PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN HARYANA

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to adulthood. Adolescence is usually associated with the teenage years, but its physical, psychological or cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later. For example, puberty now typically begins during preadolescence, particularly in females. Physical growth (particularly in males) and cognitive development can extend into the early twenties. Results showed positive and significant correlations between achievement level (r= 0.19), educational stream (r= 0.13) and family social support. Further, trend of positive correlation of family social support was seen with the gender (r= 0.06), age of the respondent (r= 0.06), perceived stress factors (r= 0.04) and friend's social support (r= 0.07) though the correlation were non-significant. In contrast, birth order was negatively non-significantly correlated with family social support. Results concerning correlation of family social support with parental variables highlighted that all the variables i.e., parental age, education and occupation (r= 0.02, 0.06, 0.03, 0.03, 0.04 and 0.03 respectively, p<0.05) were positively but non-significantly correlated with family social support. Table 2 reflects the correlations of peer social support with adolescent, parental and family variables. The data indicated significant positive correlations of achievement level (r= 0.27), and educational stream (r= 0.12) were observed with peer social support. Further, positive but non-significant correlations of gender (r= 0.04) and adolescent's age (r=0.05) were seen with peer social support.

KEYWORD: Social Support and adolescent.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the period of transition between childhood and adulthood; it involves biological, cognitive and socio-emotional changes. It starts with the physical beginning of sexual maturity and ends with the social achievement of independent adult status. Adolescents are confronted by a multitude of problems arising from physical and cognitive development to social and emotional changes. During this period they are required to develop personal values and a sense of identity, fulfill social roles with peers and members of opposite sex, meet the requirements of education and make decisions regarding their career.

Social support is considered as one of the most important way of coping with stress. Cohen and Wills (1985) believed that perceived social support may act as buffer against stress as it prevents one to perceive a situation to be a stressful one. Social support can be described as providing of assistance or comfort to other people to help them cope with a variety of problems. Support comes

from interpersonal relationships with family members, neighbors, friends and religious groups. The mutual sharing of personal, social or moral ideas by peers, support the individual and his/her social development (Turner, 1999). Regardless of the level of stress in the adolescent's life, social support sources positively affect the individual's adaptation in a positive way (Cohen and Wills, 1985). Social support has also been shown to relate positively to students' satisfaction with their schooling experience (DeSantis King *et al.*, 2006). Research consistently indicates that youth derive social support from a number of sources (e.g., parent/family, peers/classmates and teachers) and social support from each source is associated with beneficial outcomes (Malecki and Demaray, 2003). Along with all these reasons affecting the individual's state of mind, adolescents face numerous stressors that are toxic for their mental health and well-being.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The PSS-Fr and PSS-Fa (Procidano & Heller, 1983) are two instruments 20-item each to measure fulfilment of social support from friends and family. This instrument has 3-point Likert type scale which have "Yes", "No", and "Don't know". The reliability found for the PSS-Fr and PSS-Fa with alphas ranging from 0.88 to 0.91 and 0.84 to 0.90 respectively. Both the PSS-Fr and PSS-Fa have good concurrent validity. High scores reflect more perceived social support**.**

Scoring procedure: Items are scored on a 3 point scale i.e., yes, no, don't know. The 2 scales are scored separately. Responses that include perceived social support (either yes or no, depending on the item) are scored as +1 (the 'do not know' option is not scored). Scores are then summed up to generate the sub-scale score. Score ranges from 0 (no Perceived Social Support) to 20 (maximum Perceived Social Support).

RESULTS

Relationship of family social support with adolescent, parental and family variables

A cursory look at Table-1 reflects correlation of family social support and adolescent, parental and family variables. Results showed positive and significant correlations between achievement level (r= 0.19), educational stream (r= 0.13) and family social support. This indicated that adolescent's with high achievement level, opting for highly valued educational stream with science received more social support from family.

Table- 1 - Correlation of perceived family social support with adolescent, parental and family variables N=400

I.	Adolescent's variables	r
1.	Achievement level	0.19*
2.	Gender	0.06
3.	Age	0.06
4.	Birth order	0.04

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5.	Educational stream	0.13*
II.	**Parental variables**	
1.	Father's age	0.02
2.	Mother's age	0.06
3.	Father's education	0.03
4.	Mother's education	0.03
5.	Father's occupation	0.04
6.	Mother's occupation	0.03
III.	**Family variables**	
1.	Family type	-0.01
2.	Family size	-0.01
3.	Number of siblings	-0.03
4.	Caste category	-0.01
5.	Family monthly income	-0.01

*Significant at 0.05 level

Further, trend of positive correlation of family social support was seen with the gender (r= 0.06), age of the respondent (r= 0.06), perceived stress factors (r= 0.04) and friend's social support (r= 0.07) though the correlation were non-significant. In contrast, birth order was negatively non-significantly correlated with family social support.

Results concerning correlation of family social support with parental variables highlighted that all the variables i.e., parental age, education and occupation (r= 0.02, 0.06, 0.03, 0.03, 0.04 and 0.03 respectively, p<0.05) were positively but non-significantly correlated with family social support. The trend of relationship indicated that as the parental variable moved towards higher side the social support received from family also increased.

Table-1 further projects correlation of family social support with family variables. Pearson correlation analysis suggested that all the family variables were negatively and non-significantly correlated with family social support i.e., family type, family size, number of siblings, caste, and family income stressful life events (r= -0.01, -0.01,-0.03, -0.01, and -0.01 respectively, p<0.05).

Relationship of peer social support with adolescent, parental and family variables

Table-2 reflects the correlations of peer social support with adolescent, parental and family variables. The data indicated significant positive correlations of achievement level (r= 0.27), and

educational stream (r= 0.12) were observed with peer social support. The interpretation may be that as the achievement level of respondents was high, educational stream of the adolescents moved toward more scientific subjects and more differentials between parents and adolescents, peer social support increased too. Further, positive but non-significant correlations of gender (r= 0.04) and adolescent's age (r=0.05) were seen with peer social support.

On the other side, non-significant and negative correlation coefficients were traced between birth order (r= -0.08) and perceived stress factors (r= -0.03) with peer social support was observed.

Table- 2 - Correlation of peer social support with adolescent, parental and family variables N=400

I.	Adolescent's variables	r
1.	Achievement level	0.27*
2.	Gender	0.04
3.	Age	0.05
4.	Birth order	-0.08
5.	Educational stream	0.12*
II.	Parental variables	
1.	Father's age	0.08
2.	Mother's age	0.04
3.	Father's education	0.05
4.	Mother's education	0.07
5.	Father's occupation	-0.05
6.	Mother's occupation	-0.02
III.	Familyvariables	
1.	Family type	-0.04
2.	Family size	-0.06
3.	Number of siblings	-0.02
4.	Caste category	0.07
5.	Family monthly income	0.07

*Significant at 0.05 level

Going through results presented in Table-2 regarding the correlations of peer social support with parental variable it was apparent that positive yet non-significant correlation existed between peer social support and paternal age and education (r= 0.08, 0.04, 0.05 and 0.07 respectively, p<0.05). Whilst, paternal occupation (r= -0.05 and -0.02 respectively) which was negatively and non-significantly correlated with peer social support.

To examine the correlation of peer social support across family variables Pearson correlation test was conducted and the results of the test unfolded that family income and caste had positive but non-significant correlation with peer social support (r= 0.07 and 0.07 respectively, p<0.05).

Further, correlation coefficients between peer social support, family type, family size, and number of siblings (r= -0.04, -0.06, and -0.02 respectively) at 5% level of significance, was non-significant and negative.

CONCLUSION

Social support has received considerable attention in child and adolescent literature. Researchers have described social support as one of the restricting variables to stress that describes the physical and emotional comfort given to individuals by their family, friends and other significant persons in their lives (Israel and Schurman, 1990). To sum up, social support can be viewed as care, value and guidance provided from family, peer and community members (Dollete *et al.*, 2006). Summarizing the results related to the family and friend support received by adolescents highlighted that adolescents living in extended families received more social support and were more satisfied with perceived social support as compared to adolescents who were living in nuclear families.

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