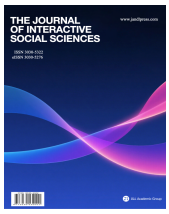
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Developmental Characteristics of Achievement Motivation and Its Longitudinal Relations with Social Support Among Undergraduates: A Three-Wave Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the developmental features of undergraduates' achievement motivation and its longitudinal relations with social support. A total of 106 students from one university were tracked across three waves at four-month intervals. The motive to approach success (Ms) and the motive to avoid failure (Mf) were assessed with the Achievement Motives Scale, and social support with the Perceived Social Support Scale. Latent growth curve models (LGCM) and cross-lagged panel models (CLPM) were estimated in Mplus. Results showed that: (1) over the eight-month period, neither Ms nor Mf changed significantly at the group level, yet significant intercept variances indicated marked individual differences at baseline; (2) social support positively predicted subsequent Ms only in the later phase (T2→T3, $\beta = .34$, $p < .001$) and was only marginal earlier, suggesting a time lag in the conversion of support into approach motivation; (3) social support positively predicted subsequent Mf in the early phase (T1→T2, $\beta = .21$, $p = .015$), opposite to the hypothesized direction, suggesting that the immediate effect of support may first activate defensive avoidance; and (4) for the reverse paths, Ms significantly predicted later social support (T2→T3), whereas Mf did not. Social support and achievement motivation thus showed an asymmetric, staged "disturb-then-focus" pattern. The findings extend the temporal scope of conservation of resources theory and suggest that institutions provide emotional acceptance before goal-oriented support.

1. INTRODUCTION

Achievement motivation reflects an individual's motivational tendency to approach success and avoid failure in achievement situations (Atkinson, 1957). Although achievement motivation is generally regarded as a relatively stable individual disposition, its levels and manifestations may still vary with changes in learning experiences and supportive environments. It is therefore necessary to examine motivational changes among undergraduates during their time at university through longitudinal research.

Prior studies provide relevant evidence for understanding motivational development. In a

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study tracking students before and after graduation, Grosemans et al. (2020) identified four profiles of motivational development based on the joint trajectories of self-efficacy and achievement goals, suggesting that motivation-related characteristics exhibit developmental heterogeneity during the graduation transition. Changes in achievement motivation may also be linked to the social support environment in which an individual is embedded. Existing research indicates that perceived social support is associated with achievement motivation: it is significantly and positively correlated with the motive to approach success, whereas its correlation with the motive to avoid failure does not reach significance (Bao, 2021). Furthermore, a decline in social support has been linked to an upward trend in the motive to avoid failure among Chinese university students (Yang et al., 2026). These findings suggest a need to examine the relations between social support and the two components of achievement motivation separately, and to further test their temporal associations using individual longitudinal data.

According to conservation of resources (COR) theory, the gain and loss of resources may constitute a bidirectional process over time (Hobfoll, 1989). Accordingly, the present study focused on students at a specific undergraduate institution and adopted a three-wave longitudinal design with four-month intervals (N = 106). The aim was to examine the short-term change trajectories of the motive to approach success and the motive to avoid failure, and to test the bidirectional predictive relations between social support and these two motivational components over time. By examining the two motivational components and their respective developmental features separately, this study contributes individual-level longitudinal evidence on motivational changes among undergraduates. Furthermore, by simultaneously testing the predictive paths in both directions, it investigates whether the associations between social support and the different motivational components vary, thereby providing a basis for understanding undergraduates' motivational development and its dynamic relationship with supportive resources.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

2.1 The Two-Dimensional Structure of Achievement Motivation and Its Changes During University

Achievement motivation was first proposed by McClelland et al. (1953). Atkinson(1957) further distinguished between two achievement-related motives—the motive to approach success and the motive to avoid failure—and pointed out that motive strength, expectancy of success, and incentive value jointly influence an individual's behavioral tendencies. Previous studies have mostly treated achievement motivation as a relatively stable personality trait, often adopting cross-sectional designs to examine its underlying mechanisms. However, motivation-related characteristics are not immutable; rather, they may exhibit dynamic developmental trajectories as educational and life contexts change.

The transition from university to the workplace is a critical stage in which students face shifts in the nature of their tasks and social roles. Longitudinal tracking studies indicate that motivation-related characteristics undergo significant changes during the graduation transition. Grosemans et al. (2020) tracked higher education students from pre- to post-graduation and found that self-efficacy and achievement goals exhibited significant longitudinal evolution during this transition period. This finding suggests that transition periods characterized by role shifts may serve as windows for systematic changes in motivation. However, because that study measured self-efficacy and achievement goals, its results cannot directly elucidate the developmental patterns of the

motives to approach success and to avoid failure among undergraduates during their time at university.

Currently, longitudinal evidence regarding the developmental trajectories of achievement motivation among undergraduate populations remains scarce. Do these two motivational dimensions remain stable at the group level over a period of several months, or do they exhibit significant upward or downward trends? Furthermore, are there significant inter-individual differences in their initial levels and rates of change? To address this gap in the literature, the present study employs latent growth curve modeling (LGCM) to explore their dynamic developmental features.

2.2 Longitudinal Reciprocal Relations Between Social Support and Achievement Motivation

The present study draws on conservation of resources (COR) theory to examine the dynamic relationship between social support and achievement motivation. This theory holds that the gain and loss of resources may, through ongoing interactions between the individual and the environment, give rise to resource gain or loss spirals (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Prior longitudinal studies provide preliminary evidence for a reciprocal link between social support and motivation. In a four-wave study of Korean students from multicultural backgrounds, Ling and Jang (2023) found that social support could predict achievement motivation directly or indirectly, and that achievement motivation, in turn, predicted subsequent perceived social support. Using a cross-lagged panel model, Gaspard et al. (2025) found partial cross-time reciprocal associations between confidence in obtaining teacher and peer support and students' expectancies of academic success and subjective task values. These findings suggest that the relationship between social support and motivation needs to be examined from a bidirectional perspective. Nevertheless, the above results are still insufficient to clarify whether social support exhibits distinct longitudinal associations with the two motivational components—the motive to approach success and the motive to avoid failure. The present study therefore specifically focuses on undergraduates and tests the longitudinal associations between social support and the two components of achievement motivation separately.

As an environmental resource, social support may act on the two components of achievement motivation by influencing expectancies of success and the appraisal of failure threat. On the one hand, emotional acceptance and support from close others may reduce an individual's concern about the shame and negative evaluation associated with failure. In a sample of university students, Cengiz (2023) found that friend support was negatively correlated with fear of failure, providing empirical evidence for a link between supportive resources and lower failure threat. On the other hand, the encouragement, information, and help provided by social support may strengthen an individual's judgments of their own ability and of the attainability of success. Among students in medical and health-related majors at Chinese universities, Chen et al. (2025) found that perceived social support was positively correlated with intrinsic learning motivation and academic self-efficacy. Although these variables are not identical to the motive to approach success and the motive to avoid failure, the above studies nonetheless provide indirect evidence that social support promotes positive motivation and reduces failure threat. Accordingly, the present study expects that social support will positively predict subsequent motive to approach success and negatively predict subsequent motive to avoid failure.

Motivational states may, in turn, influence individuals' seeking and use of supportive resources.

Students with a stronger tendency to approach success may be more willing to obtain help through active help-seeking and interpersonal interaction, whereas those with a stronger tendency to avoid failure may reduce help-seeking when they worry that it would expose their own inadequacy. In a study of university students, Karabenick (2004) found that mastery-approach goals were associated with adaptive help-seeking, whereas performance-avoidance goals were associated with help-seeking avoidance. These results offer a possible behavioral explanation for how motivation influences the acquisition of supportive resources; however, whether help-seeking tendencies further translate into differences in subsequent social support still requires longitudinal testing. Focusing on social support in everyday interpersonal relationships, the present study expects that the motive to approach success will positively predict subsequent social support, whereas the motive to avoid failure will negatively predict subsequent social support.

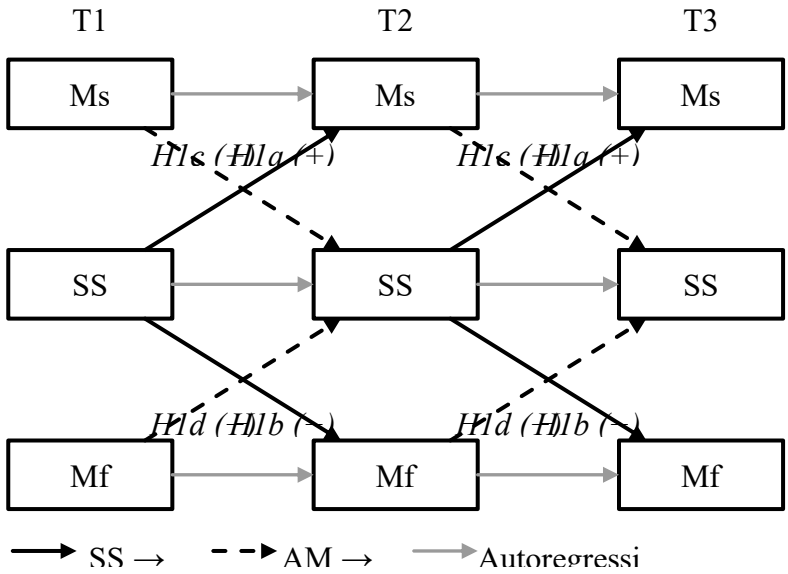
On this basis, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: Social support at an earlier time point positively predicts the motive to approach success at a subsequent time point.

H1b: Social support at an earlier time point negatively predicts the motive to avoid failure at a subsequent time point.

H1c: The motive to approach success at an earlier time point positively predicts social support at a subsequent time point.

H1d: The motive to avoid failure at an earlier time point negatively predicts social support at a subsequent time point.



Note. Ms=Motive to approach success; Mf=Motive to avoid failure; SS = social support.

Figure 1. Hypothesized cross-lagged panel model

3. METHOD

3.1 Participants and Procedure

The present study employed a longitudinal design, with data collected from an applied

undergraduate university in Wuhan, China. Data were collected at three time points (T1, T2, and T3) between October 2025 and June 2026, with a four-month interval between consecutive measurements. Aligned with the actual academic calendar, this timeframe covered the period from students' internship preparation at the beginning of the fall semester to their job hunting in the spring semester—a critical period characterized by significant changes in psychological adaptation and motivational development. To match responses across the different time points, participants provided the last four digits of their student ID numbers. Once matched, these identifiers were replaced with codes to ensure participant anonymity.

The survey was distributed to the target departments via Wenjuanxing, an online questionnaire platform. At T1, a total of 167 valid initial questionnaires were collected after excluding invalid responses. Following the T2 and T3 follow-ups, and after excluding invalid responses and dropouts, a final sample of 106 successfully matched valid longitudinal responses was obtained (attrition rate = 36.5%). Chi-square tests indicated no significant differences between the attrition group ($N = 61$) and the retained group ($N = 106$) regarding the baseline (T1) distributions of gender, registered residence, and only-child status (all ps $> .05$). Independent-samples t-tests further revealed no significant baseline differences between the two groups in the scores for social support ($t(165) = -0.873$, $p = .384$), the motive to approach success ($t(165) = -1.044$, $p = .298$), and the motive to avoid failure ($t(165) = 0.018$, $p = .986$). In the final longitudinal sample, 40.6% were male and 59.4% were female.

3.2 Measures

Achievement Motivation Achievement motivation was measured using the Achievement Motivation Scale (AMS), originally developed by Gjesme and Nygard (1970) and revised by Ye (1992). The scale consists of two dimensions—the motive to approach success (Ms) and the motive to avoid failure (Mf)—with a total of 30 items. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *completely untrue of me*, 5 = *completely true of me*), with higher scores indicating higher levels of motivation on the respective dimension. In the present study, the Cronbach's α coefficients for the motive to approach success at T1, T2, and T3 were .890, .917, and .917, respectively; for the motive to avoid failure, the Cronbach's α coefficients at T1, T2, and T3 were .893, .910, and .920, respectively.

Social Support Social support was measured using the Perceived Social Support Scale (PSSS) developed by Zimet et al. (1988). Considering that undergraduates are in a critical socialization transition from campus to the workplace, the present study followed the principle of contextualized adaptation for measurement tools. The "significant others" dimension in the original scale was explicitly redefined as "university teachers or counselors," who play a key guiding role in students' career development. The adapted scale comprises 12 items across three sub-dimensions: family support (e.g., "I can get the emotional help and support I need from my family"), friend support (e.g., "I can count on my friends when things go wrong"), and teacher/counselor support (e.g., "When I feel confused about the future, my teachers or counselors can bring me real comfort and encouragement"). Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived social support. The Cronbach's α coefficients for this scale at T1, T2, and T3 were .915, .938, and .939, respectively. Gender was included in the analysis as a demographic control variable.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data cleaning, descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and correlation analyses were primarily conducted using SPSS 26.0. To explore the developmental trajectories and cross-time bidirectional predictive relations between undergraduates' achievement motivation and social support, statistical modeling was performed in Mplus 8.3 using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation.

First, linear latent growth curve modeling (LGCM) was employed to evaluate the initial levels and macro-developmental trajectories of undergraduates' achievement motivation over the 8-month period. Subsequently, a three-wave cross-lagged panel model (CLPM) based on observed variable path analysis was constructed to test the cross-time bidirectional predictive relations between social support and achievement motivation, while strictly controlling for autoregressive effects over time. Model fit was evaluated using indices including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Common Method Bias Test and Preliminary Correlation Analyses

The present study employed Harman's single-factor test to examine common method bias. The results of an unrotated principal component analysis revealed 10 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, accounting for 70.443% of the total variance. Among them, the first factor accounted for only 22.827% of the total variance, which is well below the critical threshold of 40%. This indicates that common method bias was not a serious concern in the present study. The means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), and Pearson correlation coefficients of the core variables across the three time points are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Matrix of the Main Variables Across Three Time Points

Variables	M	SD	SS1	Ms1	Mf1	SS2	Ms2	Mf2	SS3	Ms3	Mf3
SS1	3.467	.718	1								
Ms1	3.121	.581	.499**	1							
Mf1	3.263	.548	.025	.068	1						
SS2	3.521	.647	.636**	.349**	.084	1					
Ms2	3.166	.538	.383**	.516**	.007	.482**	1				
Mf2	3.232	.569	.222*	.059	.322**	.165	.194*	1			
SS3	3.588	.546	.560**	.346**	.011	.813**	.492**	.070	1		
Ms3	3.211	.521	.296**	.480**	.130	.471**	.443**	.039	.564**	1	
Mf3	3.212	.610	.180	.206*	.226*	.148	.128	.242*	.073	.192*	1

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

The results showed that social support, the motive to approach success, and the motive to avoid failure each exhibited significant positive autocorrelations across the three waves of measurement, confirming the strong temporal stability of these core variables. Furthermore, social support at earlier time points demonstrated significant longitudinal associations with certain dimensions of achievement motivation at subsequent time points (e.g., T1 social support and T2 motive to avoid failure; T2 social support and T3 motive to approach success).

4.2 Demographic Differences in Core Variables

Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to examine gender differences in undergraduates' achievement motivation at baseline (T1). There was no significant gender difference in the motive to approach success (Mmale = 3.16, SD = 0.56; Mfemale = 3.09, SD = 0.60), t(104) = 0.614, p = .541. The gender difference in the motive to avoid failure was also not significant (Mmale = 3.16, SD = 0.63; Mfemale = 3.33, SD = 0.47), t(104) = -1.600, p = .113. Gender was included as a covariate in subsequent analyses.

4.3 Developmental Trajectories of Undergraduates' Achievement Motivation (LGCM Results)

To reveal the dynamic developmental patterns of undergraduates' achievement motivation over the 8-month period, univariate linear latent growth curve models (LGCMs) were constructed separately for the motive to approach success and the motive to avoid failure. The parameter estimation results of the models are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Parameter Estimates of the Latent Growth Curve Models for Achievement Motivation

Variables	Parameter	Estimate	S.E.	*t*	*p*
Ms					
Intercept, I	Means	3.121	0.055	56.497	<0.001
	Variances	0.210	0.068	3.102	0.002
Slope, S	Means	0.045	0.030	1.515	0.130
	Variances	0.011	0.031	0.343	0.731
Mf					
Intercept, I	Means	3.269	0.052	63.099	<0.001
	Variances	0.140	0.068	2.067	0.039
Slope, S	Means	0.016	0.035	0.441	0.660
	Variances	0.024	0.035	0.671	0.502

Note. Model fit indices for the Ms model: χ^2= 0.001, *df* = 1, RMSEA = .000, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.046, SRMR = .001. Model fit indices for the Mf model:χ^2 = 0.235, df = 1, RMSEA = .000, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.129, SRMR = .014.

The mean intercept for the motive to approach success was 3.121 (p < .001), with an intercept

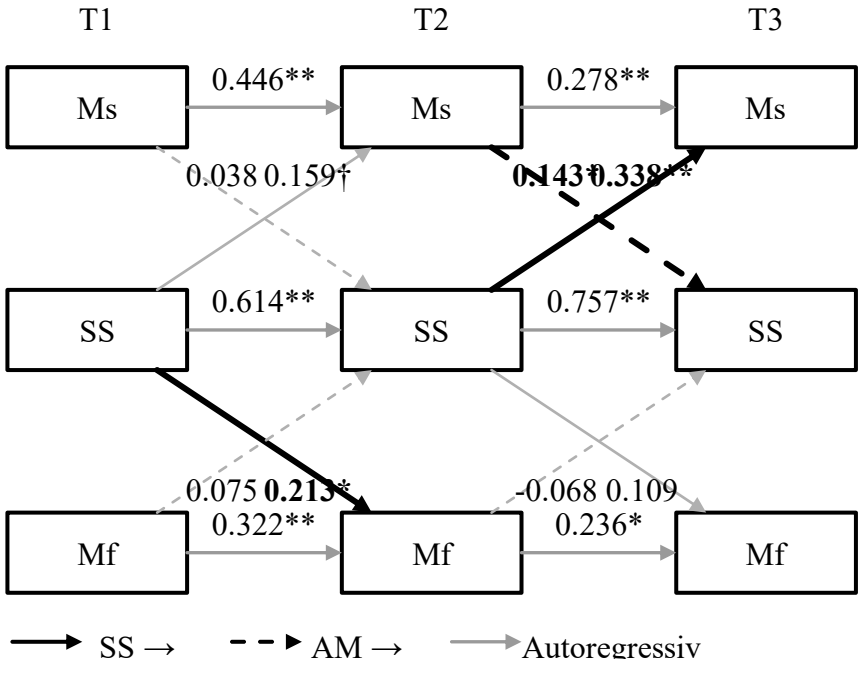
variance of 0.210 (p = .002); the mean intercept for the motive to avoid failure was 3.269 (p < .001), with an intercept variance of 0.140 (p = .039). Both dimensions were at an upper-middle level at baseline (T1), and the significant intercept variances indicate the presence of inter-individual differences.

The mean slopes for both dimensions did not reach significance (motive to approach success: p = .130; motive to avoid failure: p = .660), nor did the slope variances (motive to approach success: p = .731; motive to avoid failure: p = .502). This indicates that over the 8-month follow-up period, undergraduates' achievement motivation did not exhibit significant linear changes at the group level, nor were there significant inter-individual differences in the rates of change.

4.4 Bidirectional Reciprocal Relations Between Social Support and Achievement Motivation (CLPM Results)

A three-wave cross-lagged panel model (CLPM) was constructed to examine the longitudinal reciprocal relations between social support and the two dimensions of achievement motivation. The model allowed for concurrent residual correlations among variables within the same wave. The overall model fit was acceptable: $\chi^2(13) = 23.808$, CFI = .964, TLI = .907, RMSEA = .089 (90% CI [.025, .144]), SRMR = .047. The concurrent residual correlations for each wave were freely estimated in the model; the concurrent association between the motive to approach success and the motive to avoid failure was generally weak (only reaching marginal significance at T2, β = .181, p = .056), suggesting that the two dimensions are relatively independent within individuals.

The autoregressive paths for all variables were significant, indicating strong cross-time stability for all three variables. After controlling for autoregressive effects, the cross-lagged paths exhibited phase-specific differences. The results are summarized in Figure 2.



Note. Ms=Motive to approach success; Mf=Motive to avoid failure; SS = social support. AM = achievement motivation. Solid and dashed black arrows represent cross-lagged paths, while grey arrows represent autoregressive paths. †p < .10. * p < .05. **p < .01. *** p < .001.

Figure 2. Standardized path coefficients for the cross-lagged panel model

The results for the T1–T2 phase showed that the predictive effect of social support on the subsequent motive to approach success was marginally significant (β = 0.159, p = .088), which was consistent with the positive expectation of H1a in direction but did not reach the conventional level of significance. Social support significantly and positively predicted the subsequent motive to avoid failure (β = 0.213, p = .015), which was contrary to the negative expectation of H1b. Neither the motive to approach success (β = 0.038, p = .661) nor the motive to avoid failure (β = 0.075, p = .286) significantly predicted subsequent social support.

The results for the T2–T3 phase showed that social support had a highly significant positive predictive effect on the subsequent motive to approach success (β = 0.338, p < .001), but its prediction of the subsequent motive to avoid failure was not significant (β = 0.109, p = .247). Regarding the reverse paths, the motive to approach success significantly and positively predicted subsequent social support (β = 0.143, p = .024), whereas the predictive effect of the motive to avoid failure on subsequent social support was not significant (β = -0.068, p = .208).

The hypothesis testing conclusions are summarized as follows: H1a was partially supported (significant only in the T2–T3 phase); H1b was not supported, and the direction in the T1–T2 phase was opposite to the expectation; H1c was partially supported (significant only in the T2–T3 phase); and H1d was not supported. This indicates that a bidirectional reciprocal relationship between social support and the motive to approach success was confirmed in the T2–T3 phase, whereas no reciprocal cycle was formed between social support and the motive to avoid failure in either phase.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study employed a three-wave longitudinal design to examine the developmental characteristics of undergraduates' achievement motivation and its longitudinal relationship with social support. The findings revealed that achievement motivation remained stable at the group level over the 8-month period. The positive predictive effect of social support on the motive to approach success required a period of time to emerge. Furthermore, social support positively—rather than negatively—predicted the motive to avoid failure in the short term; this result was contrary to our hypothesis, suggesting that the immediate effects of support may differ in direction from its long-term effects.

5.1 Short-Term Stability of Achievement Motivation

The LGCM results showed that neither the motive to approach success nor the motive to avoid failure exhibited significant linear changes across the three time points, and the inter-individual differences in the rates of change were also not significant. This may be because the follow-up window of the present study fell entirely within the university period, during which critical transition events sufficient to trigger drastic motivational changes (e.g., entering the workforce for the first time; Grosemans et al., 2020) had not yet occurred. Although the group-level developmental trajectories were stable, the significant intercept variances of the two dimensions indicate that students already exhibited distinct inter-individual differentiation at baseline. This finding provides a basis for future research to further examine the internal structure of such differentiation from a person-centered perspective (e.g., latent profile analysis).

5.2 The Delayed Positive Effect of Social Support on the Motive to Approach Success

The cross-lagged panel model indicated that the significant positive predictive effect of social support on the motive to approach success only appeared in the later phase of the follow-up (T2 to T3). Based on conservation of resources (COR) theory, this suggests that translating external support into internal approach motivation requires a certain period of resource accumulation and internalization. In the early internship preparation phase (T1 to T2), supportive resources might be largely consumed to cope with daily anxiety; as resources continuously accumulate and become internalized, they eventually translate into the confidence to approach success by the job-hunting phase (T2 to T3). Furthermore, the non-significant predictive effect of the motive to approach success on subsequent support in the T1 to T2 phase also corroborates that the initiation of a "resource gain spiral" does not occur overnight.

5.3 The Unexpected Positive Effect of Social Support on the Motive to Avoid Failure

In the T1 to T2 phase, social support significantly and positively predicted the motive to avoid failure ($\beta = 0.213$, $p = .015$), which was contrary to the negative expectation of H1b. This result indicates that the immediate effect of social support does not necessarily reduce defensive motivation; rather, it may activate individuals' failure-avoidance tendencies in the short term.

This may stem from the implicit pressure transmitted alongside support and the self-worth protection mechanism (Covington, 1992). For undergraduates, high levels of attention from family and teachers are often accompanied by earnest employment expectations. While receiving care, individuals also develop a psychological burden of "not letting others down," thereby activating defensive failure-avoidance tendencies in the short term (Chuang et al., 2022). As students gradually adapt to and internalize external expectations, this defensive reaction tends to subside in the later phase (T2 to T3), exhibiting a phase-specific adaptive characteristic of "initial perturbation followed by subsequent focus."

5.4 The Reverse Prediction of Social Support by the Motive to Approach Success

In the later phase of the follow-up (T2 to T3), the motive to approach success significantly and positively predicted subsequent social support (H1c was supported), providing longitudinal evidence for the reverse path of the gain spiral in COR theory. Students with high approach motivation demonstrated stronger "resource gravity" and were able to more proactively construct external support networks, proving that social support is not merely passively received but rather a resource that can be actively activated. In contrast, the predictive effect of the motive to avoid failure on subsequent social support was non-significant in both phases (H1d was not supported). The change in direction from positive to negative may reflect the complexity of the relationship between avoidance motivation and social support. However, the sample size of the present study was insufficient to detect this weak effect, and this speculation awaits verification with larger samples.

5.5 Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications

The present study discovered phase-specific differences in the effects of social support on achievement motivation. In the short term, social support may simultaneously activate both the approach and avoidance dimensions, and only selectively enhance the approach drive after a period of settlement. This finding suggests that during the initial stage of its activation, the resource gain

spiral may undergo a process of "initial perturbation (triggering avoidance) followed by subsequent focus (enhancing approach)."

In terms of practice, universities and families should be wary of the "implicit pressure" in the transmission of support. It is recommended to prioritize unconditional "emotional support" (listening and acceptance) in the early stages of career guidance, and gradually introduce expectation-laden "goal-oriented support" after students have built foundational confidence. Furthermore, for students with high avoidance motivation who do not actively seek help, universities should establish institutionalized proactive care mechanisms (e.g., regular interviews) to ensure the effective delivery of supportive resources.

5.6 Limitations and Future Research

The sample of the present study was drawn from a single applied undergraduate university in a single city ($N = 106$); therefore, some marginally significant paths and weak effects require further verification with larger samples. The 8-month follow-up window did not cover the actual transition milestones of job hunting and workforce entry. Future research could extend the follow-up to post-graduation to examine whether the reciprocal relationship between social support and achievement motivation undergoes qualitative changes after the transition is completed. In addition, although the present study found that achievement motivation remained stable at the group level, the intercept variances were significant, and the effects of social support exhibited phase-specific differences. Future studies could employ latent profile analysis (LPA) to identify subpopulations of motivational development and implement more precise, targeted interventions.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study employed a three-wave longitudinal design to reveal the developmental characteristics of undergraduates' achievement motivation and its longitudinal bidirectional mechanisms with social support. The results indicate that the overall trajectories of the motive to approach success and the motive to avoid failure remained stable during students' graduation preparation period, but there was significant inter-individual heterogeneity at baseline. The reciprocal relationship between social support and achievement motivation exhibited an asymmetrical, phase-specific characteristic of "initial perturbation followed by subsequent focus": in the short term, expectation-laden supportive resources unexpectedly activated individuals' defensive avoidance tendencies; however, after a certain period of settlement and internalization, social support significantly enhanced the approach drive for success, and individuals with high approach motivation could reversely drive the resource gain spiral to acquire more subsequent support. The present study expands the temporal dynamic boundaries of conservation of resources (COR) theory. It not only confirms that the translation of support into motivation requires a time lag, but also provides empirical evidence for universities to implement phase-specific interventions characterized by "emotional acceptance first, followed by goal orientation."

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