

Abstract

The goal in the present study was to use self-determination theory to explore the motivational factors that promote college students' transfer ability, and also enrich the empirical studies on self-determination theory in the field of education area.

Although the positive effects of autonomy-supportive environments were repeatedly demonstrated, few studies paid attention to the changes of autonomy-support. However, during a natural 3-month college course, it is possible that students' perception of autonomy-support would change.

In study 1, we explored the dynamic changes of students' motivation and transfer in different groups of perceived autonomy support. The results showed that students who perceived high autonomy-supportive learning climate demonstrated more motivation and better perceived knowledge transfer ability.

In study 2, we examined the effects of students' perception of autonomy-support changes on students' motivation and transfer. Results showed that students who perceived increases in autonomy-supportive learning climate demonstrated more motivation and better perceived knowledge transfer ability at the end of the semester.

Introduction

Promoting students' transfer ability is critical to higher education, because one of the main responsibilities of higher education is to prepare all the graduates with the knowledge and skills for success in the workforce. However, most of the transfer studies were focused on the cognitive factors (Chen, Mo, & Honomichl, 2004; Day & Goldstone, 2012; Perfetto, Bransford, & Franks, 1983), and overlooked the motivational influences which account for a major part of people's behaviors. In the absence of adequate existing empirical study on self-determination theory and transfer, we conducted two longitudinal studies to examine the effects of students' perceived autonomy-support on the transfer ability. Both the degree and tendency of perceived autonomy support were considered.

Method

➤ **Participants:** Undergraduates (Study1: $n = 1,731$; Study2: $n = 2,170$) from a large, research intensive university in the American Midwest.

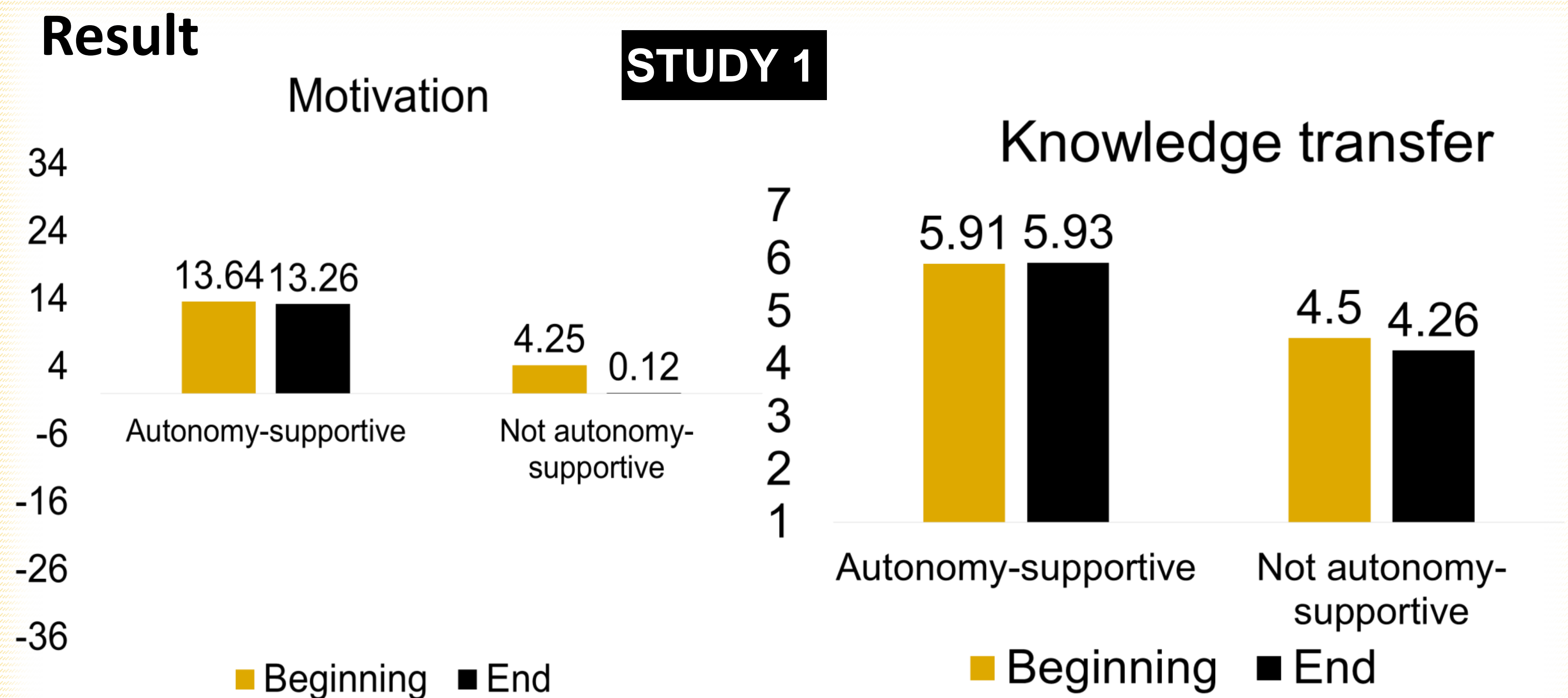
➤ **Scales:**

- ❖ Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ; Williams & Deci, 1996): 6 items, $\alpha = 0.95$;
Ex. "My instructor conveyed confidence in my ability to do well in the course."
- ❖ The situational motivation scale (SIMS; Guay & Vallerand, 1997): 18 items, $\alpha = 0.84-0.96$;
Ex. "I take the class because it's a practical way to acquire new knowledge."
- ❖ Perceived knowledge transfer scale (PKTS; Levesque-Bristol, et al., 2015): 8 items, $\alpha = 0.97$.
Ex. "I feel as if the material covered in this course is relevant to my future career."

AUTONOMY-SUPPORTIVE TEACHING AND TRANSFER

PURDUE
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Cong (Vivi) Wang,
Dr. Levesque-Bristol, Chantal



STUDY 2

Motivation

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.
Pre-SDI	.584	34.27	.000
Post-LC	.186	8.50	.000
LC change	.161	7.84	.000

* Adjusted R square = .51

Knowledge transfer

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.
Pre-PKT	.493	28.28	.000
Post-LC	.294	13.09	.000
LC change	.174	8.16	.000

* Adjusted R square = .51

Conclusion

- ❖ Compared with students who perceived low autonomy-supportive learning climate, students who perceived high autonomy-supportive learning climate demonstrated more motivation and better transfer ability. Also students perceived low autonomy-supportive learning climate showed significant decreases in both motivation and perceived knowledge transfer.
- ❖ After controlling students' pre-test scores and the degree of perceived learning climate, the changes of perceived learning climate is still significantly associated with students' post self-determined motivation and post-perceived knowledge transfer.
- ❖ Both degree and tendency of perceived autonomy-supportive learning climate should be considered in predicting students' motivation and perceived knowledge transfer ability.