A Comparative Study on Perceived Social Support and Psychological Well-being of College Students Belonging to Nuclear and Extended Families

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ABSTRACT:

Background: The social support and psychological well-being is an important aspect of performance among the college students, and the area is still unmasked in the third world country, especially in Pakistan.
This study was planned and conducted to produce some valuable basic perception of the college students on the issue.

Objective: The present study was designed to investigate a relationship between perceived social support and psychological well-being of college students belonging to nuclear and extended families. The objectives of this study were to investigate the relationship between perceived social support and overall psychosocial well-being of college student's life and compare male and female students on the measure of psychological Well-being and Social Support scale.

Methodology: In this comparative study, a sample of 160 students was selected with 80 (40 boys and girls) from nuclear families and 80(40 boys and girls) from extended families. The data for research was collected from the students of Rawalpindi and Gujar Khan Colleges who belonged to nuclear and extended families. Participants were asked to fill Perceived Social Support Scale (Procidano & Heller 1983) and Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff 1989). The data collected were analyzed through SPSS.

Results: Results showed that there was a positive relationship between perceived social support and psychological well-being. Moreover, iit was found that girls had more social support and well-being than boys of nuclear and extended families. Present study also revealed that the students who belonged to extended families showed high psychological well-being compared to nuclear families and the students who belonged to nuclear families showed high perceived social support compared to extended families. Participants with single parent showed reduced psychological well-being and perceived social support scales. Similarly, the students with low family income showed high psychological well-being compared to middle and high family income and students with middle family income showed high perceived social support compared

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to low and high family income. Moreover, students whose parent's qualification was above B.A showed high perceived social support and psychological well-being compared to those who were below matric, F.A and B.A qualification. This implies parent's education is important for well-being and social support of children is significant.

Conclusion: It is concluded that there is relationship between perceived social support and psychological well-being of college students belonging to nuclear families.

INTRODUCTION:

In all cultures, the family unit is the primary transmitter of values and attitudes in the society. Each partner in relationship comes with values, norms and expectations derived from his or her own life. The interacting dynamics of family unit promote the spiritual, physical, psychological, and social growth of each member. The family units in today's society are not all identical. Single parents, divorce, combined families, and joined custodies are realities that have changed the family structure1. The concept of psychological well-being has been neglected for long time in scientific literature. Over the last decades, however, many psychometric instruments have been developed to measure it. Well-being is a multifaceted concept. Well-being is a positive and sustainable condition that allows individuals, groups or nations to thrive and flourish. Well-being requires an integrated approach, one that embraces mind, body, society, and the environment. Understanding how individuals and communities can be helped to thrive and flourish could be of great benefit to our citizens, our educators and our leaders2. Andrew & Robinson (1991) described that well-being is positive attitude towards one's self and life. (World Health Organization, 1958) define health as positive state of physical, mental & social well-being not merely absence of diseases or infirmity. In 1958, Dunn wrote regards 'high-level' wellness and recognized that this would only be achieved if we could stop being obsessed with disease, cure and prevention and move towards what he referred to as 'positive health.

Longitudinal findings support the premise that unrealistic extreme contingencies of self-evaluation, as represented by dysfunctional attitudes, can have a detrimental impact on levels of psychological well-being. The study supported that psychological well-being of the older and middle age group is higher than the younger ones3. Another research shows children from single parent families and those with many of the correlated risk factors associated with single parenthood such as lower socioeconomic status, and lower parental educational achievement tend to be low in wellness and their education[4].

Social support is not a simple, unitary concept; it presents a collection of social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural processes occurring in personal relationships that provide aid that promotes adaptive coping. This complexity makes it important to understand varying Definitions and measurements of social support5.

Social support has many dimensions, perceive social support an important one, which has been defined in a variety of ways by different psychologists. The perception of functions which are to be performed for an individual by significant others, such as family members friends and co-workers, who can provide informational, appraisal, instrumental and or emotional assistance''. The study defined the subjective appraisal of support to be subjective evaluation assessment of a person's supportive relationships and the supportive behavior that occur within them.1

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Comparative study design was employed and data for research was collected from students of Rawalpindi and Gujar Khan Colleges that belong to Nuclear and extended families. Data was analyzed through SPSS method.

The time duration for this study was 6 months. In the present study, sample was taken from male (N=40) and female (N=40) college students belonged to nuclear families, male (N=40) and female (N=40) college students belonged to extended families from Gujar Khan and Rawalpindi colleges. The technique which is used for sampling is convenient sampling.

The researcher used two standardized scales in order to carry out the present study. The first scale measured the perceived social support of students belonged to nuclear and extended families (Rafai, 1981). The other was psychological well-being scale developed by Kamman and Fleet (1983) which measures the multiple facet of well-being of the students belonging to nuclear and extended families.

RESULTS:

The results indicated that there is positive relationship between psychological well-Being and perceived social support which found statistically significant at *p<.05 level. Females had higher means on all scales than males. The result also revealed that girls had highest mean score on psychological well-being scale 67.34 as boys on psychological well-being scale 64.93 and this difference was statistically non-significant The girls had highest mean on perceived social support scale 61.42 as boys on perceived social support 61.17 and this difference was statistically non-significant.

The students who belong to extended families showed high mean scores 66.44 on measure of psychological well-being scale as nuclear families whose mean value was 65.96 and this difference was statistically non-significant. The students who belong to nuclear families showed high mean score 61.51 on measure of perceived social support scale as extended families whose mean value was 61.13 and this difference was statistically non-significant. The students who had both parents showed high mean scores 66.84,61.36 on measures of psychological well-being and perceived social support scales as compare to single parents whose values were 58.57 and 60.64 and this difference was statistically significant.

DISCUSSION:

Present study was to find the relationship between perceived social support and psychological well-being of college students of nuclear and extended families. The objective of the present study was to measure the perceived social support with psychological well-being, to investigate the relationship between perceived social support and overall psychological well-being of college students, to compare male and female students on psychological well-being scale and to compare male and female students on the perceived social support scale.

As anticipated, the results indicate that there is a positive relationship between psychological well-being and perceived social support scales. These finding are consistent with earlier studies that report social support will contribute to well-being. Study was show that perceived availability of social support is a better predictor of well-being than actual support given6. The perception of social support is more strongly related to well-being than is the extent to which the relationship participants agree about the veridicality of social support exchanges7.

The findings also indicate that students who perceived high support from family showed high adjustment in life and well-being compared those who received less support. In study, Gavvazi

(1994) found that, those adolescents who perceived themselves as receiving high support from family members reported higher levels of psychosocial maturity than those adolescents who perceived themselves as having low support from their families8.

Girls and boys in this study reported more social support and well-being of extended families. Findings by Naheed et al (2000) supported that psychological well-being of the older and middle age group is higher than the younger ones. 3 The results of the current study have provided insight that social support is important and inter-related to person's psychological well-being. This could lead to further studies and explore the ways to show social support maintain well-being of students and any other human-being.

CONCLUSION:

In the light of the findings, it was also concluded that there was positive relationship between psychological well-being and perceived social support scales.

1. It was concluded that girls had more social support and well-being than boys of nuclear and extended families.
2. The students who belong to extended families show high psychological well-being as nuclear families where as students that belong to nuclear families show high perceived social support as extended families.
3. The students who had both parents showed high psychological well-being and perceived social support as compared to single parents.
4. The students with low family income showed high psychological well-being and students with middle family income showed high perceived social support.
5. The students whose parent's qualification was high show high social support and psychological well-being. This shows that for well-being and social support the parent's qualification play a detrimental factors.

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