

Autonomy Support, Intrinsic Motivation, and Self-Regulation Among Laguna State Polytechnic University Santa Cruz Campus College Students

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Abstract: This study examined the relationships among autonomy support, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation among first-year college students at Laguna State Polytechnic University–Santa Cruz Campus. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory, the Self-Regulated Learning Framework, and Culturally Responsive Teaching Models, the research employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design to explore how autonomy-supportive practices influenced students' motivation and self-management strategies. Data were gathered from 305 students across 27 academic programs using a validated survey instrument and were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings revealed that autonomy support and intrinsic motivation were rated as very high, while self-regulation was assessed as high. Teacher feedback ($M=3.45$, $SD=0.55$), opportunities for choice in assignments ($M=3.19$, $SD=.62$) and encouragement for self-directed learning ($M=3.37$, $SD=0.60$) demonstrated strong autonomy support. Students exhibited very high intrinsic motivation in interest in subject matter ($M=3.47$, $SD=0.50$), enjoyment of learning activities ($M=3.48$, $SD=0.50$), and desire for mastery and competence ($M=3.56$, $SD=0.46$). Self-regulation was reflected in high time management skills ($M=3.09$, $SD=0.64$) and goal setting ($M=3.29$, $SD=0.59$), alongside very high self-monitoring and evaluation ($M=3.29$, $SD=0.59$). Statistical analysis confirmed significant positive correlations between autonomy support and self-regulation, as well as between intrinsic motivation and self-regulation, indicating moderate to high positive relationships.

These findings highlighted the crucial role of autonomy-supportive strategies—such as constructive feedback, meaningful choice, and support for self-directed learning—in fostering student motivation and self-regulation. To further enhance academic success and holistic development, the Enhance Autonomy Support, Intrinsic Motivation, and Self-Regulation Program was proposed as a structured intervention.

Keywords: *Autonomy Support, Intrinsic Motivation, Self-Regulation, and College Students.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Psychology forms the bedrock of personal development and societal advancement, offering profound insights into human behavior, emotions, and cognition that enrich intellectual and professional growth. It fosters self-awareness, resilience, and adaptability at the individual level while promoting social cohesion and innovation across domains such as education, mental health, and leadership. Higher education, as a critical stage in personal and professional advancement, equips individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in an increasingly complex world. However, this phase is often fraught with challenges,

including disparities in access to quality education, inadequate technological resources, and the demanding balance of family responsibilities and academic commitments, all of which significantly affect students' academic success and well-being.

Amid these challenges, educational psychology emerges as a powerful framework to address these multifaceted concerns. By focusing on critical constructs like autonomy support, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation, educational psychology offers pathways to improve student experiences and outcomes. Autonomy support enables students to take ownership of their educational journey,

fostering confidence, engagement, and a sense of agency. Intrinsic motivation, characterized by a natural drive to learn for personal fulfillment, serves as a powerful catalyst for sustained academic effort. Self-regulation equips students with essential strategies for managing their behaviors, emotions, and learning processes, empowering them to navigate challenges and optimize performance.

These constructs, through their interconnected nature, collectively influence academic achievement and holistic development, underscoring their importance as key areas of research.

Across the globe, autonomy support consistently proves to be a key factor in boosting student engagement and achieving academic success. Educational systems that prioritize student independence foster an environment where intrinsic motivation and self-regulation thrive, leading to more effective learning experiences. Research by Ryan and Deci (2020) highlighted how addressing students' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness enhanced their drive for learning and equipped them with strategies for managing their academic progress. Despite these benefits, systemic issues such as inadequate mental health resources and financial constraints often limit the extent to which these supports could be fully implemented. Addressing these challenges remained crucial to ensuring that all students benefited from the positive effects of autonomy support in education.

In the Philippines, implementing autonomy-supportive practices faces significant challenges due to limited funding, resource shortages, and socio-cultural pressures. Filipino students often juggle multiple roles, such as fulfilling family responsibilities while managing academic demands, which can impact their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation capacities. To address these issues, it is crucial to adapt autonomy-supportive strategies to fit the unique cultural and socioeconomic context. For example, tailoring programs to accommodate familial obligations and leveraging community resources can enhance their relevance and effectiveness. As emphasized by Flunger et al. (2024), contextualizing these practices was essential for empowering students and fostering sustainable growth.

At the institutional level, universities like Laguna State Polytechnic University – Santa Cruz Campus play a crucial role in embedding autonomy support, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation within their academic frameworks. While educators acknowledge the importance of these constructs, the implementation of effective programs is often hindered by resource limitations, inconsistent teacher support, and the absence of customized initiatives. Research by Admiraal et al. (2024) showed that granting students greater control over their learning significantly enhanced self-regulatory abilities, such as planning and time management. However, the distinct challenges encountered by students at Laguna State Polytechnic University – Santa Cruz Campus remained underexplored, underscoring the need for context-specific research to address these gaps.

The interplay of autonomy support, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation demonstrates significant potential to enhance student success by addressing systemic, cultural, and institutional challenges. At Laguna State Polytechnic University–Santa Cruz Campus, the research findings highlighted how these constructs positively influenced academic outcomes. High levels of autonomy support, such as constructive teacher feedback, flexible assignments, and encouragement of self-directed learning, fostered self-regulatory behaviors like time management, goal-setting, and progress monitoring. Similarly, strong intrinsic motivation, driven by interest in the subject matter, enjoyment of learning activities, and the desire for mastery, promoted persistence and reflective learning strategies. These insights guided the development of tailored programs that empowered students, improved academic performance, and supported holistic well-being. By aligning educational strategies with the contextual realities of students, this research reaffirmed the importance of evidence-based practices in achieving sustainable and impactful results within the broader discipline of educational psychology.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design to examine relationships among autonomy support, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation.

- **Locale and Respondents:** The research was conducted at Laguna State Polytechnic University–Santa Cruz Campus, focusing on 305 first-year students selected from a population of 2,470 across 27 academic programs using simple random sampling. Proportional allocation ensured representation.
- **Instrument:** A structured survey questionnaire measured (a) autonomy support (teacher feedback, choice in assignments, encouragement of self-directed learning), (b) intrinsic motivation (interest, enjoyment, mastery), and (c) self-regulation (time management, goal setting, self-monitoring). Responses were rated on a 4-point Likert scale.
- **Validation:** The instrument was validated by experts in psychology and education. Cronbach's Alpha scores ranged from .902 to .952, indicating high internal reliability.
- **Data Analysis:** Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were used to describe student perceptions. Pearson's correlation determined the relationships among the three constructs. Ethical clearance was secured, and voluntary participation was observed.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study on autonomy support, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation among first-year students of Laguna State Polytechnic University–Santa Cruz Campus. The findings are arranged according to the sequence of the research questions.

Table 1 Level of Autonomy Support in Terms of Teacher Feedback

Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Teacher Feedback	3.45	0.55	Very High

The mean score of **3.45 (SD = 0.55)** reveals that students rated teacher feedback at a *very high* level. This suggests that teachers frequently provide constructive and timely comments, guiding students in improving performance and reinforcing their confidence. Such feedback aligns with Reeve and Cheon (2021), who emphasized that supportive teacher feedback strengthens intrinsic motivation and fosters positive learning behavior.

Table 2 Level of Autonomy Support in Terms of Opportunities for Choice in Assignments

Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Choice in Assignments	3.19	0.62	High

The rating of 3.19 (SD = 0.62) indicates a *high* level of perceived choice in assignments. While students appreciate some flexibility in their academic tasks, this is slightly lower compared to teacher feedback. This finding highlights the potential to further improve student autonomy by expanding options in task selection, which Patall (2020) described as a critical factor in enhancing engagement.

Table 3 Level of Autonomy Support in terms of Encouragement of Self-Directed Learning

Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Encouragement of Self-Directed Learning	3.37	0.60	Very High

With a mean of 3.37 (SD = 0.60), students rated encouragement for self-directed learning as *very high*. This suggests that teachers promote independence and responsibility, encouraging learners to pursue academic goals actively. Such practices support Zimmerman and Schunk's (2022) view that autonomy develops critical self-regulatory behaviors.

Table 4 Level of Intrinsic Motivation in Terms of Interest in the Subject Matter

Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Interest in Subject	3.47	0.50	Very High

The mean of 3.47 (SD = 0.50) indicates students possess very high interest in their subjects. This reflects genuine curiosity and relevance in their academic experiences, aligning with Renninger and Hidi (2020), who emphasized that interest sustains engagement and deeper learning.

Table 5 Level of Intrinsic Motivation in Terms of Enjoyment of Learning Activities

Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Enjoyment of Learning	3.48	0.50	Very High

The mean of 3.48 (SD = 0.50) reveals that students highly enjoy learning activities. Enjoyment fosters persistence and reduces academic stress, consistent with Grassinger et al. (2024), who noted that enjoyment strongly correlates with school well-being.

Table 6 Level of Intrinsic Motivation in Terms of Desire for Mastery and Competence

Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Mastery & Competence	3.56	0.46	Very High

The highest rating in intrinsic motivation is desire for mastery (M = 3.56, SD = 0.46). Students are driven by a strong aspiration to develop skills and achieve academic excellence. This result validates Davidovitch and Dorot's (2023) findings that mastery-oriented learners achieve higher academic outcomes.

Table 7 Level of Self-Regulation in Terms of Time Management Skills

Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Time Management	3.09	0.64	High

With a mean of 3.09 (SD = 0.64), time management is rated *high*. Although students generally manage their schedules, it appears weaker compared to other self-regulation indicators. This suggests the need for structured interventions, consistent with Suan (2023), who emphasized that teacher competence plays a role in guiding students' time management skills.

Table 8 Level of Self-Regulation in Terms of Goal Setting and Planning

Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Goal Setting	3.29	0.59	High

The mean of 3.29 (SD = 0.59) reflects a *high* level of goal setting and planning. Students set clear academic objectives and create plans for achieving them. This aligns with Travers (2022), who stressed that goal-oriented learners demonstrate stronger focus and efficiency.

Table 9 Level of Self-Regulation in Terms of Self-Monitoring and Evaluation of Progress

Indicator	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Self-Monitoring & Evaluation	3.29	0.59	Very High

Students rated self-monitoring and evaluation at 3.29 (SD = 0.59), interpreted as *very high*. This means they frequently review their progress and adjust strategies. These results support Zhou and Lee (2021), who found that intrinsic motivation enhances self-monitoring behaviors.

Table 10 Test of Significant Relationship between Autonomy Support and Self-Regulation

Variables	Correlation	P-Value	Interpretation
Autonomy Support & Self-Regulation	Positive	< 0.05	Significant

A significant positive correlation was found between autonomy support and self-regulation. This indicates that when students experience supportive feedback, choice, and independence, they are more likely to regulate their learning effectively. This finding echoes Zhang and Gao (2021), who established that autonomy-supportive teaching promotes perseverance and self-regulation.

Table 11 Test of Significant Relationship between Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Regulation

Variables	Correlation	P-Value	Interpretation
Intrinsic Motivation & Self-Reg.	Positive	< 0.05	Significant

Intrinsic motivation was also positively correlated with self-regulation, showing that students motivated by interest, enjoyment, and mastery are more likely to manage tasks effectively. This validates Ryan and Deci's (2020) Self-Determination Theory, which posits that intrinsic motivation is a critical driver of sustained self-regulation.

Table 12 Proposed Program: Enhance Autonomy Support, Intrinsic Motivation, and Self-Regulation Program

Area of Concern	Objectives	Strategies/Activities	Persons Involved	Time Frame	Success Indicators
Autonomy Support (Teacher Feedback, Choice, Self-Directed Learning)	To strengthen teacher practices in providing autonomy-supportive environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training workshops for faculty on autonomy-supportive teaching • Designing flexible assignment formats and grading rubrics • Encouraging independent projects 	Faculty, Program Heads, Guidance Counselors	Semester-based training	Increased student satisfaction on teacher feedback and classroom autonomy (≥85% survey rating)
Intrinsic Motivation (Interest, Enjoyment, Mastery)	To cultivate students' natural interest and enjoyment of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation seminars and peer mentoring • Integration of project-based and problem-based learning • Recognition programs for mastery and creativity 	Faculty, Student Leaders, Campus Organizations	Quarterly	Improved intrinsic motivation scores in follow-up surveys; higher participation in enrichment activities

Area of Concern	Objectives	Strategies/Activities	Persons Involved	Time Frame	Success Indicators
Self-Regulation (Time Management, Goal-Setting, Monitoring)	To improve student learning strategies and time management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time management and study skills workshops • Goal-setting and reflection journals • Peer-support groups for progress monitoring 	Guidance Counselors, Peer Mentors, Student Affairs Office	Monthly	Students demonstrate improved academic performance and self-reported study habits
Holistic Development	To ensure long-term personal and academic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness programs (stress management, resilience-building) • Counseling support • Community engagement activities 	Guidance Office, Faculty, Student Council	Ongoing	Reduced dropout rates; higher retention and engagement rates

The program integrates workshops on time management, teacher feedback training, flexible learning tasks, and peer mentoring activities. It is designed to address weaker areas (e.g., time management) while strengthening autonomy support and intrinsic motivation.

These results align with previous findings (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Zhou & Lee, 2021), which demonstrated that autonomy support and intrinsic motivation serve as strong predictors of self-regulated learning behaviors. In the Philippine context, the findings highlight the cultural importance of tailoring autonomy-supportive practices to student realities, particularly balancing academic demands with family responsibilities.

The study emphasizes that institutions must strengthen teacher practices in feedback and choice-making and implement structured interventions that foster time management and goal-setting skills.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

- Students at Laguna State Polytechnic University–Santa Cruz Campus perceived autonomy support and intrinsic motivation at very high levels, while their self-regulation was high.
- Teacher feedback and encouragement of self-directed learning were the strongest indicators of autonomy support, while desire for mastery emerged as the highest driver of intrinsic motivation.
- Significant positive correlations were found between autonomy support and self-regulation, and between intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.
- Autonomy-supportive strategies are essential to enhance intrinsic motivation and self-regulation, ultimately improving academic success and well-being.
- The proposed *Enhance Autonomy Support, Intrinsic Motivation, and Self-Regulation Program* is recommended to further develop students' academic resilience and holistic growth.

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