
ASSERTIVENESS AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

One among the major issues that adults face is the kind of social support they get from family, friends and significant others. These may vary and can influence their assertiveness. This study analyses the relation between assertiveness and perceived social support. The data was collected from 60 college students, particularly 30 males and 30 females of age group 18-25 through convenience sampling method. Assertiveness Self Statement Test and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support were used as the data collection tools in the study. It was analysed using correlational research design. Findings from the present study states that assertiveness had a high influence on their perceived social support which in turn predicted their psychological well being.

Keywords: *Assertiveness, Perceived social support, college students, family, friends, significant others*

INTRODUCTION

Assertiveness is an adaptive style of communication in which individuals express their feelings and needs directly, while maintaining respect for others. It is a social skill that depends heavily on effective communication while simultaneously respecting the thoughts and wishes of others. People who are assertive clearly and respectfully communicate their wants, needs, positions, and boundaries to others. Assertive communication is the ability to speak and interact in a way that considers and respects the rights and opinions of others while also standing up for your own rights, needs and personal boundaries. Assertive communication skills create opportunities for open discussion with a variety of opinions, needs and choices to be respectfully heard and considered to achieve a win-win solution to some problems. It can strengthen your relationships, reducing stress from conflict and providing you with social support when facing difficult times. Lazarus (1973) was the first to identify specific classes of responses in which assertive behaviour was defined as: "the ability to say no, the ability to ask favours or make requests, ability to express positive and negative feelings, the ability to initiate, continue and finish a general conversation." Smith (1975) analyses assertive behaviour as a fundamental right of every individual. His concept of freedom has taken a much more extensive liberty than the social-democratic philosophy had: "You have the right to judge your own behaviour, thoughts and emotions, to have responsibility for taking behaviours and their consequences."

Social support means having friends and other people, including family, to turn to in times of need or difficulty to give you a broader focus and positive self-image. It enhances quality of life and provides a shield against adverse life events. A social support network is made of friends, family and peers. Social support is different from a support group, which is generally a structured meeting run by a lay leader or mental health professional. Social support by our social network is important for our health. The opposite of good social support is loneliness. First and foremost, it seems that social support includes emotional support, belonging in a social community, being valued, practical help, and information and guidance. Social support represents a vital salutogenic resource for an individual's mental health. The concept of social support is multidimensional and can be incorporated into a larger context termed social capital, where social support and social networks are parts. Social support and

social networks are defined in different ways; mainly these can be seen as structurally and functionally and formally and informally.

To take a firm stand regarding the role of gender in perceived social support and assertiveness, there is a need for further research in the area based on foregoing and the following justifications. First, despite the fact that being assertive is of crucial importance in adolescents' social support, no study has been directed to set out the effects of assertiveness on students' social support in the study area. Second, not only adolescents, but also adults who could expect to lead their lives successfully need to be assertive enough; however, no study has been directed to examine the status of adolescent students' level of assertiveness in the study area.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

R.Elliot and Michael Spruell (1991) had tested predictions that assertiveness and social support would be significantly predictive of psychological adjustment. Furthermore it was anticipated that assertiveness and certain types of social relationships would differentially interact to predict adjustment and interviewed 156 persons receiving either inpatient and outpatient care with cord injuries.

Ates (2016) had explained to what extent the variables of perceived social support (friends, family and special people) and assertiveness predicted the psychological wellbeing of candidate psychological counsellors including 174 females and 134 males studying at Erzincan University, Faculty of Education, Psychological counselling and Guidance Department in 2015-2016 academic year. Results indicated that positive significant relationships were determined between psychological wellbeing of candidate psychological counsellors and assertiveness and social support perceived from family, friends and special people. Furthermore the variables of assertiveness and social support perceived from friends, family and special person were significant predictors of psychological well being variable.

Ronald.J.Delamater and Regis Menamara (2011) conducted a study on the social impact of assertiveness have revealed that although assertiveness is perceived as a dimension that is regarded as highly competent and skilful it is also viewed as unfavourable interpersonal behaviour and also several clinical implications for assertiveness training are explored.

A cross sectional and correlational research by Jones(2012) found that mental health, social support and health behaviour influence the physical health of students. There was a positive correlation between physical health and social support of students . It showed that the quality of social support had an impact on overall health of students.

HYPOTHESES

1. There will be a significant relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support among college students.
2. There will be a significant relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support from family among college students.
3. There will be a significant relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support from friends among college students.
4. There will be a significant relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support from significant others among college students.
5. There will be a significant relationship between positive self statements and perceived social support among college students.
6. There will be a significant relationship between positive self statements and perceived social support from family among college students.
7. There will be a significant relationship between positive self statements and perceived social support from friends among college students.
8. There will be a significant relationship between positive self statements and perceived social support from significant others among college students.

9. There will be a significant relationship between negative self statements and perceived social support among college students.
10. There will be a significant relationship between negative self statements and perceived social support from family among college students.
11. There will be a significant relationship between negative self statements and perceived social support from friends among college students.
12. There will be a significant relationship between negative self statements and perceived social support from significant others among college students.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support among college students.
2. To assess the relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support from family among college students.
3. To assess the relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support from friends among college students.
4. To assess the relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support from a significant other among college students.
5. To assess the relationship between positive self statements and perceived social support among college students.
6. To assess the relationship between positive self statements and perceived social support from family among college students.
7. To assess the relationship between positive self statements and perceived social support from friends among college students.
8. To assess the relationships between positive self statements and perceived social support from significant others among college students.
9. To assess the relationship between negative self statements and perceived social support among college students.
10. To assess the relationship between negative self statements and perceived social support from family among college students.
11. To assess the relationship between negative self statements and perceived social support from friends among college students.
12. To assess the relationship between negative self statements and perceived social support from significant others among college students.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and sampling procedure

This study is intended to study the relation between assertiveness and perceived social support. Sample collected for the present study was 60 college students in which 30 males and females of age group 18-25 were included and they were asked to complete the questionnaire. The samples were collected using convenience sampling method. The data collection was administered using Google Forms. Spearman's rank correlation was found using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) - 25th version.

The survey was conducted based on the consent taken from the participating students. The first sheet of the survey consisted of socio-demographic details like age and gender. The participants were also given assurance about the confidentiality of the survey. The collected data was analysed for drawing conclusions based on the study.

Tools used

Assertiveness Self Statement Test (ASST) is a 32 item instrument used to measure cognitions related to assertiveness. It has two subscales relevant to the refusal of unreasonable requests: positive self-statements that facilitate and negative self-statements that interfere with a request. The statements

were scored based on a five-point Likert scale. ASST has a fair internal consistency reliability of 0.78.

The perceived social support was measured using Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support(MSPSS).It is a 12 item instrument designed to measure perceived social support from three sources:family,friends and a significant other which is again divided into three subscales: family, friends and a significant other. A seven-point Likert scale was employed to score the items . MSPSS has an excellent internal consistency of 0.91 for the total scale and 0.90 to 0.95 for subscales.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Correlation coefficients related to assertiveness and social support perceived from family, friends and significant others.

VARIABLE	SOCIAL SUPPORT	FAMILY	FRIENDS	OTHERS
ASSERTIVENESS	0.001	-0.01	0.021	-0.022
POSITIVE	-0.039	-0.006	-0.027	-0.058
NEGATIVE	0.104	-0.036	0.113	0.049

RESULT

The data that was collected was analysed based on the formulated objective and hypothesis. The scores of assertiveness and perceived social support were assessed using Spearman's rank correlation method. The findings have been presented in the respective table.

Assertiveness was positively and significantly related to social support ($r = 0.001$) and to social support of friends ($r = 0.021$). Thus the alternative hypotheses is accepted. It was also found that social support of family($r = -0.01$) and social support of others($r = -0.022$) were negatively and significantly correlated to assertiveness. Therefore we reject the alternative hypotheses.

It was also observed that positive self-statements were negatively and significantly correlated to social support($r = -0.039$), social support of family members ($r = -0.006$), social support of friends ($r = -0.027$) and social support of others ($r = -0.058$). So the alternative hypotheses were rejected.

Negative self-statements were negatively and significantly correlated to social support of family members ($r = -0.036$).Therefore we reject the alternative hypothesis While it was positively and significantly correlated to overall social support ($r = 0.104$) , social support of friends ($r = 0.113$) and social support of others ($r = 0.049$). So the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to assess the relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support among college students. From the data collected, it can be determined that there is a positive significant relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support among college students. So, it can be understood that the social support from different sources help students to express their feelings and needs directly while maintaining the respect for others. So by the social support from the society help the students to find a right balance between passivity and aggression.

Social support from friends plays a major role in increasing assertiveness among college students. Support from friends helps the students to adapt to various situations and to maintain an effective relationship with others. While social support from family and others are not significantly related to assertiveness of college students. It might be because of the differences in opinion of family and others in the society with that of students.

Positive self-statements that facilitate or make it easier to refuse a request is negatively correlated to overall social support, social support from family, friends and others. So, there was no significant relationship between assertiveness and overall social support and social support of family, friends

and others which shows that the students are independent and are capable of making their own decisions and are confident about their decisions even though the support from the society might be less.

Negative self-statements that interfere or make it harder to refuse a request is positively correlated with overall social support, social support of friends and others and is negatively correlated with social support of family members. So there is a significant relationship between assertiveness and social support from society, friends and others and there is no significant relationship between assertiveness and social support of family. Students find it difficult to refuse a request when it is supported by society or if it is supported by their friends and others important to them as humans have a tendency to conform with others. Meanwhile there is no connection between refusing a request and support from family.

CONCLUSION

After studying the relationship between assertiveness and perceived social support, it was found that a significant relationship exists between these variables among college students. Social support from friends, family members and significant others play a major role in assertive behaviour of the student. Social support helps students to express their feelings and needs directly, thus improving their psychological well-being too. Hence it can be concluded that social support helps the students to adopt an adaptive style of communication.

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