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Impact of perceived parental support on youth risk behaviors of high school and college students in some selected schools in Cameroon: Mediating roles of hope and school engagement

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ABSTRACT
Purpose: The main purpose of this study was to investigate the mediating role of hope and school engagement in the relationship between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior of high school and undergraduate university students in some selected schools in Cameroon, and further examined the correlation between these constructs.
Method: A cross section of 425 students through the help of their school administrators were asked to respond to paper survey questionnaire that contained some of their socio-demographic characteristics, and their self-responses to constructs; perceived parental support, youth risk behavior, school engagement, and hope. Data was then analyzed using SPSS PROCESS macro
Results: The findings revealed that hope and school engagement in parallel played a statistically significant mediating roles in the relationship between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior. Further results were discussed
Conclusion: The results suggest that students school engagement and personality trait hope are critical vital factors that contributes to the reduction youth risk behaviors amongst students.
Keywords – Perceived parental support, youth risk behaviors, hope, school engagement, students, adolescents.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On a global setting, the wellbeing of youths is a priority for all countries, which makes parents and governments to invest hugely on their children in academics and their welfare in order to help reduce the incidence of the youths getting involved in risky behaviors. However, for the past decade the world has experienced increased unrest and instability due to terrorism, armed conflicts, civil war etc. For example, civil war in Yemen which started since 2014 till present which has led to a death toll of about 377,000 by the end of 2021 (UNDP, 2021) which includes those killed as a result of indirect and direct causes, while in Cameroon, over 700,000 children have been impacted by school closures due to often brutal violence as reported by United Nation's (UN, 2021) humanitarian arm - OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs). Therefore, there is a very serious issue plaguing the Cameroonian youthful community especially the youths in Southwest and Northwest who are out of school keeps on getting involve in all sort of criminal activities (e.g., drug abuse, alcoholism, sexual misconducts, suicidal ideation, arm robbery etc.). In some parts of the globe, it is evident that several children are born by teenagers of age 15 – 19 years old, who could barely take care of themselves (Hamilton et al., 2010) and also there is increasing daily consumption of cannabis by teenagers (Johnson et al., 2008). Although the challenges of youth risky behaviors vary across countries, the negative consequences of risky behaviors on the well-being of youths are experienced all around the globe.

Cameroon`s youthful population is currently faced with increased practice of risky behaviors, especially in Northwest and Southwest which is evident by the ongoing armed conflict, and far North region due to terrorism (OSAC, 2020). Drug consumption among Cameroon youths has become not only a very serious security issue, but also a major health issue (WHO, 2018). WHO further reported that in 2018 alone, drug abuse contributed to 0.32% death in Cameroon The increased crime rate in Cameroon is evident to increase rate of the different drug use patterns that youths engage in, such as the use of more psychoactive substances (e.g., marihuana – cannabis, tramadol, etc.), might be the stimulant to increase crime rate (Lehti et al., 2009), not living the increased rate of alcohol consumption which has proven to be the cause of domestic violence (Seale et al., 2002). Despite the worsening health issues that comes as a result of increased youth risk behaviors like drug abuse and alcoholism, Gallois et al. (2021) reported that increased use of psychoactive substance – (e.g., tramadol) was associated to several household and social conflicts in a study with Cameroonian 'pygmies.

The increase crime rate amongst youths in Cameroon is an important issue to be reckoned with. Most of the consequences of these youths' risky behaviors first of all are behaviors considered to be volitional, and also has very critical important societal consequences. The potential to change youths' behaviors to a positive one, and to realize tremendous societal benefits provides a very strong need for proper examination on various factors or interventions necessary to reduce if not eliminate youth's involvement in risky behavioral activities.

The current study examines the use of parental support on their children in school to help their children to be of good behavior, and also through the students' full engagement in school activities and as well through providing high hope levels amongst these school children as a means to reduce their engagement in risky behavioral activities. This article tries to contribute to the knowledge gap with the central aims of these examinations' being focus on: (1) to investigate the correlation amongst youth risk behaviors, perceived parental support, hope, and school engagement of the students; (2) to examine the influence of perceived parental support on youth risk behaviors of the students; and (3) to investigate if educating students to possess high hope personality trait, and be fully engaged in school activities will help reduce the students' involvement in risky behaviors. In order to address these objectives, this study begins by setting up the research questions, followed by explanation of the main constructs of the study which includes: youth risk behavior as the main outcome variable; perceived parental support as the main focal antecedent variable; and lastly, hope and school engagement as the mediating constructs. Thus, the following research questions were put in place; (1) what is the correlation between the variables, youth risk behavior, perceived parental support, hope, and school engagement? (2) How does perceived parental support of students influenced their involvement in risky behaviors? And lastly, (3) can students' possession of high hope personality trait and their full engagement to school activities play a significant mediating role in the relationship between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior?

In order to understand the main constructs of this study, the following explanations of their concept is presented.

1.1 Dependent variable – Youth risk behavior

The definition of youth risk behavior is adopted from Jessor (1991), which defines youth risk behavior as behaviors that compromise health, quality of life, or life itself. A broad array of research also referred to youth risk behavior as "any behavior that can compromises youth development irrespective of whether the youth is aware or motivated of the risk that is involved. For example, the increase participation of risk taking among adolescents' youths is a very robust characteristics of them (He et al., 2004), although some risk taking by is sort of a normal trend in adolescents' development, some youths get involve or engage in very destructive self-behaviors such as, sexual misconduct, violent behaviors, drug abuse etc. (Jessor, 1987) which are detrimental to themselves and to society in general. For example, adolescents' self-destructive behavior is strongly associated to depression (DiClemente et al., 2005; Goodman & Huang, 2002)'.

The center for disease control (CDC) using youth risk behavior surveillance system, identifies and monitors six categories of health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults; behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence, alcohol and other drug use, use of tobacco, sexual behaviors related to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, unhealthy dietary behaviors, and inadequate physical activity (CDC, 2019). Therefore, it is very necessary to examine some of the factors that affects youth risk behaviors.

1.2 Independent variable - Perceived parental support

It is important to note that although peers continue to be very influential during adolescents', family relationship or particularly parent-adolescent relationship, provides one of the most important contexts in society for adolescents' development, and the parents also continue to be a very vital source for adolescents' decisions with respect to major life choices. Parents also play an important role in guiding adolescents on good values, interest and views on future goals (Nurmi, 1991). Thus, parental support can be defined as being emotionally present and consistently dependable for the child in times of need. It is also very important to the well-being of adolescents, as it positively influences children's' self-efficacy (Felson & Zielinski, 1989). The current study adopts the definition from the Icelandic 'Institute of Educational Research' (IER), which defines perceived parental support as; how adolescents perceive their accessibility to the general support they receive from their parents (Thorlindsson et al., 1998).

However, in general studies have found out that perceived parental support among adolescents has been the primary focus of research (Barrera & Li, 1996; Wagner et al., 1996), wherein most of these studies showed that adolescents who perceived a lot of support from their parents are less likely to suffer from mental distress than adolescents who perceive less parental support. The current study suggests further use of intervention constructs like adolescents – hope and adolescents school engagement to help further reduce adolescents' involvement in risky behaviors.

1.3 Mediator variable – Hope

The current study suggests the use of promoting student to possess a high hope personality trait as a mediating construct in the link between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior. The definition of hope use is adopted from Snyder et al. (1991). According to Snyder and colleagues, hope is "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal – directed energy) and (B) pathways (planning to meet goals)". Snyder's hope theory can be subdivided into four categories: (1) Goals that are valuable and uncertain being anchors of the hope theory as they provide direction for hopeful thinking; (2) pathway thoughts refers to the routes we take to achieve our desired goals and the individuals perceived ability to produce these routes (Snyder, 2000); (3) agency thoughts refers to the motivation we have to undertake the routes towards our goals; and (4) barriers block the attainment of our goals and in the event of a barrier we can either give up or we can use our pathway thoughts to create new routes.

Several empirical studies suggests' the use of personality trait hope as an intervention construct in situations of distress. For example, Shorey et al. (2003) found out that hope variable develops in the context of a secure relationship with supportive adult in childhood (Snyder, 1994), and mediates the link between developmental processes and adult mental health outcomes.

1.4 Mediator variable–School engagement

School engagement in addition to hope, is another critically important factor that is expected to significantly help reduce students' involvement in risky behavioral activities, and thus help further strengthen the link between perceived parental support and youths risk behaviors. School engagement in this study reflects students' involvement and their interest in learning and their active participation and attention in all school activities (Orkibi & Tuaf, 2017; Newmann, 1992). According to Fredricks et al. (2005), school engagement is expressed in several ways including; emotional expressions which involves positive and negative reactions in classroom; emotional reactions to the school and to their teachers; behavioral expressions which involves actual participation in school activities; and cognitive expressions involving their investment in learning, and possessing the desire to study beyond school requirements, and seek cognitive challenges.

Empirical research posits that encouraging higher levels of school engagement by students will help reduce their health risk behaviors (Dolzan et al., 2015; Wang & Fredricks, 2014). Similarly, school disengagement is evident to be significantly associated to symptoms of depression (Garvik et al., 2014), so it is important for research to focus on providing more supporting evidence on the necessity of students' school engagement.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Research model

The research model for this study is model 4 as was adopted from PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2018). As showed in figure 1, the model diagram proposes that 'perceived parental support (PPS) will negatively influence youth risk behavior (YRB) of students, and further proposes that promoting high hope and school engagement (ScE) of the students will further reduce the level of youth risk behaviors.

Therefore, in this study, the perceived parental support is the main independent variable (X), youth risk behavior is the main dependent variable (Y), while hope and school engagement are mediator variables (M1 & M2 respectively).

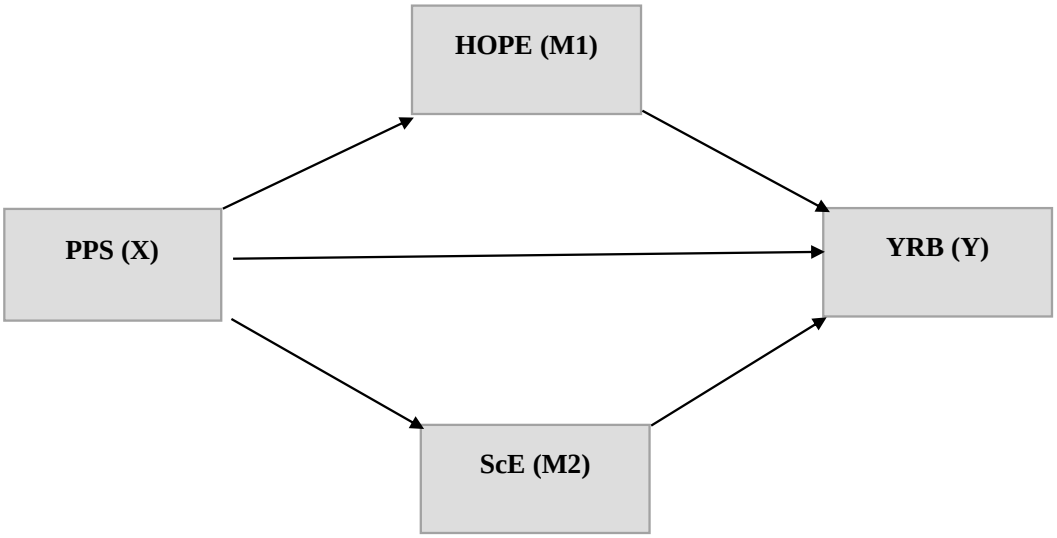


Figure 1. Model diagram

2.2 Data collection and participants

Using a paper survey questionnaire and through the assistance of school administrators' data for 425 high school and university students selected at random were collected from some schools in Cameroon. According to the age of the students, the youngest students were 15 years and the oldest students were 39 years old, with a range of 24 years. The mean age was 19.74 years with standard deviation of 2.579 years. The majority of the participants were females occupying 63.3% of the study overall participants, according to the region of origin, students from the North west region were most represented (44%), while students from the South west region represented 18.8% of the study size, and 37.2% of the students came from other regions. Furthermore, students who had only a father as sponsor were least represented (4.2%), while students who had both parents were mostly represented (68.2%) in this study. Students with no parent occupied 6.8% of the study participants. Majority of the students were single (97.2%). More also, students living with parents represented 80% of the study size, compared to students'; living alone (7.3%), with friends (3.1%). Lastly, majority of the students were from low-income background (< 200,000frs per month – 55.3%).

Table 1. Socio – demographic data of students

Constructs	Sub-category	n	%
Gender	Male	156	36.7
	Female	269	63.3
Age (years)	15 – 19	230	54.1
	20 – 24	173	40.7
	25 – 29	20	4.7
	30 – 39	2	0.5
Region of origin	South west	80	18.8
	North west	187	44.0

Constructs	Sub-category	n	%
	Others	158	37.2
Education level	Lower sixth	13	3.1
(School level)	Upper sixth	279	65.6
	University level **one**	59	13.9
	University level **two**	54	12.7
	University level **three**	20	4.7
Parental status	Single mother	88	20.7
	Single father	18	4.2
	Both parent	290	68.2
	No parent	29	6.8
Marital status	Single	413	97.2
	Married	12	2.8
Accommodation	With parent	340	80.0
	Without parent/guardian	41	9.6
	With friends	13	3.1
	Alone	31	7.3
Family income level (FCFA)	<200,000	235	55.3
	≥200,000 ~ 500,000≤	151	35.5
	>500,000 ~ 1000,000<	25	5.9
	>1000,000	14	3.3

n= sample population

2.3 Research tools

Perceived Parental Support Scale (PPSS)

The perceived parental support scale developed in 1990s which was originally developed at IER (Institute of Educational Research) in Iceland and advanced by ICSRA (Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis) which is affiliated to Reykjavik University school of health and education (Kristjansson et al., 2010) was used in this study. The scale consists of five items (e.g., "How easy or hard is it for you to receive advice about your studies from your parents"). Responses were made on a 4 – point Likert-type scale. A total score is obtained by summing all individual items, and higher scores indicates higher levels of perceived parental support. The reliability for this variable was $\alpha = 0.734$.

Youth Risk Behavior Scale (YRBS)

The youth risk behavior scale used in this study was adopted from the paper by Lowry, R. et al. (2018) titled `Nonconforming gender expression and associated mental distress and substance among high school students". In this study, the scale used is a seven-items scale (e.g., "During the past 30 days how often do you smoke cigarettes") adopted from the original scale of 14 items in order to be suitable for the locale of this study. The scale was also

adjusted to a 4-point Likert scale format in order to ease understanding of the respondents. Sum of all individual items gives total level of youth risk behavior. The reliability (α) of this variable was 0.726.

Snyder's Adult Hope Scale (AHS)

The Adult Hope Scale (AHS: Snyder et al., 1991) was used to assess hope variable. This scale conceptualizes hope as an enduring factor or trait (Snyder et al., 1996). The AHS is a 12-item (e.g., "there are lots of ways around any problem") scale scored on a 4-point Likert scale; here higher scores indicate higher dispositional values of hopefulness. The scale consists of two subscales (agency and pathways). Summation of all individual item gives total hope score, and higher scores indicate higher hope levels. The reliability (α) value for this measure was 0.709.

High School Student Engagement Scale (HSSES)

The school engagement scale used in this study is that adopted from the `High School Student Engagement Survey (http://ceep.indiana.edu/hssse) and National Student Engagement Survey (http://nsse.iub.edu). It is a 23-item scale (e.g., "I feel close to people at my school"). Responses were made on a 5-point Likert-type scale. A total score is obtained by summation of all individual items, and higher scores indicate higher levels of students' school engagement. The reliability(α) of this measure was 0.708.

2.4 Data collection

The data for the current study was analyzed using SPSS PROCESS macro. Frequency analysis, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis were analyzed using SPSS, while direct, indirect effects (Mediating effects) were analyzed using bootstrapping methods by SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013; 2018). The conditions for statistical significance were set at 95% confidence level under 5000 corrected bootstrap samples, with results considered statistically significant if under these conditions there was no zero between the lower and upper confidence limits.

III. RESULT

Preliminary analyses such as reliability (α) and internal consistency (common method bias) were performed prior to analyses with respect to the research questions of this study. As showed in table 2, all Cronbach alpha (α) values for these constructs were above 0.700 and less than 1.00 (Cortina, 1993), and indicates good reliability. Also, the CMB (common method bias) using Harman`s single factor tests 11.105% which is less than 50% indicating there was no common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

3.1 Correlation analyses and descriptive statistics.

Bivariate correlation (using Pearson – r) analyses was performed to check the correlation between the main constructs. As showed in table 2, all main constructs were statistically significantly correlated to each other. Accordingly, Youth risk behavior was statistically significantly negatively correlated to; perceived parental support (r = - 0.227***), school engagement (r = - 0.257***), and hope (r = - 0.225***); then perceived parental support was statistically significantly positively correlated to; hope (r = 0.167**), and school engagement (r = 0.277***); and lastly hope was statistically significantly positively correlated to school engagement (r = 0.254***).

Furthermore, descriptive statistics results showed that 'students reported high levels of perceived parental support (M = 2.848, SD = 0.637), low levels of youth risk behavior (M = 1.339, SD = 0.384), high levels of hope (M = 2.854, SD = 0.299) and high levels of school engagement (M = 3.654, SD = 0.426).

Table 2. Correlation and descriptive statistics

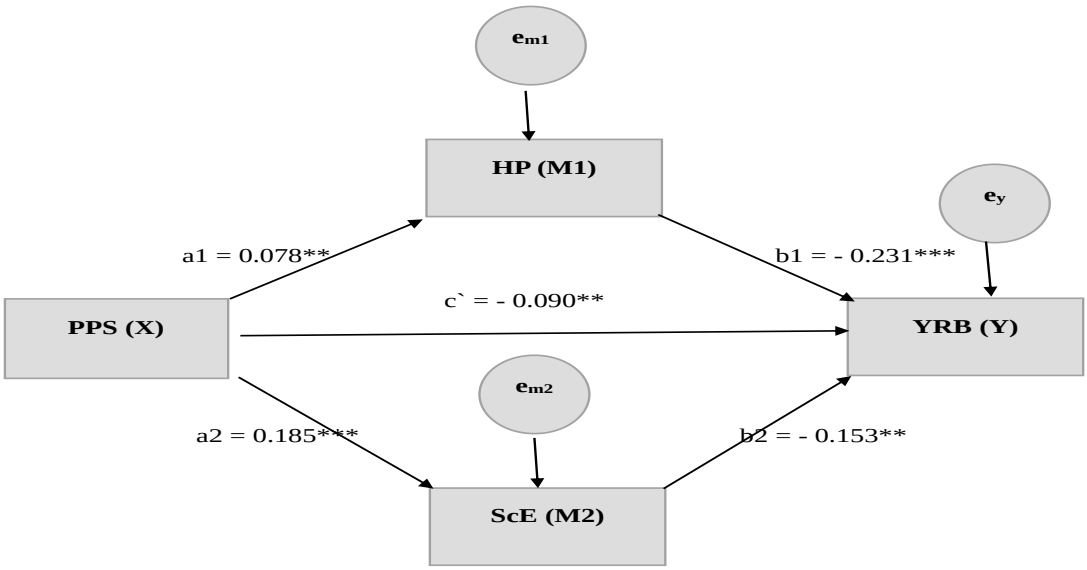
Variables	1	2	3	4
Perceived parental support	1			
Youth risk behavior	- 0.227***	1		
Hope	0.167**	- 0.225***	1	
				1
School engagement	0.277***	- 0.257***	0.254***	

Variables	1	2	3	4
Mean	2.848	1.339	2.854	3.654
Standard deviation	0.637	0.384	0.299	0.426
Cronbach alpha	0.734	0.726	0.709	0.708
Harman`s single factor test CMB		11.103%		

****P < 0.001; **P < 0.01; CMB: Common Method Biases*

3.2 Mediation analysis

The mediation analysis is showed in figure 2 or in table 3, was conducted using ordinary least squares path analysis. Path analysis results showed that, perceived parental support (X) had a statistically significant negative influence on youth risk behavior (B = - 0.090, p < 0.01); a statistically significant positive effect on hope (B = 0.078, p < 0.01) and a statistically significant positive effect on school engagement (B = 0.185, p < 0.001). Furthermore, result showed that hope showed a statistically significantly negative influence on youth risk behavior (B = - 0.231, p < 0.001), and lastly that school engagement statistically significantly negatively influenced youth risk behavior (B = - 0.153, p < 0.01). The overall model showed that the predictors perceived parental support, hope, and school engagement as a set explained 12.2% of the variance in youth risk behavior, and model also showed a good fit (F(3, 421) = 19.525***). The negative effects of perceived parental support, hope, and school engagement on youth risk behavior indicates that increase in the levels of perceived parental support, Hope, and school engagement will lead to decrease in the level of students' youth risk behaviors. Specifically, this study found out that when perceived parental support increase by I unit, youth risk behavior will decrease 0.090 unit; when students hope level increase by 1 unit, their youth risk behavior will decrease by 0.231 units; and lastly, when students school engagement increases by 1 unit, their level of youth risk behavior decreases by 0.153 units.



****P < 0.001, **P < 0.01, PPS: perceived parental support (X); YRB: youth risk behavior (Y); HP: Hope (M1); ScE: school engagement (M2); R^2= 12.2%; F(3, 421) = 19.525****

Figure 2. Statistical diagram

Table 3. Path analysis

Outcome variable hope							
Model summary	**R**	**R-square**	**MSE**	**F**	**Df1**	**Df2**	**p-value**
	0.167	0.028	0.087	12.122	1	423	0.000
Model 1	**B**	**SE**	**T**	**p-value**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**	
Constant	2.630	0.066	40.021	0.000	2.501	2.760	
PPS	0.078	0.023	3.482	0.001	0.034	0.123	
Outcome variable school engagement							
Model	**R**	**R-square**	**MSE**	**F**	**Df1**	**Df2**	**p-value**
Summary	0.277	0.077	0.168	35.155	1	423	0.000
Model 2	**B**	**SE**	**T**	**p-value**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**	
Constant	3.126	0.091	24.301	0.000	2.947	3.305	
PPS	0.185	0.031	5.929	0.000	0.124	0.247	
Outcome variable youth risk behavior							
Model	R	**R-square**	**MSE**	**F**	**Df1**	**Df2**	**p-value**
Summary	0.349	0.122	0.130	19.525	3	421	0.000

			Outcome variable hope			
Model 3	**B**	**SE**	**T**	**p-value**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
Constant	2.813	0.203	13.845	0.000	2.214	3.213
PPS	- 0.090	0.029	- 3.128	0.002	- 0.147	- 0.033
Hope	- 0.231	0.061	- 3.786	0.000	- 0.350	- 0.111
ScE	- 0.153	0.044	- 3.490	0.001	- 0.240	- 0.067

PPS: Perceived parental support; YRB: Youth risk behavior; ScE: School engagement; B: unstandardized coefficients.

3.3 Verification of mediating effects

In order to verify the indirect effects of perceived parental support on youth risk behaviors through hope and school engagement, bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effects based on 5000 corrected bootstrap samples was performed using SPSS PROCESS macro.

As showed in table 4, the direct, all indirect effects were all statistically significant. Accordingly, hope partially mediated the relationship between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior at 95% confidence level under 5000 corrected bootstrap samples since there was no zero between the lower and upper confidence limits (B = - 0.018, BootLLCI – 0.040 ~ - 0.004 ULCI). Similarly, school engagement statistically significantly partially mediated the relationship between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior at 95% confidence level under 5000 corrected bootstrap samples since there was no zero between the lower and upper confidence limits (B = - 0.028, BootLLCI – 0.055 ~ - 0.007 ULCI). Note here that, the pairwise contrast (Ind1 minus Ind2) was not statistically significant. However, the total effect of perceived parental support (X) on youth risk behavior (Y) was also statistically significantly negative (B – 0.137***). More also, the total indirect effect of perceived parental support on youth risk behavior was statistically significantly negative (B = - 0.046, BootLLCI – 0.089 ~ - 0.017ULCI) at 95% confidence level under 5000 corrected bootstrap samples since there was no zero between the lower and upper confidence intervals. Thus, indirect effect1, indirect effect2, the total indirect effect was all verified to be statistically significant. Therefore, it was verified that hope and school engagement statistically significantly partially mediated the link between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior. In other words, perceived parental support through hope had a statistically significant negative effect on youth risk behavior, and also that perceived parental support through school engagement had a statistically significant negative influence on youth risk behavior.

Table 5. Verification of direct, indirect, total, and contrast effects

	Effect	**SE**	**T**	**P**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
Total Effect	- 0.137	0.029	- 4.784	0.000	- 0.193	- 0.080
Direct Effect	- 0.090	0.029	- 3.128	0.002	- 0.147	- 0.033

Indirect effects	**Effects (B)**	**Boot SE**	**BootLLCI**	**BootULCI**
Total Indirect effect	**- 0.046**	0.018	**- 0.089**	**- 0.017**
Ind1: PPS →HP→YRB	- 0.018	0.009	**- 0.040**	**- 0.004**
Ind2: PPS	- 0.028	0.012	**- 0.055**	**- 0.007**

→ScE→YRB				
C1: Ind1 minus **Ind2**	0.010	0.012	- 0.014	0.034

PPS: Perceived parental support; HP: Hope; ScE: School engagement; C1: contrast effect

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The influence of perceived parental support on the different risky behaviors (drug abuse, alcoholism, sexual misconduct etc.) that students get involved have been validated in various studies (Reininger et al., 2012; Yu et al., 2006). However, within this realm, almost no quantitative study has a model setting that suggest the use of school engagement and hope as mediators in parallel in the link between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior of students. Thus, the present study aimed at using hope and school engagement as critically important factors that will further strengthen the relationship between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior from the perspective of the students only.

According to the first research question; this study found out that 'youth risk behavior was statistically significantly negatively correlated to perceived parental support, hope, and school engagement; while perceived parental support, hope, and school engagement where all statistically significantly positively correlated to each other. The significant negative correlation between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior indicates that, the more support students received from their parents or guardians, the lesser their involvements in risky behavioral activities. This finding is consistent with several empirical studies. For example, Donenberg et al. (2002) posited that parental monitoring and parental permissiveness are more strongly associated with sexual risk taking in trouble girls, while Li et al. (2000) found out that low levels of perceived parental monitoring were associated with adolescents' participation in several health-related risk behaviors, including sexual behavior, substance use/drug use and violent behaviors. This finding suggests the need for parents and guardians to be fully committed to providing support and close monitoring of their children to help the children from getting involved in risky behaviors.

Furthermore, the negative correlation between hope and youth risk behavior indicates that 'students with high levels of hope will tend to be less involve in risky activities and vice versa. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Brooks et al., 2016; Carvajal et al., 1998). This finding suggests that focusing on hope may be one modifiable target in a comprehensive prevention program on reducing risky behaviors among adolescents. Additionally, the negative correlation between school engagement and youth risk behavior implies that 'the more students are engagement with school activities, the lesser their involvement in risky behavioral activities. Similar to this finding, Wang and Fredricks (2014) asserted that adolescents who had declines in emotional and behavioral engagement with school, tended to have more substance use and delinquency over time. Therefore, academic institutions, parents, school administrators, researchers, and teachers should consider school engagement as a critically important construct that helps reduce students' involvement in risky behavioral activities.

Furthermore, the significant positive correlation between perceived parental support and hope implies that 'the more support students perceived from their parents or guardians, the more hopeful they become in their career development. Several empirical studies support the significant positive relationship between perceived parental support and hope (e.g., Jiang et al., 2013; Ho et al., 2021; Shorey et al., 2003). Therefore, providing parental support and monitoring is very important in student academic development as it enables the student to be more focus with school activities.

Additionally, the positive correlation between hope and school engagement indicates that the more hopeful students are, the more they get engagement with school activities. This finding is supported by several previous studies (e.g., Demirci, 2020; Chen et al., 2020; Tomas et al., 2020). This relationship suggest that both hope and school engagement should be treated as very critical factors important to the development of the students' career.

In accordance to the second research question, which investigate the impact of perceived parental support on youth risk behavior, finding revealed strong supporting evidence related to several empirical studies. The current study revealed that perceived parental support statistically significantly negatively influence youth risk behavior of students. Consistent with this finding, Borawski et al. (2003) found out that perceive parental trust served as a protective factor against sexual misconduct, tobacco, and use of cannabis and alcohol among adolescents. Therefore, the current study supports the use of parental support, guidance and strict monitoring to children as a critically

important factor to help reduce students' involvement in risky behaviors.

Lastly, in accordance to research question three, the current study found out that hope and school engagement played significant mediating roles in the relationship between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior. This finding tries to fill the gap or add to the literature on factors that helps reduce youths' involvement in risky behaviors. Therefore, hope and school engagement of students is suggested to be use as critically important factors by academic institutions to help fight against youths ' risky behaviors. Some empirical studies support the use of hope as a mediator variable, for example, Walker et al. (2011) found out that hope mediated the link between child-reported parent-child connectedness and adolescents' prosocial behavior. Similarly, school engagement as a mediator is supported by empirical studies, for example Perry, Liu, and Pabian (2010), found out that school engagement mediated the path between career preparation and grades.

However, the current study also had some limitations; firstly, study constructs are based on self-reports which validity can be questioned. Secondly, this study involved only a few regions, thus, future study should try to extend participation to all regions of the country. Thirdly, the study was cross-sectioned at one point in time which did not allow for causal inference. Therefore, future study should consider a longitudinal survey.

In a nutshell, the current study revealed that hope and school engagement further influence the relation between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior as perceived by high school and undergraduate university students in some selected schools in Cameroon. Review of literature showed gap in the use of hope and school engagement as mediating constructs in the link between perceived parental support and youth risk behavior in general, which is the uniqueness of the current study. Empirical evidence further supports the correlation among the constructs as observed in the current study. Thus, perceived parental support, hope and school engagement are critically important constructs that should be used in programs on the prevention of youth risk behaviors.

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