance alone; emotional backing matters just as much. Earlier research supports this view: supervisors, family members, and peers who offer encouragement have been linked to higher motivation and less procrastination among students (Widiantoro et al., 2021; Setriani et al., 2021). Small things such as words of encouragement, constructive feedback, and a sense of working alongside someone rather than alone appear to keep students confident and engaged as they move through the research process.

Sarafino (1994) describes social support as the comfort, appreciation, care, and hands-on help a person receives from others, which can take emotional, informational, instrumental, or appraisal forms here provided by supervisors, family members, and friends. DeVito adds that how this support is communicated matters just as much: openness, empathy, and encouragement, delivered through effective interpersonal exchange, help build the kind of positive academic environment that keeps learning motivation alive.

Motivation itself, following Notoatmodjo (2014), is essentially the willingness and confidence needed to carry out one's academic responsibilities. Students with strong motivation typically show greater commitment, persist longer, and trust their own abilities more. Two well-known frameworks help explain where such motivation comes from: Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory points to internal belief in oneself, while the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) highlights how external conditions, social support among them, shape behaviour. House similarly argues that emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support all feed into a student's confidence and their intention to see a final project through to completion.

A number of studies back the idea that social support boosts student motivation. Fadhillah et al. (2025), for instance, found a strong positive link between peer support and motivation to learn; Rusianti et al. (2023) noted that family support builds psychological resilience in students; and Widianoro et al. (2019) observed that supportive supervisors make students more enthusiastic about finishing their theses. Even so, none of these studies has looked specifically at how social support relates to motivation among students at STKIP Muhammadiyah Southwest Aceh — a gap this study aims to close.

B. METHOD

This study used a quantitative method with a correlational design to look at how social support relates to students' motivation to finish their final projects. A correlational approach suited the purpose well, since it allowed the strength and direction of the relationship between social support (the independent variable) and motivation (the dependent variable) to be measured without manipulating either one.

The study took place at STKIP Muhammadiyah Southwest Aceh, drawing on undergraduate students who were in the process of completing their final projects. Participants were selected through random sampling, subject to a few conditions: they had to be enrolled in either the English Education or Mathematics Education programme, be in their eighth or tenth semester, and be actively working on their final project. Thirty students met these criteria and took part — 25 from the English Education Department (23 in semester eight, 2 in semester ten) and 5 from the Mathematics Education Department (all in semester eight). Every participant was female.

A closed-ended questionnaire with two sections was used to collect data: one section covered social support as the independent variable, and the other covered motivation to complete the final project as the dependent variable. The social support items were built on Sarafino's (1994) framework, covering family, peer, and lecturer support, while the motivation items drew on DeVito's (2018) Interpersonal Communication Theory, spanning openness, empathy, positivity, supportiveness, and equality, on the premise that good interpersonal communication feeds motivation through positive social interaction. In total, the questionnaire contained 27 statements 11 for social support and 16 for motivation each rated on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 5 through Strongly Disagree = 1), with reverse scoring applied to negatively worded items.

Once sampling was finalised, the questionnaire was distributed to participants, who responded independently based on their own perceptions of the support they received and

their level of motivation. The resulting data were processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences): descriptive statistics frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation summarised each variable, while Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was used to gauge the strength and direction of the relationship between social support and motivation.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics Respondents

This part lays out who the respondents were, broken down by study programme, semester, and gender, to give a sense of what the sample looked like. Table 1.1 presents the full breakdown.

Table 1
Characteristics respondents

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	female	30	100.0	100.0	100.0
Semesters		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	8	28	93.3	93.3	93.3
	10	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Department		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Department of English Language Education	25	83.3	83.3	83.3
	Department of Educational Mathematics	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

As Table 1 shows, 30 undergraduate students took part in the study. Twenty-five of them (83.3%) came from the English Education Department and five (16.7%) from the Mathematics Education Department. In terms of academic level, 28 (93.3%) were in their eighth semester and two (6.7%) in their tenth. All 30 respondents were female.

Validity Test

Before the main analysis, each questionnaire item was checked for validity whether it truly measured what it was meant to measure using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation. Table 2 lists the results.

Table 2
Validity Test

Variabel	Butir	Koefisien Korelasi	sig. (2tailed)	Remarks
Social Support	X1	0.391	0.032	VALID
	X2	0.680	0.000	VALID
	X3	0.714	0.000	VALID
	X4	0.571	0.001	VALID
	X5	0.424	0.020	VALID
	X6	0.670	0.000	VALID
	X7	0.692	0.000	VALID

	X8	0.790	0.000	VALID
	X9	0.704	0.000	VALID
	X10	0.792	0.000	VALID
	X11	0.701	0.000	VALID
Motivation	Y1	0.563	0.001	VALID
	Y2	0.649	0.000	VALID
	Y3	0.677	0.000	VALID
	Y4	0.542	0.002	VALID
	Y5	0.627	0.000	VALID
	Y6	0.789	0.000	VALID
	Y7	0.609	0.000	VALID
	Y8	0.672	0.000	VALID
	Y9	0.773	0.000	VALID
	Y10	0.745	0.000	VALID
	Y11	0.598	0.000	VALID
	Y12	0.703	0.000	VALID
	Y13	0.678	0.000	VALID
	Y14	0.682	0.000	VALID
	Y15	0.645	0.000	VALID
	Y16	0.024	0.901	INVALID

All eleven items measuring social support turned out valid, each with a significance value below 0.05. The same held for the motivation items, with one exception: item Y16 failed to meet the validity criterion and was dropped from further analysis. On the whole, the remaining items held up well as measures of the intended constructs

Reliability Test

With validity established, the next step was to check reliability how internally consistent each set of items was using Cronbach's Alpha. Results appear in Table 3.

Table 3
Reliability Test

No.	Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
1.	Social Support	0.863	Reliabel
2.	Motivation	0.904	Reliabel

The social support questionnaire returned a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.863, and the motivation questionnaire returned 0.904. Both figures comfortably clear the commonly used cut-off of 0.70, indicating that both instruments held together well internally and were fit for use in the main analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

To address the first two research questions, descriptive statistics were run to capture the overall level of social support and motivation among respondents, covering minimum and maximum scores, means, and standard deviations. These appear in Table 4.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Support	30	29.00	55.00	40.7667	6.48969
Motivation	30	43.00	75.00	54.3667	8.34796
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Social support averaged 40.77 (SD = 6.49), with scores spanning 29 to 55 placing it, on the whole, in the moderate range, though with some spread across respondents. Motivation averaged 54.37 (SD = 8.35), ranging from 43 to 75, again landing mostly in the moderate category despite some variation between individuals.

To make sense of these averages, both variables were sorted into low, moderate, and high bands based on the mean and standard deviation, following Azwar's (2012) approach: scores below Mean – 1 SD were classed as low, those between Mean – 1 SD and Mean + 1 SD as moderate, and those above Mean + 1 SD as high. Table 5 sets out these bands for both variables.

Table 5
Categorization of Social Support and Motivation Levels

Variabel	Low	Moderate	High
Social Support	29-34	35-47	48-55
Motivation	43-46	47-63	64-75

Both social support and motivation fell mainly into the moderate band, suggesting that respondents generally felt reasonably supported by family, friends, and lecturers while working at a moderate level of motivation toward finishing their final projects.

Correlation Test

To answer the third research question, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was used to test whether social support and motivation were significantly related, and to capture the strength and direction of that relationship. The hypotheses tested were as follows:

- H0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between social support and students' motivation in completing their final projects among undergraduate students at STKIP Muhammadiyah Southwest Aceh.
- H1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between social support and students' motivation in completing their final projects among undergraduate students at STKIP Muhammadiyah Southwest Aceh.

Decisions on these hypotheses rested on a significance threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$: a p-value below 0.05 would mean rejecting H0 in favour of H1, while a p-value at or above 0.05 would mean retaining H0. Table 6 presents what the analysis found.

Table 6
Correlation Test

Correlations

		Social Support	Motivation
Social Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.527**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	30	30
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.527**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	

N	30	30
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The correlation test returned $r = 0.527$ with a significance value of 0.003 well under the 0.05 cut-off pointing to a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between social support and motivation. In simple terms, students who felt more supported tended to report being more motivated to finish their final projects. On this basis, H_0 was rejected and H_1 was accepted.

D. CONCLUSION

This study set out to gauge how much social support students perceived, how motivated they were to complete their final projects, and how the two related to each other among students at STKIP Muhammadiyah Southwest Aceh. Three main conclusions follow from the findings.

First, students on the whole rated the social support available to them from family, friends, and lecturers as moderate, suggesting this support was present and useful, if not overwhelming, throughout their work on their final projects.

Second, students' motivation to finish their final projects also came out at a moderate level. Most respondents leaned positive, though motivation varied somewhat from one student to another.

Third, the correlation analysis found a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between social support and motivation ($r = .527$, $p = .003$). Because the significance value fell below the 0.05 threshold, H_0 was rejected in favour of H_1 , confirming that students who felt more supported tended to be more motivated to complete their final projects.

Taken together, these findings point to social support as a meaningful factor in keeping students motivated as they work through their final projects. Lecturers, family members, and peers who continue to offer encouragement can help students stay on track and finish their projects successfully and on time.

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