

Relationship between Social Support and Self-Esteem of Adolescent Girls

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Abstract: *The focus of current research was to examine the relationship between self-esteem and social support of the adolescent girls. Study was carried out at College of Home economics Lahore on a randomly selected sample of 120 girls ranging from 16 to 19 years of age. Two instruments were used to measure self esteem and social support. For self-esteem Rosenberg's self-esteem scale was used and for social support a self designed questionnaire was used to measure two types of social support namely family support and peer support. Descriptive statistical measures as well as Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation test was used to analyze the collected data. Results revealed a strong correlation between social support and self-esteem. Furthermore, a strong correlation was also found between family support and peer support. The study also revealed that adolescents rely more on support from their families as compared to their peers.*

Keywords: *Adolescents, Self-Esteem, Social Support.*

I. Introduction

Self-esteem can be broadly explained as an overall appraisal, or an attitude of a person towards himself or herself (Leary & MacDonald, 2003; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt & Schimel, 2004). It is important because of its role in healthy human development, it is critical determinant of a personality and positive correlations exists between self-esteem and many other attributes that bear directly on person's capacity for satisfaction and for achievements (Branden, 2010; Driscoll, 2013).

It is crucial for individuals to maintain their self-esteem as well as social relationships, thus nurturing a sense of social support (Budd, Buschman & Esch, 2009). According to House, Umberson and Landis (1988) social support can be defined as the quality of support from social relationships as perceived by a person. It can be explained as the level to which a person believes that support from social relationship is available to him or her, this support can be of any form including emotional, informational or tangible support and maybe available from significant others, family members and peers (Allen & Finkelstein, 2003; Schaefer, Coyne & Lazarus 1981). People having a better level of support in their social relations are healthier physically and psychologically as compared to individuals with comparatively lower support (Barrera, 1986). Demaray, Malecki, Davidson, Hodgson and Rebus (2005) found relationship between low social support and general psychological stress and other emotional problems. Social support levels have also been observed to be associated with self-esteem (Muhlenkamp & Sayles, 1986; Teoh & Nur, 2010).

According to Harter (1993) and Rosenberg (1981) self-esteem an important concept during adolescence and support from social relationships is deemed important and plays a vital role in the development of self-esteem during adolescence. Huurre (2000) found that self-esteem tend to be higher in adolescents who have higher levels of social support from family and peers. Stryker (1980) suggested that people use role models as a tool that is used to shape thinking about their selves, thus persons who have supportive role models are more likely to have higher self esteem.

Budd, Buschman and Esch (2009); Teoh and Nur (2010) found a strong relationship between self-esteem and social support. Moreover, Tam, Lee, Har and Pook (2011) discovered a positive correlation between perceived social support and self esteem with perceived peer support as highest form of perceived social support in adolescents. Arslan (2008); Hoffman, Ushpiz, and Shiff, (1988) suggested that relationship and support from family and peers in the adolescence help in the development of self-esteem. Family and peers are considered important factors of the social support as they are present in the immediate proximity of the adolescents and thus make an important context of their socialized process (Schwartz, 2006).

Family is considered important because relationship with family is considered to have an important source of influence on self esteem and life satisfaction of both males and females (Helsen, Vollebergh, Meeus, 2000). During adolescence, family especially the parents make up an important source of support and helps in development of important aspects of personality (Wall, Covell & Macintyre, 1999). Furthermore, Aydin (2005)

concluded that adolescents who have strong relation with their families and trust them have been observed to maintain good relationships with their peers as well.

Brown and Larson (2009) considered peer support important because adolescents at this stage spend more time with peers as compared to their childhood, often without supervision from adults. He further elaborated that expectations and opinions of the peers have more importance and value during adolescence.

According to World Population Prospectus the 2012 Revision, UN 2013 adolescents of age 10 to 19 in Pakistan makes up to 30.9 million of the total population which makes 23.1% of the total population. Arslan (2008) suggested that adolescence period is an important phase that must be understood by both the family and the society. According to Erikson (1965), the adolescent years are crucial for identity formation. It is during these years that individuals experiment in life in order to gain autonomy and form their identity. This period is especially important for the development of self-esteem which may have significant consequences for life outcomes throughout the life span of the adolescents (Impett, Sorsoli, Schooler, Henson, 2008; Neff, 2009).

In the light of the literature and empirical observations of the researcher, the aim of the current research study was to explore the relationship between social support and self-esteem of adolescent girls of Pakistan and following objectives were formulated for the conduct this study:

- To find out the relationship between self-esteem and family support.
- To find out the relationship between self-esteem and peer support.

II. Materials And Method

It was correlation research and a survey was carried out to meet the objectives of the study. The population for the study was girls in their adolescence between 16 to 19 years of age. 120 girls in their adolescent were selected through simple random sampling.

Self esteem and social support was measured by one instrument each. For analyzing self esteem, Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale was used. For measuring social support, a scale was developed by researcher. After the reviewing of literature indicators of social support were developed and questions with multiple choices were formed using these indicators. These questions were given to psychologists for approval and pilot study was carried out to check the reliability of this scale which was found to be 0.71. Each question had two parts; first part required the individual to choose between “family” and “peer” under given circumstances. The second part asked the respondents to rate their level of satisfaction from the chosen.

In order to collect data students from College of Home Economics Lahore were selected. After seeking consent with the concerned authorities, data was collected thorough simple random sampling. The researcher collaborated with time table of respective students. After consulting the time table and considering students’ availability, researcher went to their respective classes. The purpose of the research was explained to the perspective participants of the study. After that questionnaires were distributed. Each respondent filled the questionnaire by choosing the options which they thought suited them the best and returned the questionnaire to the researcher.

III. Results And Discussion

Data was entered to the grid sheet of SPSS, version 20. Descriptive statistical measures as well as Pearson's Product-Moment correlation were conducted to find the relationship between self esteem, family support and peer support.

Apart from the stated objectives additional results from the study were obtained by calculating the respondent’s choice of social support between family and peers. These results are given in the Table 1.

Table 1 Percentage of Respondent’s Choice between Family and Peers for Social Support

	Family	Peers
Depend upon when need help.	78	22
Accept all good and bad traits.	76	24
Cares regardless of what is happening.	74	26
Help in feeling better when gloomy.	59	41
Consoles when upset.	49	51
Helps in getting relaxed when feeling pressure.	47	53
Total Percentage	63.83%	36.17%

The table shows that majority of the adolescents feel their families to be a better choice as compared to their peers when seeking support. Mixed reviews were found in relation to this result. Contreras (2008); Way and Robinson (2003) in their studies came to similar conclusion that though support from both family and peers is important but adolescents rely more on support from the family as compared to the support from the peers and support from peers may not be as important for adolescents as compared to the support from the family. On the

contrary, Tam, Lee and Harr (2011) in their research regarding social support and self esteem found that peer support was the highest form of social support.

Table 2 Relationship of Self-Esteem with Family and Peer Support.

Variables	Peer Support	Family Support	Self Esteem
1. Self Esteem			-
2. Family Support		-	.565**
3. Peer Support	-	.666**	.476**

A significant correlation was found between self esteem and family support and between peer support and self esteem. Thus, higher self-esteem was associated with having higher satisfaction with support from families and peers.

The results of the current study are concurrent with Çakar and Karatas (2012) who found a causal relationship between adolescent self-esteem, perceived social support and hopelessness. Dr. Tajbakhsh and Rousti (2012) found family support to be strongly affecting self esteem closely followed by peer support and support from significant others. Sherekat and Reed (1992) conducted a research on the effect of religion and social support on self esteem of suddenly bereaved and concluded that the frequency of contact, the quality of received expressive support and confiding with friends and relatives can predict self-esteem which is in line with the results of current research that peer support does affect self esteem. Arslan (2009) also found a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and anger control and between self-esteem and the social support received from family and teachers. Farzaee (2012) in her research found a strong relation between self esteem and three type of social support namely family support, peer support and support from significant others.

Hoffman, Ushpiz and Shiff (1988) found support from mothers had a strong effect on self-esteem, whereas support from peers was considered important when maternal support was absent. Also, when support from other sources was controlled paternal support was found to have little effect on self-esteem.

The findings of the current research also indicated strong correlation between family support and peer support. The findings suggest that support from family and peers are positively interrelated. Findings of the current research are concurrent with Way and Chen (2000) who found that support from peers is correlated with support from families which in turn is related with positive health outcomes. Sheppard (2009) in her research on college students found that students who believe they have high levels of parental support also believe they have high levels of peer support. While Aydin (2007) observed that individuals who had good relationship with their families had good relationships with their peers too.

IV. Conclusion

The current research suggests that there is a strong relationship between social support and self esteem of adolescence. Additional results apart from objectives revealed that adolescents rely more on family support than peer support. In society like Pakistan where adolescents are usually dependent on families, support from families is usually considered foremost source of social support. A strong correlation was also found between family support and peer support indicating these two kinds of social support are interrelated thus adolescents who feel comfortable with support from their families are more likely to feel comfortable with support from peer. It is thus concluded that for high self esteem which is essential for better psychological and physical health social support from both family as well as peers is necessary.

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Appendix A

A. Below are a series of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Circle the response that indicates the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
2. At times, I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6. I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD

Appendix B

A Scale for investigating Social Support

Below are statements about people in your life who provide you with help or support. Each question has two parts. For the first part, circle whom you can count on for support.

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Note: Family in the below statements means your parents and your siblings. Peers mean your friends as well as your age mates. For the second part, circle how satisfied you are with the support you have from whom you have encircled.

1. I can depend upon when I need help.	Family		Peer	
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
2. I feel accepts all my good and bad traits.	Family		Peer	
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
3. I feel cares for me regardless of what is happening with me.	Family		Peer	
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
4. I feel makes me feel better when I am feeling gloomy or sad.	Family		Peers	
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
5. Consoles me during the times when I feel upset.	Family		Peers	
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
6. Helps me feel relaxed when I am under pressure.	Family		Peers	
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied