

The relationship of perceived social support with self-esteem among college-going students

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between the two important psychological constructs i.e., Perceived social support and Self-esteem. Social Support is the assistance available to an individual or a circle of an individual's life on which he or she can rely upon whenever they need any assistance in social life. Self-esteem can be defined as the person's evaluation of his/her own life. It is a judgment of an individual or an opinion about oneself. Many studies have revealed that self-esteem is influenced by the support one has in his/her life. The present study was conducted to examine this relationship. The data was collected by simple random sampling from Amar College Srinagar. The data comprised of 75 students (40 males and 35 females). The Social support construct was measured by using a Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support scale developed by Zimet, Dahlem & Fairey (1988), and the Self Esteem construct was measured by using Self-esteem Scale developed by Rosenberg (1965). The perceived social support scale measured the three dimensions of the social life of an individual Family, friends, and Significant others. The collected data was analyzed by T-test and Pearson's correlation. There was a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and three dimensions of social support. For self-esteem and family social support the correlation was found to be ($r=.58, p<.001$), for self-esteem and friends social support it was ($r=.48, p<.001$) and for significant other social support it was found to be ($r=.50, p<.001$). An independent-samples t-test was used to compare the mean difference in self-esteem scores among males and females.

The results show a significant difference in scores for males ($M=32.45, SD=4.24$) and females ($M=24.40, SD=4.34; t(71)=7.96, p<.001$). The result also indicates a significant difference in self-esteem in terms of area of residence i.e., Rural ($M=26.11, SD=5.28$) and Urban ($M=29.92, SD=5.88, t(71)=2.90, p<.005$). The results conclude that the social support influences the self-esteem of an individual which in turn impacts his academic and social life.

Keywords: self esteem, perceived social support, college students

Introduction

Social support can be understood as a circle or chain of supportive people and persons of an individual on which he can rely upon. People with strong social support networks are more likely to be social, academically and health-wise better than those with low social support networks. Social support makes an individual feel loved and cared by other members of the network. Social support can be emotional, instrumental, financial or informational (Reevyl & Maslach, 2001). There are various forms of support available to an individual like emotional, financial (tangible), and intangible, informational, and companionship. The term social support refers to the mechanisms by which interpersonal relationships protect people from deleterious effects of stress (Kessler, 1989). There is not a single agency of social support. Social support can become available from any source family, friends, religious institutes, once relatives, neighbors colleagues, and co-workers. There are generally four common functions of social support.

Emotional support: This kind of support a person can get through the empathy by others, love, care, affection, level of trust, intimacy, and encouragement. It is sometimes called the esteem support because it let the person know that he is being loved and cared.

Tangible support: This is also called instrumental support and is a direct way of assisting people. Financial and material support is a tangible kind of social support.

Informational Support: Social support available in terms of advice, suggestions, information whether in formal or informal ways. Formal informational support includes the professional help from counselors, clinicians etc.

Companionship support: This is also called belongingness support and it gives an individual a sense of belongingness. The presence of companions to engage in shared social activities.

Self-esteem is defined as an overall subjective emotional evaluation of oneself. The term self-esteem describes as the person's overall sense of self-worth and the personal value (Cherry, 2014). Self-esteem is relatively a permanent personality trait that stays longer. Self-esteem is an individual's personal evaluation of his worthiness that is expressed in his behaviors, and attitudes that he carry for himself. (Sanaktekin & Sunar, 2008). Self-esteem of people is linked with various life domains. People with high self-esteem are more likely to be less worried about the things around them. They carry a positive attitude towards themselves that is inwardly related to their academic performance, self-worth, and relationships. These individuals didn't carry out not by the rejection of others. A person with low self-esteem on other hand holds a negative evaluation about themselves and lack clarity and certainty in life. People with low self-esteem generalize the failure more often to other domains of life.

Review of Literature

Ikiz and Cakar (2010) [2] conducted a descriptive study to examine the relationship between the levels of perceived social support with self-esteem among adolescents. 257 Participants were randomly selected for this study from different schools of Turkey. The Results of this study reflected that in terms of gender, there is a statistically significant difference on the perceived peer and teacher support levels however there is no difference in self-esteem levels. A statistically significant positive relationship between perceived social support levels and self-esteem levels of adolescents was found.

Richter, Brown, and Mott (1991) [8] in an influential study examined the impact of self-esteem and social support on adolescent substance abuse treatment outcomes. Both adolescents and their parents completed the questionnaire pertaining to self-esteem and social support and research during treatment and after 6 and 12 months after treatment. Results indicate that the quality of social resources (i.e., drug-use patterns of supports) reported during treatment was related to alcohol- and drug-use status post-treatment, with abstainers reporting more nonusing supports than teens that stayed with drugs. One’s level of Self-esteem and the degree of satisfaction with social support during treatment phase were negatively correlated with the number of major life problems during the 6 months following discharge.

Hoffman, Ushpiz, Rachel (1988) conducted a study social support and self-esteem among adolescents. They assessed contingencies in the effect of social support from parents and friends on adolescents’ self-esteem. This study was administrated on 76 Israeli adolescents. Self-esteem, stressful life events, and perceived social support from father mother and friends were assessed. The results suggest that support from mother heavily influences the self-esteem of adolescents and support from friends is impactful if maternal support is absent. Support from fathers was found a little impact.

Budd, Buschman, Esch (200) examined the relationship between self-esteem and perceived social support where they hypothesized that higher level of perceived social support increases the individual's self-esteem. Full-time undergraduate students between the ages of 18-25 were selected through the method of connivance sampling. The Index of Self-Esteem (Hudson, 1982) and the Social Support Appraisals Scale (Vaux, Phillips, Holley, Thompson, Williams, & Stewart, 1986) were used for this study. The results of the study revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between perceived social support and individual self-esteem.

Kumar, Lal, and Bhuchar (2014) [3] conducted a study to examine the Impact of Social Support in Relation to Self-Esteem and Aggression among Adolescents. Multidimensional perceived social support scale developed by Zimet (1988) was used for social support construct and Self-esteem is measured by Rosenberg scale of self-esteem (1965). The sample of the study consisted 100 students from different colleges of Chandigarh between the age range of 18-23 years. The results of this study also revealed that there is a positive correlation between the perceived social support and self-esteem and negative correlation was found between social support and aggression.

Tahir, Inam and Raana (2015) [9] conducted a study on adolescent girls in Lahore Pakistan in they examine the

relationship between social support and self esteem. 120 adolescent girls between the ages of 16-19 years were randomly selected for this study. After the analysis of data the results of the study revealed that there is positive correlation between social support and self esteem.

Objectives

- To access the perceived social support and self-esteem among college students
- To access the relationship between perceived social support and self-esteem among college students

Method

The aim of this study is to find out the relationship between the perceived social support and self esteem among college going students in Kashmir.

Participants

Simple random sampling method of data collection was used to collect the data for this study. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed in two-degree colleges of Srinagar out of which 75 questionnaires were returned. Both males and females participated in this study which comprises 40 males and 35 females. The participants were between the age ranges of 18-23 years.

Measures

Perceived Social Support scale developed by (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988) was used for the perceived social support variable. This scale consists of 12 items and is divided into three dimensions family, friends and significant others.

Rosenberg Self Esteem scale (1965) developed by Rosenberg was used to for the variable of self esteem. This is 10 item scale and is suitable for young population.

Statistical Analysis

Independent t-test and Pearson’s coefficient of correlation was used to analyze the data.

Results and discussion

After the analysis of data following results were obtained:

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: t-test for differences in self-esteem in male and female participants

Variables	Males		Females		t-value (df=7)	95%CL	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		Lower	Upper
Self esteem	32.45	4.24	24.40	4.34	-7.981	-10.07	-6.04

T-test results clearly depict a significant difference in self esteem across gender. It can be further observed from the table 1 that males scored comparatively higher as compared to females.

Table 2: t-test for differences in self-esteem in rural and urban participants

Variables	Rural		Urban		t-value (df=71)	95%CL	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		Lower	Upper
Self esteem	26.11	5.27	29.91	5.88	-2.912	-6.41	-1.20

As can be observed from the table 1.2, there is a significant difference in self esteem scores between urban and rural participants. From the mean scores, it can be seen that urban participants have higher scores on self esteem as compared to rural participants.

Table 3: Inter-Correlation matrix of self-esteem and social support dimensions

	PSS	Family	Friends	So
SE		.586**	.481**	507**

** Correlation significant at .001 levels (2-tailed).

The results of bivariate correlations depict that self esteem correlated positively and significantly with all the dimensions of social support.

Discussions

Social support is directly linked with self esteem as is evident from the results of this study. The result suggests that the higher levels of social support indicated the better self esteem among people. People who are receiving good social support from various sources are having better view of themselves. These results are in line with the previously studies conducted on these constructs e.g. Budd, Buschman, Esch, Tahir, Inam and Raana etc. This study is focused on the young population and provides an insight of importance of social support. By increasing the support system of adolescents or by providing them good sense of social support, it can boost their self esteem which in turn results good academic performance, health benefits and good social relations. Social support and self esteem is also seen potentially help in treatment outcomes of various problems like substance abuse and dependence. Hence professionals working with the younger generation population need to boost their self esteem and enhance their social support circles.

Limitations

The sample size of this study was relatively small and area of study was also limited. Future researches can include a large number of participants and also cover large research area. Also a comparative study of population in terms of culture, ethnicity can also be studied in further researches.

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