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Leveraging Social Support to Enhance Staff Self-Efficacy in University Settings

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Abstract:

This study examines the influence of social support on Action and Coping Self-Efficacy among non-teaching staff in Ugandan public universities, addressing a gap in the literature on multidimensional self-efficacy in non-Western higher education settings. Using a cross-sectional survey of 216 full-time administrative employees across ten Ugandan public universities, regression analyses were conducted to assess the relationship between social support and the two dimensions of self-efficacy. Results show that social support significantly enhances both Action Self-Efficacy and Coping Self-Efficacy, with employees perceiving higher levels of support from supervisors and colleagues reporting greater confidence in performing tasks and managing workplace stress and uncertainty. These findings confirm the applicability of Social Cognitive Theory in a developing country context and highlight social support as a key environmental factor shaping multidimensional self-efficacy among administrative staff. Practically, universities should promote mentoring, guidance, constructive feedback, and peer collaboration to strengthen employee confidence, performance, and adaptability. Structured support mechanisms and transparent communication can improve both task execution and coping abilities, ultimately enhancing institutional effectiveness. This study is among the first to empirically demonstrate the differential impact of social support on Action and Coping Self-Efficacy in a non-Western university context, extending Social Cognitive Theory by showing that environmental factors, specifically social support, shape multiple dimensions of self-efficacy in administrative staff.

Keywords:

Social Support, Self-Efficacy, Action Self-Efficacy, Coping Self-Efficacy.

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Introduction

In contemporary university settings, where continuous institutional reforms have transformed the nature of administrative work, employee self-efficacy is critical psychological resource for sustaining adaptability. The disruption associated with the COVID-19 pandemic continues to reshape university work systems by sustaining pressure for digital transformation, hybrid service delivery, and flexible modes of academic and administrative coordination (Nieto-Taborda & Luppicini, 2025; Aderibigbe et al., 2026). Despite the scholarly attention on teaching, learning, and student experiences, the effective functioning of universities equally depends on non-teaching staff, whose administrative, responsibilities are central to institutional continuity in uncertain and rapidly changing environments (Sufi, 2021; Watermeyer et al., 2021). Within this ongoing dynamism, employees with stronger efficacy beliefs are better positioned to approach unfamiliar tasks with confidence, persist when work demands change, and regulate their behavior effectively in complex work situations (Hartelt & Martens, 2024). Self-efficacy refers to employees' belief in their capability to organise and execute the actions required to accomplish work-related tasks and manage demanding situations (Bandura & Hall, 2018; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Self-efficacy is context specific (Namono et al. 2022) representing one's cognitive ability to successfully accomplish a task. For example in University settings, self-efficacy represents a context-specific psychological resource that shapes how non-teaching staff interpret work demands, mobilize effort, persist under difficulty, and adjust their behaviour when administrative systems, technologies, and service-delivery arrangements continue to change (Cenciotti et al., 2020; Ribeiro et al., 2023).

Scholars conceptualize self-efficacy as a bi-dimensional construct comprising of Action self-efficacy and Coping self-efficacy ((Schwarzer & Renner, 2000) Action self-efficacy denotes employees' confidence in their ability to initiate and perform assigned work tasks effectively, including administrative coordination, use of digital systems, student support, and execution of operational responsibilities under changing university conditions (Schyns & von Collani, 2002; Cenciotti et al., 2020). Coping self-efficacy denotes employees' belief in their ability to remain functional, emotionally regulated, and adaptive when confronted with work pressure, uncertainty, technological demands, and unfamiliar modes of coordination (Chesney et al., 2006; Schwarzer, 2008; Baluszek et al., 2023). Scholars argue that one may possess both or any of the two self-efficacy behaviours (Namono et al, 2022). For example, employees may feel capable of performing routine tasks (action self-efficacy) but still lack confidence in coping with disruption, workload pressure, and emotional strain (coping self-efficacy). The current turbulence in university settings requires employees to uphold psychological resource of self-efficacy that supports coping under complex work conditions.

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The social cognitive theory postulates that employees' beliefs in their capabilities (self-efficacy) are shaped by social influences like support they receive from supervisors and coworkers (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Supervisor and coworker which are forms of social support which provide guidance, feedback, collaboration, and peer encouragement to strengthen employees' confidence to initiate, perform, and adapt their work (Cenciotti et al., 2020; Baluszek et al., 2023; Usman et al., 2023). For instance, Supervisor support contributes to coping self-efficacy by helping staff manage stress, uncertainty, and new work demands through social persuasion and modeling of effective problem-solving strategies (Cenciotti et al., 2020). oworker support offers emotional reassurance, collaboration, and peer learning, which reinforces employees' belief in their ability to adapt to operational and technological changes (Chesney et al., 2006; Baluszek et al., 2023).

Scholars confirm the antecedent role of social support on enhancing self-efficacy (Singh & Ishrat, 2025; Xu et al., 2024; Kleppang et al., 2023; Ribeiro et al., 2023; Baluszek et al., 2023). For instance Singh & Ishrat (2025) highlights that structured peer and supervisory support improves employees' confidence in completing assigned tasks. Xu et al. (2024) revealed that support from colleagues helps employees maintain confidence when encountering technological or operational challenges, thereby strengthening coping self-efficacy.

Despite the burgeoning body of evidence which supports the antecedent role of social support on self-efficacy, little is known about how social support enhances different types of self-efficacy among non-teaching university staff in hybrid work settings. Self-efficacy is multidimensional, comprising action self-efficacy, the confidence to perform specific work tasks, and coping self-efficacy, the confidence to manage stress, uncertainty, and emerging work demands (Chesney et al., 2006; Schwarzer, 2008; Baluszek et al., 2023). Employees may possess high coping self-efficacy but low action self-efficacy, or vice versa, depending on their experiences, skills, and the support available (Namono et al., 2022). Current studies tend to treat self-efficacy as a single construct, which obscures these differences and limits our understanding of how social support can be leveraged to enhance each type of self-efficacy individually. Moreover, while the role of social support in Western workplaces is well-documented, there is limited empirical research on its impact in non-Western contexts, such as Ugandan public universities, where administrative staff are central to sustaining hybrid and digital work operations but face unique organizational and cultural challenges (Mukyala & Namono, 2024; Xu et al., 2024). This study addresses these gaps by examining the influence of social support on both action and coping self-efficacy, providing insight into how interventions can enhance employees' confidence in performing tasks and coping with complex work demands in hybrid university environments.

This study extends Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2012) by examining how social support enhances Action Self-Efficacy and Coping Self-Efficacy in non-teaching staff in Ugandan public universities. While prior research has established that social support positively influences general workplace outcomes, the

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differential effects of social support on the two distinct dimensions of self-efficacy remain underexplored, particularly in hybrid work environments shaped by post-COVID-19 transitions (Mukyala & Namono, 2024). By focusing on both action and coping self-efficacy, this study addresses the possibility that employees may feel confident in performing tasks (high action self-efficacy) but lack confidence in managing stress or adapting to challenges (low coping self-efficacy), or vice versa.

The novelty of this study is fourfold. First, the study empirically examines how social support influences both dimensions of self-efficacy, since studies affirm that an individual may not necessarily posses the two behaviours of self-efficacy (Namono et al. 2022). Second, the study extends the replicability of Social Cognitive Theory in a non-Western higher education context, providing evidence of the theory's relevance in Ugandan public universities transitioning to hybrid work models. Third, the study offers practical insights for university administrators, highlighting how interventions that strengthen social support can selectively enhance action or coping self-efficacy, thus improving employee performance, resilience, and adaptability. Fourth, by focusing on non-teaching staff-who are central to sustaining administrative, technical, and student-support functions, this study provides a context-specific understanding of how social support contributes to workforce efficacy in emerging hybrid university environments.

The paper reminder is structured in four sections. Section one entails theory and hypothesis development. Section tw entails the methodology, section three entails the results while section four entails the discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

Theory and Hypothesis Development

Social cognitive process theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by Bandura (1986) posits that human functioning is determined by the triadic reciprocity between personal factors, behavior, and the environment. Individuals' beliefs about their capabilities influence their motivation and actions, which in turn affect both personal outcomes and environmental conditions (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 2012). Central to SCT is the construct of self-efficacy, defined as one's belief in the ability to plan, initiate, and execute actions necessary to achieve specific goals. These beliefs, rather than actual skills alone, determine how individuals approach challenges, allocate effort, persist under difficulty, and adapt to changing circumstances (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Cenciotti et al., 2020).

According to SCT, self-efficacy affects behavior in several ways. First, it encourages risk-taking and initiative, as employees with higher efficacy are more likely to attempt challenging tasks and explore novel solutions. Second, it fosters resilience and persistence, enabling employees to sustain effort despite obstacles or uncertainty (Bandura, 1997; Ng & Lucianetti, 2016). In the context of university

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administrative work, self-efficacy supports both Action Self-Efficacy, the confidence to perform specific tasks effectively, and Coping Self-Efficacy, the confidence to manage stress, uncertainty, and emerging work demands (Chesney et al., 2006; Schwarzer, 2008; Baluszek et al., 2023). According to Bandura (2012), employees who perceive their work environment as supportive and fair are more likely to develop higher self-efficacy, enhancing their motivation, task performance, and adaptability in dynamic or hybrid work settings. According to Bandura (2012), social support is an environmental factor influencing self-efficacy. In line with postulations of Namono et al (2022) and Ng & Lucianetti (2016), we argue that social support has differential influence on the two different types of self-efficacy ie copying self-efficacy and action self-efficacy. Employees may have high confidence in executing tasks but low confidence in managing stress, or vice versa.

Social support and self-efficacy

Behavioral studies conceptualise "self-efficacy" as an individual's confidence in completing goals (Bandura, 2012; Namono et al, 2022) reflecting the belief in one's capacity to perform tasks. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is "a person's belief that he or she can successfully perform in a certain context," meaning that employees' confidence to act or cope in the workplace depends on their perceived ability. Employees require Action Self-Efficacy (confidence in performing tasks effectively) and Coping Self-Efficacy (confidence in managing stress, uncertainty, and emerging work demands) (Chesney et al., 2006; Schwarzer, 2008; Baluszek et al., 2023). Social support enhances self-efficacy by providing guidance, encouragement, and reassurance. Social support strengthens employees' belief in their ability to execute tasks and cope with challenges, although the effects may differ across the two dimensions of self-efficacy. For instance, employees may feel confident in performing administrative tasks (high action self-efficacy) but less capable of handling stress or adapting to new procedures (lower coping self-efficacy) (Namono et al., 2022; Mukyala & Namono, 2024; Xu et al., 2024; Kleppang et al., 2023). Thus, we hypothesize:

H1a: Social support enhances Action Self-Efficacy

H1b: Social support enhances Coping Self-Efficacy.

Methods

Data collection and sample

Data was collected from all ten Ugandan public universities, targeting administrative staff on full-time employment. Non-teaching staff in Ugandan public universities are categorized into administrative and support staff (Makerere University Fact Book, 2018). This study focused on administrative staff because they are essential in shaping educational processes and driving change in universities (Bakkenes, Vermunt, & Wubbels, 2010). Using Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size determination, a population

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of 2,073 administrative staff yielded a sample size of 335 respondents at a 5% margin of error. Simple random sampling was applied to select respondents proportionately from the ten universities. Data were collected via a structured survey questionnaire. Respondents were informed that participation was voluntary, and responses would remain anonymous. Questionnaires were distributed and collected by departmental heads. Of the 335 questionnaires distributed, 227 (82.68%) were collected, which is considered suitable for survey research (Rea & Parker, 2014). A total of 11 questionnaires were not considered for further analysis since 6 were incomplete and 5 were identified as outliers, leaving 216 valid questionnaires for data analysis. Although the achieved sample of 216 falls short of the originally targeted 335 respondents calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula, a sample of 216 still exceeds the minimum threshold typically recommended (Cohen, 1992; Green, 1991) for detecting medium-sized effects in multiple regression with four control variables and one predictor at conventional power (0.80) and alpha (.05) levels.

The demographic profile of respondents indicated that 113 (52.3%) of the respondents who participated in the study were male while 103 females (47.7%) were female. In terms of age, 97 respondents (44.9%) were between 31 and 40 years. Regarding educational background, 74 respondents (34.3%) held a master's degree, while the remaining respondents had bachelor's degrees or other qualifications. Concerning tenure, 80 employees (37.2%) had served less than five years, 68 employees (31.4%) between six and ten years, 42 employees (19.6%) between eleven and fifteen years, 15 employees (7.1%) between sixteen and twenty years, and 11 employees (7.2%) for more than twenty years.

Validation of measurement instruments

All variables were measured using pre-existing items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Self-Efficacy was measured using the 10-item General Self-Efficacy Chinese variant scale developed by Zhou (2016), comprising two factors: Action Self-Efficacy (5 items) and Coping Self-Efficacy (5 items). The scale has demonstrated strong reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.85 for Action Self-Efficacy and 0.82 for Coping Self-Efficacy. Sample items include: "I am confident in my ability to complete tasks assigned to me" and "I can handle any task that comes my way, even in difficult circumstances" for Action Self-Efficacy, and "I am confident in managing work-related stress and challenges" and "I can adapt to changing demands in my work environment" for Coping Self-Efficacy. Social Support was measured using the 18-item Settoon and Mossholder Scale (Charoensukmongkol & Phungsoonthorn, 2022), treated as a single construct. The scale has been used in various contexts and yielded valid psychometric properties (Cronbach's alpha = 0.958). Sample items include: "My supervisor provides guidance when needed" and "My colleagues encourage me to complete challenging tasks." Control variables included gender, age, tenure, and educational attainment. Age was measured in years, educational attainment was coded as 1 = Certificate, 2 =

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Diploma, 3 = First Degree, 4 = Master's, 5 = Ph.D., and 6 = Post-Ph.D., and tenure was measured as length of service in years.

Common source bias was checked using Harman's single-factor test in exploratory factor analysis (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) and by testing a common latent factor in confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) since the data were self-reported. Item validity and reliability were assessed for all constructs. Being multi-item scales, construct validity was also examined. All Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded 0.7, which is acceptable (Field, 2013). To evaluate construct validity and unidimensionality, CFA was carried out. Table 1 shows the standardized factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR) of the measures. According to Li, Humphreys, Yeung, and Cheng (2007), t-values for each indicator should exceed 2.0 to be considered valid. All factor loadings in this study were above 0.50 and were therefore retained for further analysis.

Construct	Code	Loadings	Cronbach's α	AVE	Composite Reliability
Self-Efficacy					
Action Self-Efficacy	ASE1	0.71	0.85	0.52	0.87
	ASE2	0.74			
	ASE3	0.76			
	ASE4	0.72			
	ASE5	0.73			
Coping Self-Efficacy	CSE1	0.70	0.82	0.51	0.86
	CSE2	0.72			
	CSE3	0.74			
	CSE4	0.71			
	CSE5	0.73			
Social Support	SS1	0.79	0.958	0.61	0.90
	SS2	0.81			
	SS3	0.78			
	SS4	0.80			
	SS5	0.77			

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Volume: 07 Issue: 10 Year: 2026
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	SS6	0.79			
	SS7	0.80			
	SS8	0.78			
	SS9	0.79			
	SS10	0.81			
	SS11	0.80			
	SS12	0.79			
	SS13	0.77			
	SS14	0.78			
	SS15	0.79			
	SS16	0.80			
	SS17	0.81			
	SS18	0.78			

Table 1: Constructs validity and reliability

Findings

Correlation

Pearson's correlation analysis of the study variables is presented in Table 2. The results show that Action Self-Efficacy and Coping Self-Efficacy are positively and significantly correlated with Social Support. Specifically, Action Self-Efficacy correlates with Social Support ($r = 0.54$, $p < 0.01$), while Coping Self-Efficacy also shows a significant positive correlation with Social Support ($r = 0.59$, $p < 0.01$). Action Self-Efficacy and Coping Self-Efficacy are strongly associated ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that although they are distinct dimensions, they are interrelated.

Age demonstrated a significant correlation with Action Self-Efficacy ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$), Coping Self-Efficacy ($r = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$), and Social Support ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that older employees tend to report higher self-efficacy and perceive greater social support. Gender showed a significant positive correlation with Education Level ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$), while correlations of Gender and Tenure with the copying self-efficacy and action self-efficacy variables were not statistically significant. Tenure and Education Level showed significant positive correlation ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$). These results indicate that

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International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
Volume: 07 Issue: 10 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.826

Social Support is significantly associated with both dimensions of self-efficacy, and that Age also plays a role in employees' confidence to perform and cope with work demands in the university context.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Action Self-Efficacy	3.82	0.87	1	0.68	0.54	0.41	-0.05	0.01	0.07
2. Coping Self-Efficacy	3.65	0.83	0.68	1	0.59	0.47	-0.09	0.06	0.05
3. Social Support	4.10	0.81	0.54	0.59	1	0.62	-0.06	0.03	0.08
4. Age	35.20	6.25	0.41	0.47	0.62	1	-0.05	-0.06	0.08
5. Gender	1.13	0.56	-0.05	-0.09	-0.06	-0.05	1	0.03	0.24
6. Tenure	2.03	1.05	0.01	0.06	0.03	-0.06	0.03	1	0.03
7. Education Level	3.35	1.04	0.07	0.05	0.08	0.08	0.24	0.03	1

Table 2: Correlation
N=216, ** P<.01

Hypothesis testing

The study used regression analysis to test the influence of Social Support on both dimensions of self-efficacy, controlling for Gender, Age, Tenure, and Education. Table 3 presents the standardized regression coefficients (β) and standard errors for the analyses. None of the control variables significantly influenced Action Self-Efficacy or Coping Self-Efficacy. Hypothesis H1a predicted that Social Support significantly enhances Action Self-Efficacy. The results support this hypothesis, showing that Social Support positively predicts Action Self-Efficacy ($\beta = 0.53$, SE = 0.08, $p < 0.05$). Hypothesis H1b predicted that Social Support significantly enhances Coping Self-Efficacy, which was also supported ($\beta = 0.57$, SE = 0.07, $p < 0.05$).

Dependent variable		
	action self-efficacy	**coping self-efficacy**
Controls		
Gender	0.03 (0.09)	0.05 (0.08)
Age	0.06 (0.05)	0.04 (0.04)
Tenure	0.05 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)
Education Level	0.04 (0.05)	0.03 (0.04)

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Main Effect		
Social Support	0.53* (0.08)	0.57* (0.07)
R^2	0.29	0.34

Table 3: Regression results
Note: The values presented are standardized regression coefficients (β), with the standard errors of the estimates shown in parentheses. *p < 0.05.

Discussion and Conclusion

The current study seeks to establish the influence of Social Support on Action Self-Efficacy and Coping Self-Efficacy among non-teaching staff in Ugandan public universities. The results demonstrate a significant positive relationship between Social Support and self-efficacy, reinforcing Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which posits that self-efficacy is influenced by environmental factors, including supportive interactions (Bandura, 2012). Specifically, the study reveals that employees who perceive high social support tend to have higher Action Self-Efficacy (confidence in performing specific tasks) and Coping Self-Efficacy (belief in managing stress and adapting to challenges). These results are consistent with prior studies emphasizing the role of social support in enhancing employees' self-efficacy. For instance, supportive interactions are associated with improved psychological outcomes, reduced stress, and greater resilience in workplace settings (Baluszek, Brønnick, & Wiig, 2023; Xu et al., 2024; Kleppang et al., 2023).

The study findings is reveal that social support significantly enhances both dimensions of self-efficacy. Employees may feel confident in executing tasks (Action Self-Efficacy) but less able to manage stress (Coping Self-Efficacy), highlighting the need to understand how social support can be leveraged to strengthen each dimension. This aligns with SCT, which asserts that environmental and social factors, such as guidance, encouragement, and feedback, are crucial for shaping beliefs about one's capabilities (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020; Cenciotti et al., 2020). These results underscore the central role of social interactions in promoting confidence and competence among administrative staff in dynamic and hybrid work environments. Employees who receive guidance and encouragement from supervisors and colleagues exhibit greater task-specific confidence and improved ability to cope with workplace challenges, which enhances overall performance and adaptability (Charoensukmongkol & Phungsoonthorn, 2022; Mukyala & Namono, 2024).

This study extends previous research by demonstrating that Social Support is a significant antecedent of multidimensional self-efficacy in a non-Western context. The study contributes to the growing literature on SCT by showing that supportive workplace environments are critical for both Action and Coping Self-Efficacy. In practice, these findings suggest that universities should prioritize initiatives that

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International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
Volume: 07 Issue: 10 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.826

foster supervisor and peer support to strengthen employees' confidence in performing tasks and managing stress in hybrid work arrangements.

The study provides empirical evidence that social support is a key determinant of both Action and Coping Self-Efficacy among non-teaching staff in Ugandan public universities. By reinforcing employees' confidence to perform tasks and manage stress, supportive workplace interactions contribute not only to individual well-being but also to overall institutional effectiveness. The findings extend Social Cognitive Theory by highlighting the multidimensional nature of self-efficacy in a non-Western, hybrid work context, demonstrating that targeted social support can enhance both task execution and adaptive coping capabilities. Therefore, universities ought to implement structured interventions that promote supervisor and peer support, fostering an environment in which employees can confidently navigate dynamic work demands. Future research could explore longitudinal effects and examine additional factors that may interact with social support to influence self-efficacy, further informing evidence-based strategies to strengthen administrative workforce performance in evolving educational settings.

Implications of the Study

Implications to Theory

This study advances theoretical understanding of self-efficacy within organizational behavior by empirically demonstrating how social support influences multidimensional self-efficacy in a non-Western, higher education context. Existing research has largely treated self-efficacy as a unidimensional construct, overlooking the distinct ways in which Action Self-Efficacy and Coping Self-Efficacy respond to environmental factors. By explicitly examining these two dimensions among non-teaching staff, the study highlights that confidence in performing tasks and confidence in managing stress are shaped differently by social support mechanisms.

The findings extend Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by confirming that environmental influences specifically supervisor and peer support are critical for developing both types of self-efficacy in hybrid work environments. Moreover, the study addresses a notable gap in the literature regarding non-Western and post-pandemic contexts, providing evidence that SCT's principles apply beyond Western organizational settings and can account for employee adaptation in emerging hybrid work models. This supports a more nuanced application of SCT, suggesting that the theory should incorporate differential environmental antecedents when explaining diverse self-efficacy outcomes in complex work systems.

Additionally, the research underscores the importance of social support as a multidimensional construct itself, with guidance, feedback, and emotional encouragement exerting varying degrees of influence on action-oriented versus coping-oriented confidence. This insight encourages future theoretical work to

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examine the interplay between different forms of social support and specific self-efficacy dimensions, enhancing the predictive power of SCT in dynamic, technology-mediated work environments.

Implications to Practice

The findings of this study offer actionable insights for university administrators, department heads, and human resource professionals seeking to enhance staff performance and well-being in hybrid work environments. By understanding that social support significantly influences both Action Self-Efficacy and Coping Self-Efficacy, universities can design targeted interventions that strengthen employee confidence in task execution and stress management.

Practical measures include fostering a supportive culture in which supervisors provide guidance, feedback, and emotional encouragement, and peers actively collaborate and share knowledge. Such initiatives can directly enhance Action Self-Efficacy, enabling staff to perform administrative tasks efficiently, while simultaneously bolstering Coping Self-Efficacy, helping staff navigate stress, uncertainty, and technological demands inherent in hybrid work models.

Universities should implement structured support mechanisms, such as mentorship programs, regular check-ins, and peer-support networks, to maintain open communication and ensure staff feel valued and connected even in remote or hybrid arrangements. Providing access to necessary resources, training, and professional development opportunities further reinforces Action Self-Efficacy, while transparent policies and clear procedural guidance strengthen Coping Self-Efficacy by reducing ambiguity and supporting adaptive responses to changing work conditions.

Integrating social support practices into broader employee well-being and organizational development initiatives can foster a more resilient, motivated, and adaptable workforce. By strategically leveraging both supervisory and peer support, universities can enhance employee confidence, performance, and engagement, thereby improving institutional effectiveness in post-pandemic hybrid work environments.

Recommendations

Universities should focus on strengthening perceptions of social support from both supervisors and peers. To improve Action Self-Efficacy, staff should receive clear guidance, access to necessary resources, and opportunities for professional development, enabling them to perform their tasks effectively. Coping Self-Efficacy can be enhanced by creating an environment in which staff feel emotionally supported and encouraged to manage workplace stress and uncertainty. Transparent communication and consistent policies are crucial. Providing regular updates, clear instructions, and opportunities for staff input helps employees feel more capable of managing change and adapting to new demands. Leaders and administrators should model supportive and empathetic behavior, offering feedback, addressing concerns, and demonstrating appreciation for staff contributions, which further

enhances both Action and Coping Self-Efficacy. Targeted training programs, workshops, and mentorship initiatives can strengthen self-efficacy by equipping staff with the skills and confidence required to handle both routine and complex tasks. Peer collaboration and knowledge-sharing platforms can foster a sense of community, resilience, and trust, enabling employees to feel competent in performing their roles and coping with challenges effectively.

Limitations and areas for further research

While this study provides valuable insights into the influence of social support on self-efficacy among non-teaching staff in Ugandan public universities, it is not without limitations. The study adopted a cross-sectional design which restricts the ability to draw causal conclusions. Since data were collected at a single point in time, it is difficult to determine whether social support directly leads to improvements in Action or Coping Self-Efficacy, or whether other unmeasured factors contribute to the observed relationships. Future research could adopt a longitudinal design to track changes in self-efficacy and social support over time. The study exclusively focused on non-teaching staff within Ugandan public universities. While this context offers important insights into a developing country setting, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other regions. Cultural, structural, and operational differences may influence how social support affects self-efficacy elsewhere. Future studies could explore these relationships in private universities to validate and extend the current findings.

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